

POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ALBANIA IN THE POST
COLD WAR PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the political relations between Turkey and Albania in the post Cold War period. Political and diplomatic relations between Turkey and Albania based on mutual respect for territorial integrity and independence. This study analyzes the continuities and changes in the Turkish foreign policy towards Albania in the post Cold War era. Also changes and continuities in the Albanian foreign policy in the post Cold War period are scrutinized. This work examines the main Turkish foreign policy approaches towards Albania. Patterns of Turkish Balkan policy are examined to find out how Turkey constructed its foreign policy towards Albania after the end of Cold War. Turkey continued its traditional foreign policy according to realist and national interest-based foreign policy formulation. After 1990, Albania was in a period of a transition from its *sui generis* communist dictatorship regime under Enver Hoxha to an emerging democracy. Albania considered Turkey as a reliable ally in the Balkans. Turkey attached strong importance to stability and security in the Balkan region. Albania has significant role to play in Balkan region. Thus Turkey welcomed the Albanian decision on membership application to NATO and EU. Turkey tried to strength its bilateral relations with Albania and supported Albania's participation in regional and international organizations. This study focuses on the relations of Turkey and Albania within the framework of international and regional organizations.

Keywords: Turkey and Albania, Turkish Balkan Policy, 1997 Pyramid Crises, Kosovo Issue, Greater Albania.

ÖZ

SOĞUK SAVAŞ SONRASI DÖNEMDE TÜRKİYE ARNAVUTLUK SİYASİ İLİŞKİLERİ

Sülkü, Mehmed

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler

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Bu tez Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türkiye ile Arnavutluk'un siyasi ilişkilerini incelemektedir. Türkiye ve Arnavutluk'un siyasi ve diplomatik ilişkileri her iki ülkenin toprak bütünlükleri ile bağımsızlıklarına duydukları karşılıklı saygı temeline dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışma Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde, Arnavutluk'a yönelik Türk dış politikasındaki devamlılık ve değişimi analiz etmektedir. Ayrıca aynı dönemde Arnavutluk'un dış politikasındaki devamlılık ve değişim incelenecektir. Türkiye'nin Balkan siyasetindeki teamülleri irdelenerek Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türkiye'nin Arnavutluk'a karşı izlediği dış politikanın nasıl oluşturulduğu araştırılmaktadır. Türkiye bu dönemde gerçekçi ve ulusal çıkara dayalı geleneksel dış politikasını sürdürmüştür. 1990 sonrasında Arnavutluk Enver Hoca yönetimindeki kendi şahsına münhasır komünist-diktatörlük rejiminden yeni oluşmakta olan bir demokrasiye geçişi yaşıyordu. Arnavutluk Türkiye'yi Balkanlar'daki güvenilir bir müttefiki olarak değerlendirmekteydi. Türkiye Balkan bölgesindeki istikrar ve güvenliğe özel önem atfetmektedir. Arnavutluk Balkanlar bölgesinde önemli bir role sahiptir. Türkiye Arnavutluk'un NATO ve AB'ye üyelik başvurularını memnuniyetle karşılamaktadır. Türkiye Arnavutluk ile ikili ilişkilerini geliştirmeye özen göstermekte ve Arnavutluk'un bölgesel ve uluslararası örgütlerde yer almasını desteklemektedir. Bu çalışma Türkiye ile Arnavutluk'un uluslararası ve bölgesel örgütler çerçevesindeki ilişkilerini de incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye ve Arnavutluk, Türkiye'nin Balkan Politikası, 1997 Piramit Krizi, Kosova Sorunu, Büyük Arnavutluk.

To my family.

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ACRONYMS

BSEC	:Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CARDS	:The Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization
CSCE	:Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DP	:Democratic Party
EBRD	:European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ESDP	:European Security and Defense Policy
EULEX	:The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
FP	:Foreign Policy
FRY	:Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GDP	:Gross Domestic Product
OIC	:Organization for Islamic Conference
IMF	:International Monetary Fund
IPA	:Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KFOR	:Kosovo Force
KLA-UÇK	:Kosovo Liberation Army
NSDI	:National Strategy for Development and Integration
OSCE	:The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PfP	:Partnership for Peace
PHARE	:Poland and Hungary Aid for Restructuring of Economies

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to analyze the political relations between Turkey and Albania in the post Cold War period. After the collapse of communist regimes in the Balkan region, multi-ethnic/religious Balkan countries transformed their political, economic and social structures very rapidly. Struggles for formation of independent states brought some new wars, clashes and chaotic realms within this region. Transition to democracy was also another challenging issue for Balkan states. Interstate relations of Balkan countries and international interventions into the region enforced Turkey to follow an active foreign policy approach towards the region. Within this context of political developments, relations of Turkey and Albania entered into a new era.

The main aim of this thesis is to analyze the continuities and changes in the Turkish foreign policy towards Albania in the post Cold War era. Also changes and continuities in the Albanian foreign policy in the post Cold War period will be scrutinized throughout the thesis. Main tenets of Turkish foreign policy towards Albania were almost identical to Turkey's overall Balkan policy. Main objective of Turkish Balkan policy was to endure stability and peace in the region. Bearing this main objective in mind Turkey developed its bilateral relations with Albania immediately after the end of Albanian isolationist policies following the death of Enver Hoxha. Turkey until the mid 1990s rapidly increased its political, military and economic ties with Albania.

This work examines the main Turkish foreign policy approaches towards Albania. Patterns of Turkish Balkan policy will be examined to find out how Turkey constructed its foreign policy towards Albania after the end of Cold War. Besides the new definitions about Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's role in the Balkan region that are started to be expressed with the active foreign policy initiative of Özal, pro

status quo and pro Western orientation of traditional Turkish Balkan FP did not grandly changed in post Cold War era. Turkey continued its traditional foreign policy according to realist and national interest-based foreign policy formulation. Albania's geo-strategic location, possible threatening of Albanian question to the stability and security of the region, danger deriving from rising influence of an hegemonic power over the country and region, risks of immigration flows towards Turkey in a case of conflict or instability within the region and severe effects of an economic crisis were the main factors that Turkey considered carefully in its relations with Albania. Turkish FP makers continued to cautiously involve in the affairs of the region and developed their relations with Albania within institutional frameworks.

In this respect, this thesis explains why and how the Turkish foreign policy towards Albania remained without any grand changes in the post Cold War period. Throughout the thesis; main dynamics in the formation of Turkey's FP towards Albania, political significance of Albania for Turkey and vice versa, strategies of Turkish governments about the formation of Balkan and Albanian policies, domestic and international factors that effected the construction of Turkish FP towards Albania, changing and continuing patterns of Turkish Balkan foreign policy, relevance of new orientations and ideologies about the 'new Turkish FP' in actual implementation of Turkish Balkan FP, turning points and affairs that contributed to the development or deterioration of relations between Turkey and Albania, scopes of military and economic co-operation between Turkey and Albania and the role of TİKA as an instrument of Turkish FP in Albania will be discussed.

This thesis argues that Turkey refrained from unilateral involvement in Albania during 1991 and 1997 crises and Kosovo issue in 1999. Instead Turkey preferred to involve to those conflicts under international organizations and pursued policies aligned to international community. To endure peace and security in the region Turkey encouraged Albania's participation in regional and international organizations. Turkey followed an active diplomacy in international and regional organizations to find out solutions to the problems and conflicts of Albanians in the

region. Turkey supported Albania's integration into Euro-Atlantic organizations. These characteristics of Turkish FP reveals that Turkey did not basically changed its implementation of FP towards Albania in the post Cold War period. Considering aforementioned patterns of Turkish FP this study discusses the continuities of realist Turkish FP towards Albania with regard to factual and specific topical issues in the political and economic relations of Turkey and Albania in post Cold War era.

Turkey emerged as a regional power in the Balkan region in the post Cold War period. Turkey in this respect tried to gain reliable allies in the Balkan region to enhance its position against Greece. Rivalry between Turkey and Greece enforced Turkey to gain support of Balkan states. Thus Turkey attached specific importance to its relations with Albania. On the other hand Albania was trying to gain the support of a great power to handle its domestic and international affairs. Albania was the least developed country in the Balkan region. External assistances were extremely important for Albania to recover its economy and maintain its democratic domestic political order. As a result Albania developed its relations with U.S. and other European countries. Support of U.S. was critical for Albania since Albania tried to balance influences of Italy and Greece. Also development of bilateral relations with Turkey was important to balance the influences of Greece. On the other hand Albania was in need of external assistances that would be received both from Turkey and Greece. This study attempts to expose the political reasons behind the development of relations between Turkey and Albania after 1990.

This study examines the main characteristics of Turkish-Albanian relations. Turkey has deep and intensive historical and socio-cultural relations with Albania. After 1990, Albania was in a period of a transition from its *sui generis* socialist-dictatorship regime under Enver Hoxha to an emerging democracy. In following years, relations between Turkey and Albania increased rapidly virtually in all areas due to bilateral agreements on military and police trainings, education, trade, and health. Reciprocal visits of high level officials had been arranged and Turkey tried to provide humanitarian and technical assistance to Albania. Military and economic

cooperation of Turkey and Albania will be analyzed in depth. Albania has strategic military and economic ports opening to Adriatic and Mediterranean Sea. Defense and military relations between Turkey and Albania increased rapidly after 1990. In 1992, two countries signed Military Cooperation Agreement and later Turkey took active part in restructuring the Albanian army. Turkey sent 800 troop unit to the UN Multinational Peace Protection Force (ALBA) which was set up to prevent the domestic chaos caused by the pyramid crises in 1997. In 1998, a protocol was signed between the two countries for the modernization of Vlore military base of Albania and the construction of the Naval War School, which was called as the Vlore Project.

Albanian struggle for establishing democracy and implementation of liberal market economy will be emphasized in this work. Also this thesis carefully reviews foreign policy orientations of Albania and Turkey after the end of Cold War. Albania considered Turkey as a reliable ally in the Balkans. Albania has significant role to play in Balkan region. There are ethnic Albanians living in most of the Balkan states. Problems of these Albanian minorities took the attention of regional states and international community as well. States that host Albanian minority alerted with the danger of possible separatist claims of Albanians. Thus 'Greater Albania' ideology and Albanian question had always been a matter of concern for Balkan and European states. In this study relations of Albania with its neighboring states will be analyzed with special concern to 'Greater Albania' ideology and Albanian question in the region.

Turkey welcomed the Albanian decision on its membership application to NATO and EU. Turkey in one hand tried to strength its bilateral relations with Albania on the other hand supported Albania's participation in regional and international organizations. In line with this policy Turkey invited Albania to join Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization as a founding member and supported her application to the Organization of The Islamic Conference. This study focuses on the relations of Turkey and Albania within the framework of international and regional organizations.

Turkey also supported the establishment of a strong democratic state structure for the well protection of Albanian borders. Furthermore, Turkey supports Albania over this issue since stability and peace is a fundamental goal of Turkish foreign policy in Balkans. Yet one of the most important policies of Turkey in the Balkan region is to prevent any other super powers' dominance over the Balkans. With this regard in this study partnership of Turkey and U.S. and rivalry between Greece and Turkey in the Balkan region will be scrutinized.

In addition, Turkey's commercial and economic relations with Albania will be reviewed in this work. Economic relations of Turkey and Albania had been growing rapidly especially after 2000. According to the records of Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade, trade volume between Turkey and Albania reached 226 million U.S. dollars in 2006 and Turkey comes 3rd in Albania's imports after Italy and Greece. Turkish investors found eligible conditions to strength their businesses investments in Albania in several sectors. Turkish total investments in Albania are nearly amounted USD \$115 million. Turkey is the third biggest investor in Albania, after Italy and Greece. Turkey and Albania signed the Free Trade Agreement in 2008 to further develop their trade.

Turkey also considers the proximity of Albania to European and Balkan markets as an important asset in its economic relations with the country. Turkey also started to provide important technical assistances to Albania. With this regard activities and projects of Turkish International Development and Cooperation Agency (TİKA) in Albania will be analyzed in this thesis.

Turkish foreign policy in the Balkan region is widely discussed among politicians and scholars. According to some scholars Turkey constructs backbone of her FP based on its imperialistic past. This argument underlines the importance of religious, cultural past and some other affinities of Turkey. These scholars claim that Turkey should undertake a FP that privileges these specialties to increase its

influence in the region. According to their point of view, Turkey should take the opportunity to become global power first by being a leading regional power in her broader region. In contrast some scholars argue that Turkey is only a middle sized regional power and its policy towards Balkan region should not imply any implicit ideological orientations. With analyzing the aforementioned discussions, this thesis aims to reveal the main tenants of Turkish FP towards the region regarding the concrete occurrences.

Last but not least this thesis aims to provide a chronological review of political and economic relations of Albania and Turkey including key events that occurred in the post Cold War period, as a base for analyzing the bilateral and multilateral dimensions of relations between these two countries.

This study will discuss the main tenets of Turkish-Albanian political relations in the post Cold War period starting with brief introductory information about the historical background of political relations between Turkey and Albania. After this introduction, domestic situation in Albania after the collapse of Communism will be analyzed. Then foreign policy of Albania under the rule of Democratic Party will be discussed. Afterward main problematic issues considering the political relations of Turkey and Albania will be scrutinized. In that part effects and impacts of Greater Albania Project and Albanian Question in the Balkans, Kosovo Issue and 1997 Pyramid Crisis to the development of political and military relations of Turkey and Albania will be analyzed. In the following political relations between Turkey and Albania in the post Cold War period and patterns of Turkish FP towards Balkans will be discussed. Turkey's efforts to maintain stability and security in its neighborhood by gathering Balkan states under regional and international organizations will be analyzed through scrutinizing the relations between Turkey and Albania within multilateral organizations such as Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), NATO and EU. Finally economic relations of Turkey and Albania and TİKA's activities in Albania will be examined in depth.

CHAPTER 2

POST COLD WAR PERIOD

2.1. Albania: Background and Brief History in the Cold War Period

Six Great Powers (Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and Italy) gathered in The Conference of London and decided that Albania, deprived of about one-half of its ethnic territory (i.e. Kosova), would be a sovereign state independent of the Ottoman Empire on 29 July 1913. This decision provided the basis for the international recognition for Albanian independence. According to the accords; Albania “become an autonomous, sovereign and hereditary principality by right of primogeniture, guaranteed by the six Powers”.¹

With the beginning of WW1; Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia occupied Albania. A new government was established in Albania by the Congress of Lushnja in 1920. With the admission of Albania to League of Nations, Albania was recognized as a sovereign state in international arena.²

Efforts for constructing diplomatic relations between Turkey and Albania started in 1920s.³ Soon after the declaration of Turkish Republic diplomatic relations between Turkey and Albania constructed. In December 1923 eternal friendship Treaty was signed. This Treaty was consist of Treaty for Constructing Diplomatic Relations, Treaty for Consular Issues and Citizenship Agreement. Also this Treaty

¹ "1913 The Conference of London" on www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1913_2.html accessed on 25/09/2009.

² "Independent Albania" on www.albanian.com/main/history/independ.html accessed on 27/09/2009 accessed on 18/11/2009.

³ Gazmend Shpuza, "Atatürk ve Arnavutluk - Türkiye İlişkileri", *Atatürk Yolu*, Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Dergisi, Vol. 3 No. 11, 1993, p.313.

was a clear proclamation of rooted historical ties and sharing of a common past between Albanian and Turkish societies. At the time of signing this treaty Albania was governed by liberal powers. But after the coup of Zogu Albania was entered into a dictatorship regime backed by Yugoslavia.

As Rakibi argues modern Albanian state emerged under the governance of King Zogu. King Zogu achieved to establish centralized state and institutions over the Albanian territories.⁴ It was hard to define Albania as a ‘state’ until that time.⁵ He reformed military, education and other bureaucratic institutions according to the western models. Zogu's 14 years long reign ended in 1939 when Italy invaded and occupied the country. King Zogu fled to Greece and then to Britain. With the beginning of World War II, Italy considered Albania as a bridge for military expansion towards the Balkans and Italy's invasions under Mussolini had been expanded to the Adriatic region.

Albania during the WW II was first occupied by Italian and then by German forces which installed puppet governments. Italian occupation of Albania had been an important lesson also for Turkish foreign policy makers. Turkey during the WW II was trying to keep its neutral stand. But proximity of Axis powers by expansion towards Balkan and Mediterranean states raised security concerns for Turkey. Minister of Foreign Affairs Şükrü Saraçoğlu mentioned about the threat emerged with the Italian occupation of Albania and he stated about Turkey's decision to take a side with the Allied Powers.⁶ During the beginning of the war in the Axis camp Mussolini was playing the major role in Balkan politics. The German diplomats reiterated that they had no political purposes in the Balkan region. Thus until 1940 they gave priority to Italian interests. Turkey chose to cooperate with the Allied

⁴ Albert Rakipi, *Weak States and Security; Rethinking the Balkan Post Cold War Security Agenda*, AİS, Tirana, 2008, pp.82-83

⁵ Glenn Misha, *Balkanlar 1804-1999: Milliyetçilik, Savaş ve Büyük Güçler*, Translated by Mehmed Harmanci, Sabah Kitapları, İstanbul, 2000, p.340.

⁶ Mehmet Yılmaz, “Türk Dış Politikasında Arnavutluk”, unpublished Master’s Thesis submitted to the Dept. of International Relations, Gazi University, 2001, p. 102.

powers and attempted to maintain the *status quo*. The main concern of the Turkish government was the Soviet Union at that time.⁷

Nazi Germany defeated Greece and Yugoslavia in 1941, and Kosova and Northern Epirus regions were merged into Albania. Consequently during the war Albania's territories were expended to include Albanians living in Yugoslavia, Kosova and Northern Epirus region of Greece. As a result, short lived ethnically united Albanian state was created. This new state had been ended in 1944, when the Germans withdrew from Albania.

Communist guerrillas took the control at the end of the war. In December 1945 general elections was resulted with the victory of Albanian Communist Party and in 1946 constructive parliament declared the Albania People's Republic. Hoxha became the head of the government and Albania entered into the *sui generis* communist dictatorship regime under the Hoxha until his death in 1985. However USA and other Western states refused to recognize this election and considered the communist government as illegitimate.⁸ Throughout the Cold War period, Albania under the Hoxha's rule eventually isolated from each of its neighbors, western world and communist countries as well.

Hoxha's government started to nationalize industry, banks, and all commercial and foreign properties. Hoxha publicized all of the ownership including even private automobiles in the country and followed a militarist defense and communist economic plan all over the country. His strategic plan was based against outside threats and any external influence. To achieve protectionist policy he allocated country's resources according to military dimensions. His foreign policy was just a continuation of this domestic policy. Hoxha's foreign policy would be analyzed in four periods: period under the influence of Yugoslavia (1945-1948),

⁷ Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans; Twentieth Century*, Vol.2, Cambridge University Press, NY, 1994, p. 214.

⁸ Rakipi, op cit., pp. 78-79

shifting to sphere of influence of USSR (1948-1961), cooperation with China (1961-1978) and total isolation period (1978-1985).

Yugoslavia had hegemonic aims toward Albania and dependency of Albania to Yugoslavian aids was signaling the threat of loosing sovereignty of Albanian state. Hoxha was looking for an alternative ally. When Yugoslavia broke with Soviet Union Hoxha found his new and much more powerful ally for Albania. With deterioration of relations with USSR, Hoxha decided to took part on the side of China in ideological differences between Sino and Soviet bloc. This was a great lost for Soviet Bloc regarding its influence over the Mediterranean region. USSR had lost its strategic military base located in Vlore and the balance of power in Mediterranean region had totally changed.

China was the new ally of Albania between 1961 and 1978. Albania retreated from Warsaw Pact in 1961 and decided to not join to international communist meetings under the auspices of Soviet Bloc. Hoxha implement new reforms in cultural and social areas influenced by Mao's ideologies. Inspired by Chinese Cultural Revolution, religion and all religious practices were outlawed. Religious places and institutions, most of the mosques and churches were demolished or converted to warehouses, circuses or sport halls.

Friendly relations with China lasted due to the decrease of foreign aids provided by China. Hoxha had chosen to close its doors to any hegemonic power and try to run the country by its own resources and dynamics. This decision was not realizable since economic backwardness and lack of any technological research and development were obstacles for managing this sort of domestic and foreign policies. Without external assistances it was impossible to maintain sustainable economy in Albania. Hoxha on the one hand was trying to minimize foreign relations but on the other hand he was initiating new diplomatic and trade relations with Italy, Turkey, France and some other European states.

Hoxha was died in 1985. He was remembered as one of the most despotic leaders in Europe in the Cold War era. He was the founder of the first atheist state in the world. He suppressed his own people's religious and traditional beliefs and practices. He punished hundreds of thousands people by labeling them as political suspects and jailed them as for being regime opponents. Albanians were banned to travel abroad. Their daily diet, especially in 1970s was just bread.⁹ According to the official statistics per capita income was USD \$750 in 1970. Outdated technologies and equipments in health services was also another problem for Albanian citizens. They were ruled under a militarist state violence and lived in a state of fear. They did not have any chance to express even any little critics about the Hoxha and his regime without taking a risk of deprivation from all civic rights and social isolation that affects not only themselves but also their family members and relatives. Hoxha wasted the limited sources of country by increasing military spending based on the fears of external interventions of especially Western world.

During the Hoxha's reign relations with Turkey and Albania were not developed much. In the first years of his presidency Hoxha sent Turkish ambassador back to Turkey and closed the embassy along with the other foreign missions. Turkey during the Cold War took part in the Western bloc and entered to Western international organizations such as European Council and NATO. Turkey had its own security and domestic policy concerns during the Cold War period. Although Turkey had historical ties with Balkan states foreign policy makers chose rather a passive stand to developments in the Balkans. Turkey followed a foreign policy towards Balkans that maintains *status quo* in the region. Within this framework Turkish policy towards Albania was no exception. Nevertheless Turkey did not neglected importance of Albania's sustainability for the peaceful coexistence in the Balkan region. During Balkan Entente meetings Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey emphasized this view although Albania did not join to the meetings of Balkan Pact in the beginning.

⁹ Ibid. p. 89.

In a polarized world, members of different blocs Turkey and Albania did not have tensions in their limited relations. This was a result of common historical past shared by these two nations. Turkey's considered Albania as a friend and brother country and there are millions of Albanian people living in Turkey with peaceful coexistence.¹⁰

One of the turning points in the relations between Turkey and Albania was Albanian vote for Turkey in the UN meeting considering the Cyprus issue in 1965. This gesture had contributed much for the development of relations between Turkey and Albania. After this event some official visits begun and trade agreements signed bilaterally. In 1968 head of Turkish parliament Ferruh Bozbeyli visited Albania and reciprocally members of Albanian parliament visited Turkey and Trade Agreements signed in 1967 and 1968.

After Hoxha's death his successor Ramiz Alia became the president of Albania. He declared the continuity of the socialist regime in the country and insisted on his commitment to legacy and principles of Hoxha. Between the years 1985 and 1989 Alia could not implement radical political reforms according to the grand developments in international arena. Alia legalized investments of some foreign firms and tried to establish diplomatic relations with the Western states.

Starting from mid-1980s, the Eastern bloc was facing great transformations in political, economic and social realms. These winds of change inevitably started to effect Balkan states. Under these conditions a meeting of foreign ministers of the Balkan countries was held in February 1988 in Belgrade. Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia were represented in the meeting. Main goal of the meeting was to prepare the ground for rapprochement among the Balkan states. Meetings paved the way for signing agreements in fields such as trade, economy, culture, transport. Regional cooperation had been increased mainly

¹⁰ Although there is no exact record or number of Balkan and Albanian people that immigrated to Turkey between 1946 and 1966, 246.000 Albanians immigrated to Turkey. (see Yılmaz, op cit., p.103) It is estimated that today 3-4 millions of Albanian and approximately ten millions of Balkan people lives in Turkey as Turkish citizens.

because of common security concerns of the Balkan states. Several meetings were held at different levels and the whole process is known as the Balkan Multilateral Cooperation Process.¹¹

Also in same year Turkish Foreign Minister Mesut Yılmaz paid an official visit to Tirana. This visit could be considered as a milestone in relations between Tirana and Ankara since it was the first contact at this level since the Communists came to power in Albania.¹² Yılmaz commended the state of Turkish-Albanian relations and declared that "no political problems" existed between these two countries.¹³

In 1990 Tirana hosted the follow up meeting of Deputy Foreign Affairs Ministers of Balkan states and this meeting was the first multilateral meeting held in Tirana since 1945. Balkan states were encouraged to get involved in cooperation initiatives. During this meeting it was stated that "unless democratic regimes were not established, integration into Euro-Atlantic structures would be a dream for the Balkan states".¹⁴ Yet these initiatives were halt by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the civil war in Yugoslav territories.¹⁵

On the other hand, Turkey was excluded from this rapprochement process due to its passive stand at the beginning of the process along with Greece's anti-Turkish attitude. However Turkey had to change its policy concerning the Balkan region when it was left alone in the international arena as a result of the UN General Assembly's vote for the pro-Greek stand regarding the Cyprus issue.

¹¹ N. Aslı Şirin, "Inter-State Cooperation in the Balkans: The Cold War Era", *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, OBIV, 2002, p.178.

¹² Louis Zanga, "Solid Turkish-Albanian Relations", Background Report/156 on www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/4-5-32.shtml accessed on 25/10/2009.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ N.Şirin, op cit., p.188

¹⁵ Ibid.

It was in 1990 that Albanian Foreign Affairs Minister visited Turkey and agreements on Culture and Postal Services signed between Turkey and Albania.¹⁶ This sort of agreements were to warm up the relations between Turkey and Albania.

Turning to Alia's reformations in Albania, it was an important development that he allowed some Italian and Greek TV channels broadcastings to be aired especially in border regions. Through these channels Albanians were receiving recent developments and getting aware of the outside world. Although Alia was introducing gradual reforms in social, political and economic levels it was hard to ease the severe effects of long period of isolation and communist policies. Communist party members and secret service called Sigurimi led by, Nexhmije Hoxha, wife of Enver Hoxha, were strongly opposing the reforms. Nexhmije Hoxha was still supporting the principles of Enver Hoxha and claiming the self-sufficiency of the country.

Gorbachov's Glasnost and Perestroika doctrines were effecting systemic transformations in Balkans and in some other central and eastern European countries. In an international environment in which communist bloc was melting down and ex-soviet countries either declaring their independence or turning into a democratic political system it was impossible for Albania to be indifferent to these transformations.

With the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 political opponents of the system have chance to become visible and speak loudly. Many demonstrations and student riots blew over the country. Alia at first tried to manipulate the society by claiming that on going transformations would strength Albanian communist regime. But rapid domestic and international changes were indicating clearly that Albania could not remain as the sole communist regime in Europe. Alia responded to domestic pressures by implementing some reforms. He granted Albanian citizens the

¹⁶ Bilal N. Şimşir, *Türkiye Arnavutluk İlişkileri : Büyükelçilik Anıları 1985 - 1988*, ASAM Yayınları, Ankara, 2001, p.460

right to travel abroad and limited the powers of the Sigurimi, allowed religious freedom, and adopted some free-market measures for the economy.¹⁷

During these transformations in Balkans and Albania, main goal of Turkish policy after the end of Cold War towards the Balkans was set to preserve Turkey's security by actively involving in the regions' affairs. Turkish FP towards Balkans had been constructed by several factors and actors. Strategies shaped by Ministry of Foreign Affairs were some times by-passed with strong and active interferences of Özal, the president between 1990 and 1993. Also during the Refah-Yol coalition government Islamic ideologies came into front as factors to affect FP discourse of the time. Besides "new Ottomanism" became very popular and gained more support with growing criticism towards some European states' unwillingness and lateness to stop massacres and ethnic cleansing during the Bosnia and Kosova wars. Huge public support backed by manipulations of mass media urged Turkish governments for taking active and strong actions towards the region and this was also another important factor that expressed the vital influence of public opinion upon the construction of FP.

Collapse of communist regimes in Central Asia and Balkans reconnected and revived the kinship and cultural ties towards these regions. Many scholar and politicians discussed about the new role of Turkey as a regional great power. Thus Ottomanism along with Islamist approaches in FP accepted as a new ideological supply to legitimate Turkey's involvement in the Balkan affairs.

Turkish FP towards Balkan region is presented briefly above. In the following the relations between Turkey and Albania will be analyzed in depth over some topical issues that emerged after the end of Cold War.

¹⁷ "Albania" on www.albanian.com/information/history/collapse.html accessed on 27/09/2009.

2.2. Albania after the Collapse of Communism

In 1990 communist and dictator regimes in Eastern and Central Europe were collapsing and Soviet Bloc was on the eve of collapsing. President Alia and Adil Carcani, the prime minister of the time, announced that process of democratization will prevail in Albania and relations with U.S. and USSR could be initiated. Carcani also declared the desire of Albania to become a member of Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. What's more Alia endorsed the creation of independent political parties which was a signal to an end to the communist/labor Party monopoly since 1944.

However many Albanians' was not trusting in Alia's calls for democratic reforms. Thousand of Albanians were seeking asylum to Western countries. They were illegally immigrating to Italy from the port of Durres and seeking for sheltering at embassies in Tirana. From the beginning of the nineties some 400.000 people have migrated abroad; over 250.000 to Greece, 105.000 to Italy, 10.000 or so to the rest of Europe according to UN report on Albania. And this figure amounts to 12% of the Albania's total population.¹⁸ It was clear that state was loosing its control over Albanian society.

In 1990 Central Authority of the Labor Party accepted the right of establishing political parties and fair elections. Democratic Party was established and followed by establishment of Christian Democratic Party.

Uprisings all over the country were expended. State was unable to stop riots and respond to the demands of opposition groups. One of the most crowded demonstrations held in the center of Tirana was resulted with demolition of Enver Hoxha's statute and Alia later promised to demolish Hoxha's statutes all over the country. Today Hoxha's statute in the center of Tirana is replaced with the statute of Skanderbeg. Skanderbeg was presented as the most important historical figure of

¹⁸ "UN report on Albania", in Peter R Prifti, *Unfinished Portrait of a Country, East European Monographs*, Boulder Distributed by Colombia University Press, NY, 2005, p.130.

Albanian nation. This was an effort to establish a common and glorious national past in a process of modern nation state building which was hampered during the cold war period with notion of international socialism.

General elections that held in 1991 resulted with the victory of Labor Party led by Ramiz Alia. Democratic Party could not have enough time and adequate resources to back its election campaign. In 1990s, 60% of the Albanian population was living in rural areas. Democratic Party reached the people living in cities but was not successful to expand its propaganda in rural areas. Labor Party took the advantages of using and manipulating the means of state institutions. Furthermore Alia granted some rights for Albanians who migrated to western countries and encouraged them to turn back to Albania and participate in the elections. Alia gained the support of voters by promising reforms on religious and human rights. Democratic Party (DP) did not give up challenging the new government. DP extended its propaganda to rural areas and called for the systemic change. Meanwhile new government was facing severe economic challenges to modernize the country. On the other hand insufficient actions for adopting western type of market economy and human rights reforms caused losing its legitimacy before the people. Growing reactions and boycotts enforced Labor Party to initiate some revisions over the cabinet and a coalition government was established. A new election was inescapable and government decided to arrange elections in 1992.

Sali Berisha tried to convince citizens for the benefits of democratic and western ideals. He accused opposition party, namely Socialist Party led by Fatos Nano, as a continuation of communist ideology. U.S. and other western states with institutions such as World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were closely following the transformation movements in Albania. U.S. had donated some aid to Albania after the first democratic elections in 1991. Berisha implicitly took the support of U.S. and U.S. backed organizations and media companies functioning in Albania. People were looking for radical change in politics and sought foreign aid and support that was essential for these changes to be successfully adopted. “Continuing economic, social, and political instability led to the fall of several

governments” during 1991 “and in March 1992 a decisive electoral victory was won by the anticommunist opposition led by the Democratic Party”.¹⁹ Sali Berisha became the new president of Albania. Isolation of Albania especially from western world lasted and Albania started to receive necessary aid from developed countries. New government was eager to integrate Albania's politics and institutions into the Western structures. Besides public opinion was sharing the ideas of Albanian intellectuals who argued that Europe was their cultural and geographic home.

Albanian communist rule had been one of the most repressive regimes in the region. Any opposition stemming from public had been eliminated but even Albanian communist regime could not resist to outside influences and collapsed. That's why electoral victory of Democratic Party (DP) under Berisha's leadership was representing beginning of a new era in Albania's political, social and economic life. But there were too many obstacles for transforming such a repressive communist regime into a western type political and economic system. When Berisha came to power Albania was suffering from severe food shortages, outlaw armed gangs especially in the south part of the country were threatening the state authority and increase in inflation and unemployment rates were causing civil unrest among Albanian citizens. Albania was the last communist state in Balkan region and the weakest economy with the youngest population in the region as well. Under this conditions DP undertook legislative reformations and tried to strength institutional structure of the new democratic state. Transformation in to market economy was one of the most important issues to overcome. Lack of experience in implementing this new economic model was an obstacle and DP urged to solve problematic legislative matters in the fields of privatization, distribution of land and foreign investments.²⁰

¹⁹ “Collapse of Communism” on www.albanian.com/information/history/collapse.html accessed on 27/09/2009.

²⁰ see Eylem Altunya, “Turco-Albanian Relations (1923-1997)”, unpublished Master’s Thesis submitted to the Dept. of International Relations, METU, 1997, pp. 37-38 and Albert Rakipi, *Weak States and Security; Rethinking the Balkan Post Cold War Security Agenda*, AIIS, Tirana, 2008, pp.106-108.

Although Albania is an uni-ethnic country its transition from communist rule into a democratic regime with functioning institutions and other *sine qua non* mechanisms of democracy were not an easy task. DP government prepared a constitution to be replaced with Stalinist constitution of 1976. However it was rejected in public referendum held in 1994. Main reasons for public rejection were clauses that empower the authority of president and some articles considering the election of head of religious groups living in Albania.²¹

Failure in approving new constitution was causing some problems in judicial and legislative functioning of the democratic state. Responsibilities of Albania before international institutions and foreign countries that provide aid were increasing since these institutions and countries had been examining and scrutinizing process of democratization more closely. They were looking for concrete developments in settlement of democratic rule and well functioning institutions. Council of Europe for example concerned in the trials of Ramiz Alia and Fatos Nano who were accused of their misdoings during the communist period. The trials were connected to suppressive way of DP's rule that limits and undemocratically blocks opposition. Promises of DP about democracy and human rights before 1992 elections were not realized *per se*. Albanian political scene had been polarized into two camps symbolized by two parties: Democratic Party and Socialist Party. As Rakibi argues "the Albanian state is primarily identified with the Government".²² That's why ruling party monopolizes every means of the state for favoring its supporters and abandoning opponents. On the other hand, dialog among Albanian political parties' officials was very low. They tended to accuse and harshly criticize each other to downgrade others credibility before the people.²³ During the DP rule corruption and bribery was not abolished totally in public services and affairs. DP government influenced judicial institutions and media for manipulating Albanians in favor of

²¹ Altunya, *ibid.* pp.38-39

²² Rakipi, *op cit.*, p.114

²³ See Erhan Türbedar, "Ekonomik Sorunlar ve Siyasi İstikrarsızlık Kıskaçından Kurtulamayan Ülke: Arnavutluk", *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 2, No. 23, March 2002, pp. 29-35.

their interests. But these attitudes were chronic to highly polarized political system of Albania and occurred also during the Socialist Party rule after 1997.

Political system was based on the win-lose principles and elections were important for only its function to clarify the winner and losing sides. Thus Albanian democracy was described as a zero sum game.²⁴ Governing party was installing its supporters into high bureaucratic posts, public institutions and even university posts were changing according to the will of ruling party. Citizens were almost convinced that they had to bribe to receive most of the public services or for applying to a job in public institutions.

Another important aspect of transition process was the economy. Transition into a free market economy from state planned economy was the main goal of the DP government in the field of economics. Starting from 1991 National Agency of Privatization restructured the land distribution and privatized small scale enterprises. Yet approximately 28% of Albanian work force had been immigrated abroad²⁵ and industrial sector compared to agricultural sector was not developed well. Even today remittances of Albanian workers abroad are one of the main sources of country's economy. Additionally foreign aid in forms of financial and technical assistances and foreign direct investments are other major sources for Albanian economy. Albanian state was lacking its one of the main responsibility over the issue of collecting taxes. This deficiency had indicated the impotence of Albanian state even in one of the fundamental duties of any state. Dependency on foreign incomes as a result hinders country's development of economy relying on its own derivatives especially in the field of industrial production. Many basic goods are imported to the country and domestic investors could not compete with great international firms. Following the political crises emerged by 1996 general elections and economic crises after collapse of pyramid schemes Albania once more in its history entered into a chaotic realm that caused a turbulence in state autonomy and authority.

²⁴ Ibid., pp.110-115

²⁵ Altunya, op cit., p.42

2.3. Foreign policy of Democratic Party and General Background of Cooperation

Following end of Cold War turmoil in global and regional scale necessitated small seized states to develop strategies for maintaining foreign support in political, economic and security matters. Thus Albania pursued a policy strategy that develops bilateral relations with a great power. Within this framework of strategy DP introduced a new foreign policy model and orientation for integrating Albania into Western international institutions and empowering legitimacy and recognition of reformations taking place in the country. Albania developed its bilateral relations with U.S. and European states. Integration to European Community (EC) had been set up as the main foreign policy objective of Albania. Albania was already member of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) since 1991. In 1992 Albania signed Helsinki Final Act, by the time Albania was the sole European country that did not sign the Act. An agreement of cooperation had also been signed with EC in 1992.

Albania developed its relations with U.S. and European states in order to pragmatically obtain foreign assistances and support for its political and security matters in international and domestic affairs. “Albanians looked to the United States to become a strategic partner- preferably an ally – to guarantee Albanian security nad back Albanian causes in the Balkans”.²⁶ Albania was expecting financial assistance of U.S. along with its political and security support for balancing growing pressures of Italy and Greece which could easily spread from economic realm into sphere of politics.²⁷

Berisha secured USD \$95 million credit from President Bush during his visit to Washington D.C. in 1992 and U.S. recognized Albania’s most-favoured-nation status. U.S. was not a great trade partner of Albania but during the wars and clashes

²⁶ Dilaver Arıkan Açar, "Small State Playing the Asymmetric Game: Continuity and Change in Albanian Foreign Policy", unpublished PhD. Thesis submitted to Dept. of International Relations, METU, 2008, p.123.

²⁷ Ibid., p: 124.

especially in mid-1990s U.S. developed its military presence in Albania. U.S. using Albanian military bases undertook military and intelligence operations in the region. Albania following U.S. and NATO's strategies in Kosovo issue did not tolerate any extremist nationalistic policies towards the region. Relations between U.S. and Albania continued also after Berisha's rule. Socialist Party mentioned the priority of partnership with U.S. in their foreign policy in their government program for 2002-2005. Also when Berisha won 2005 elections DP reiterated primary importance of relations with U.S. in their government program. U.S. supported Albania in their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Albania continued to develop its relations with other international organizations. Albania along with Turkey is the second biggest country with a Muslim majority of population in the Balkans. In 1991 Albania was participating in Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) with an observer status. In late 1992 Albania became member of OIC with Berisha's opportunist policy that sought economic assistance from the organization. Islamic Development Bank donated USD \$100 million to Albania in 1993. Berisha's decision of membership to OIC had been harshly criticized by opposition. Socialist Party and some other groups criticized DP in this decision since they regarded membership as a departure from European and western ideals.

Albania considering her security and defense matters applied to NATO membership. Albania was the first ex-communist state that applied for NATO membership. NATO membership was not accepted but Albania had joined to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programs since 1994.

Bilateral relations were growing mainly based on financial assistances and grants that are secured particularly from Italy, Greece and Turkey. Italy was the main aid donor for Albanian recovery and reconstruction. Many Albanian people (known as boat people) immigrated to Italy and Greece in search for a job. Italy and Greece were both assisting Albania for her recovery particularly to relax the burden of Albanian immigrants in their homelands. But still historical tensions between

Albania and Greece had not been eased since relations between two countries was facing problems related to the problems of Greek minority living in south part of Albania and repressions towards Albanian emigrants in Greece.

Problem of Kosovo was another problematic issue regarding the relations with Yugoslavia. Two main dynamics that constitute Albanian foreign policy initiative were relied on ethnic problems with neighboring countries and foreign assistance. Berisha was trying to end isolation of Albania in international arena. His foreign policy strategy was based on the principle of “opening” to outside world. Relations with Turkey started to improve from the beginning of DP's rule. Bilateral cooperation with Turkey was developing in the spheres of economy, culture and military assistances. For the first time in the history of relations between Turkey and Albania a highest rank state representative President Özal paid a visit to Albania and gave a speech at the parliament in 1993. Özal sought to sign a fifteen year economic agreement with Albania covering areas from tourism to port renovation and further military assistance. In addition, President Özal “urged Berisha to recognize Macedonia believing that a normalization of relations between the latter two would help stabilize the area and prevent the war from spreading”.²⁸

During Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel’s official visit to Albania, Turkey and Albania signed the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation. Turkey's financial assistance towards Albania had been discussed during the visit. Turkey promised to extend a USD \$50 million humanitarian and technical aid to Albania. Turkey granted USD \$29 million worth assistance to Albania in a form of food and equipment donation until the end of 1992.²⁹ Also two states signed public cooperation protocol in 1992.

²⁸ Gazmen Xhudo, *Diplomacy and Crisis Management in the Balkans: A US Foreign Policy Perspective*, Macmillan Press Ltd., Suffolk, 1996, pp.50-51.

²⁹ Mehmet Yılmaz, “Türk Dış Politikasında Arnavutluk”, unpublished Master’s Thesis submitted to Dept. of International Relations, Gazi University, 2001, p.106.

In 1992 Albanian officials argued that they would like to improve their relations with Turkey in a more systematic way. They pointed out three main deficiencies regarding the relations between two countries as follows: lack of coordination in bilateral agreements and ideas that received common understanding, difficulties faced during implementation of common decisions, deficiency for strategic framework and absence of road map for improving relations between two states.³⁰

In 1993 Albanian Prime Minister Alexander Meksi visited Turkey. In following year President Berisha visited Turkey with an airplane supplied by President Demirel. Berisha requested for continuity of assistances in security and economic areas. By this visit several agreements had been concluded related to economic, trade and military issues. Also Berisha asked for Turkey's support in Albania's membership application into NATO, for peaceful settlement in Kosovo issue and for protecting rights of the Kosovar Albanians. Financial assistance provided by Turkey was another issue in the Berisha's agenda. During the visit a decision had been taken for establishment of a common bank for developing the capacity of banking system in Albania. Berisha also invited Turkish investors to Albania. During Berisha's rule relations between Turkey and Albania developed also with personal efforts of Berisha. He was seeking for the support of Turkey against Albania's problems with Greece. Opposition party SP accused Berisha for pursuing pro-Turkish approach in his FP.³¹

U.S. and European countries had special interests in stability and sustainability of Albania regarding the peaceful settlement of Kosovo issue during the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Transition period had caused radical changes in Balkan states after the end of Cold War. These changes brought clashes and disputes among Balkan nations and states. Frozen or disregarded issues became visible and started to threaten the peace and security in the region. Instability in the Balkan

³⁰ Ibid., p.108

³¹ Erhan Türbedar, "Türkiye Arnavutluk İçin Beklemede", *Stratejik Analiz*, September 2005, p.10.

region had always been a problem also for neighboring regions and western European countries as well. Historically Balkans had been a region of battleground for great powers and after the end of Cold War interventions towards the problems of region by U.S. and European powers has been continued. Thus Albania's stand regarding the issue of Kosovo was vital for the sustainability of the Balkans. Ethnic Albanians are the most populated nation that lives in separate countries in the region. Ethnic Albanians living in Yugoslavia's south region Kosovo regarded Albania as their elder brother and naturally seek for their support. Under the DP rule Albania declared that there will not be an integration of Kosovo with Albania. This policy was backed by European powers and regarded as an appropriate approach for peaceful settlement in the region.

Once more attentions of international institutions, US and European states were directed towards Albania due to the turmoil in the country started with the collapse of pyramid schemes in 1997. Pyramid crisis was not the sole reason for eruption of chaos within the country. Political, economic and social situation of Albania in transition period caused many chasms within the society and alleged frauds at 1996 general elections also escalated tensions between state and society.

Main opposition party Socialist Party and some other small parties claimed that DP government had systematically silenced every political opposition and applied fraud during the elections. During the DP government Genocide Law and Verification Law entered into force. These laws brought restrictions to candidates in joining elections whom were officials during communist rule. Also Central Electoral Commission was the authorized agency with right to ban electoral candidates. SP under the leadership of Fatos Nano who had been jailed in 1993, argued about the arbitrary structure of agencies and legislations that favors the position of ruling party at the elections while diminishing the power of opposition parties.³²

Foreign observers especially OSCE monitors announced that the elections had not meet international standards for free and fair elections. But both domestic

³² Altunya, op cit., p.44

and international critics had been neglected and election resulted with DP's triumph by gaining more than two thirds of the seats in the parliament. Berisha by taking support from the public gained enormous power over state. Regardless of harsh critics mainly deriving from Greek minority and socialists living in Albania, Berisha underestimated demands of opposition for renewing elections. On the other hand after elections Berisha's government continued to receive financial assistances and support of Western states. Stability and sustainable development in Albania had been considered as vital for interests of European countries and Berisha's highly criticized authority was not questioned to sustain prevailing conjuncture in the Balkans.

2.3.1. Greater Albania Project and Albanian Question in the Balkans

Approximately 6.5 million Albanians lives within the Balkans and only about half of this number reside in Albania. Other Albanians are divided between Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece and some tiny groups of Albanians live in Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. Albanians living in Turkey consider themselves as Turk rather than their original ethnicities.

The term Greater Albania refers to an irredentist claims of uniting the borders of Albania with Kosovo, western Macedonia, south eastern Montenegro and the Epirus region of Greece, known to Albanians as Chameria.³³ These lands are considered part of a greater national homeland by some Albanians.

Starting from declaration of independent Albania in 1912 Albanian question has emerged. Although Albanians historically never lived under one united Albanian state, exclusion of Kosovo and relatively late emergence of Albanian nationalism raised anxiety about Albanians in the Balkans. Albanians living in the borders of non-Albanian states had always ties with Albania. Host states whether there was a real danger or not deriving from Albanian communities living within their borders

³³ "Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?", *International Crisis Group*, Report No.153, 25 February 2004, p.5.

worried about claims of Greater Albania. Albanians living in non Albanian states asked for improvements of their political and social rights and continued to demand more legal and civil rights. Yet there had not been a strong expression of a desire to establish a Greater Albania host states considered Albanian communities as a potential threat to their unity.

Apart from host countries' fears Albania was trying to keep its unity and independency against its hostile neighbors. Also Albanians were divided not only with physical borders but ideologies and ways of life styles were differentiated among Albanians. Albanians residing in Yugoslavia under Tito's authoritarian regime whereas Albanians in Greece were living under Western type of government. During the Cold War period Albania under the communist rule of Enver Hoxha sought a policy that stressed the importance of unity with international laborers. Ethnic Albanian nationalism was not considered as a way of politics during communist rule in Albania.

However growing tendency of nationalism in the Balkans caused ethnic wars and clashes among Balkan states. Problems among Balkan states were frozen during the Cold War era. Rising of nationalism especially in Serbia and hostile desires of Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia brought the idea of Greater Serbia. Milosevic claimed to unify lands in which ethnic Serbians reside. This claim caused bloodshed and wars in Croatia and Bosnia. Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo also endangered with claims of Milosevic. This danger started the struggle of Kosovar people for their survival.

Albanian minority living in Macedonia also regarded as an important issue that could affect the stability and union of the Macedonia. One quarter of the Macedonia's population is Albanian with a majority especially in western part of the country. Albanians enjoys minority rights such as education in their language in the country but still some clashes occur between nationalist Albanians and Macedonian forces. Macedonian officials are suspicious about separationist claims of Albanian

minority and therefore they are rejecting the suggestions of establishing a federation Macedonians and Albanians.

In 1990s problems of Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia are considered as a national issue by some marginal political and academic circles. In fact Ramiz Alia did not undertake a significant policy change regarding the Kosovo issue. Later Democratic Party rule under Berisha abstained to seek pan Albanian policies and considered the issue of Kosovo as a matter of foreign policy and human rights. Despite the expectations of Albanians in Kosovo Albania did not involve in the hot clashes in Kosovo. Many Albanians immigrated to Albania from Kosovo. This gave the opportunity to Albanians for learning much more about these Kosovar people whom lived separately from a long while. In 1993, Berisha in one his speeches mentioned that idea of Greater Albania is not accepted in serious political environments in Tirana. Later on after the electoral victory of Socialist Party in 1997, party officials announced that they are not seeking any idea of Greater Albania. This approach was admitted by also following governments of Socialist Party in 2001 and Democrat Party in 2005.³⁴

Albanian extremist nationalism was rooted more outside Albania's borders than within. Yet today in Kosovo extreme poverty superseded any other ideology to be pursued and Macedonian Albanians did not expect any assistance from Tirana in their affairs. "Albanian nation itself appears reluctant to entertain Greater Albania idea".³⁵ Today political parties formed by Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia do not apply and follow idea of Greater Albania. Rather than following an territorial integration among Albanians today Albanian officials seek policies for increasing fraternity and improving good neighborhood relations within their crossing borders. Thus project of Greater Albania necessarily marginalized in the official and non-official courses of Albania.

³⁴ Nuray Bozbora, "Arnavut Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu, Gelişimi ve Günümüze Etkileri", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.14, No.1, pp: 153-154.

³⁵ Paulin Kola, *The Search for Greater Albania*, C.Hurst & Co. Ltd., India, 2003, p.394.

2.3.2. Kosovo Issue

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic repealed Kosovo's autonomy within Yugoslavia in 1989. Under his harsh regime violations of human rights had increased. Members of the abolished Kosovo assembly declared an independent "Republic of Kosovo" which was not recognized in international arena.³⁶ The Serbian government arrested 112 of the 120 members of the assembly. More than hundred thousand of Kosovar Albanians were sacked from their jobs. International human rights organizations reported torture and killings within the region. By the time international community focused more into the Kosovo issue.

Along with the Albanian question Yugoslav disintegration process raised security concerns of Western countries and U.S. over the Balkan region. European Union was not a homogenous group and therefore did not consider intervention by using military force in the initial stages of the process of Kosovo issue. Yet "Balkan conflict has forced the EU to adopt a much more unified strategy towards the region and this in turn has strengthened both its foreign and its defence policy areas".³⁷ On the other hand U.S. had warned Serbian government to stop accelerating the aggression against the Albanians. Both U.S. and most of the European states supported Berisha's government in his cautious policy over the issue. Eventually Albanians faced more oppression from Serbs and Milosevic's nationalistic policies took the attention of Albania and international community more intensely.

There were no armed conflicts in the Kosovo region until 1995 and international community was more concerned with the war in Bosnia. After Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 Kosovo problem entered into a new pace. International community gave a chance to FRY under Milosevic government to establish

³⁶ Enika Abazi, "Kosovo Independence: An Albanian Perspective", *SETA Policy Brief*, No.11, April 2008 on www.setav.org/document/Policy_Brief_No_11_Enika_Abazi.pdf accessed on 25/12/2009.

³⁷ Mirela Bogdani and John Loughlin, *Albania and The European Union: the Tumultuous Journey towards Integration and Accession*, I.B.Tauris&Co Ltd, NY, 2007, p.121.

democratic regime that is respectful to human rights. Trade and arms embargo would have been lifted if government implemented these requests. Also resolution of Kosovo issue in proper terms was another demand of the international community. This issue was considered as internal matter by FRY government. But it became clear that Kosovo issue was under close scrutiny of international community. Albania also was for internationalization of the Kosovo issue.³⁸ United States Information Agency (USIA) opened an office in Kosovo to analyze the situation and developments in the region. “President of Kosovo” and leader of Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) party Ibrahim Rugova invited international organizations and neighboring allies such as Turkey to open liaison offices in Kosovo. Hence Turkey did not responded positively to this call and tried not to involve too much in the Kosovo issue.

Starting from February 1996 tensions between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs turned into armed conflicts. The KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army - UÇK) undertook a series of attacks against security forces that included police stations and Serb government offices in Western Kosovo. The Serbian authorities denounced it as a terrorist organization and U.S. listed this organization in terrorist organizations list until 1998. But credibility of KLA increased among the Kosovar Albanian population. FRY blamed LDK for supporting this terrorist organization and undertook harsh measures to stop activities of KLA. But LDK did not accept the accusations and Rugova claimed that terrorist actions were held by Serbian provocateurs to reduce the support of international community.

It was clear that KLA was a separate armed group fights for independent Kosovo. Kosovar Albanians perceived KLA as the armed branch for struggle of independence. In contrast, Rugova was seeking a passive resistance against Serbian oppression. Since Milosevic regime were responding strictly to halt activities of KLA international community focused more to the armed confrontations within the

³⁸ Mustafa Türkeş and Sait Akşit, “International Engagement, Transformation of the Kosova Question and its Implications”, *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. XXXVIII, No.38, 2007, p.89.

region. In 1998 armed clashes between Serbian forces and KLA increased. Kosovo was facing bloodbath after the Bosnian war. Nearly one fifth of Kosovar Albanians immigrated to Albania and Macedonia to escape from bloodshed in the region. This massive immigration threatened the security in the Balkans once more. Demographic and economic burdens of Albanian immigrants was also endangered the hosting countries. International community was alerted with regard to current developments. Armed conflicts could have been easily spread over the region if settlement between Belgrade and Kosovar Albanians was not immediately secured.

In March 1998 Turkey took an initiative for establishing peace in the region and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem paid an official visit to Belgrade. Turkey offered an immediate cease-fire and restoration of legal status and rights of Kosovo which were abolished in 1989. Two days later a meeting took place in Bulgaria with participation of foreign ministers of Turkey, Macedonia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria. After this meeting foreign ministers agreed on solution of the problem by respecting the integrity of FRY and declared that FRY should accept the autonomy of Kosovo.³⁹ Later on great powers involvement through international organizations increased. The Contact Group, an informal grouping composed of United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia whom have interest in developments in the region, proposed implementation of arms embargo on FRY and called both sides to negotiate on reasonable solution to the problems. UN Security Council issued several resolutions that calls for stabilization and advised for granting substantial degree of autonomy to Kosovo. Especially resolution 1199 expressed the “humanitarian catastrophe” in the region. It is mentioned that Yugoslav army was using excessive and indiscriminative force against Kosovar Albanians led to civilian casualties and human flows of Albanian refugees to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Turkey which was endangering the peaceful environment of the region. FRY was also accused of violating human rights and international humanitarian laws with its extreme aggression.

³⁹ Eylem Altunya, “The Kosovo Crisis and Turkey (1991-2001)”, unpublished Phd. Thesis submitted to Dept. of International Relations, Bilkent University, 2003, p.113.

U.S. assigned Richard Holbrooke as US envoy to enable the negotiation between warring sides. He tried to convince especially FRY for cooperating with international organizations to ease the situation. OSCE and FRY agreed upon formation of Kosovo Verification Mission. In line with this development UN Security Council welcomed the “agreement signed in Belgrade on 16 October 1998 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) providing for the OSCE to establish a verification mission in Kosovo.”⁴⁰ Also UN Security Council Resolution 1203 mentioned for peaceful settlement in the region and reminded FRY her responsibility to secure returning of Kosovar refugees back to their homes.

Then UN Security Council resolution 1199 NATO initiated an action plan to engage military operation in case the severe conditions in the region did not concluded in proper resolution.

Turkey abstained from unilateral involvement during the developments in the Kosovo. Turkey sought a solution under the framework of international consent and Turkish officials expressed their support for only internationally decided actions. President Demirel and Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov signed joint communiqué on 2 October 1998 and in this communiqué two sides agreed upon the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions and mentioned about solution of the problem with maintaining territorial integrity of FRY and protection of the rights of all minorities residing in the region. Last but not least, both countries reiterated their willingness to donate humanitarian aid and equipment for sheltering refugees.

Ankara stated NATO’s preparation for military engagement if warring parties do not confront the conflict by themselves. Also Ankara announced that Turkey

⁴⁰ UNSCR 1203, 24 October 1998

would supply troops and logistic support such an action under NATO forces. Turkish Grand National Assembly had approved permission to participate in joint force possibly established by NATO. Yet until December 1998 Kosovar Albanians and Serbs had not reached an agreement to stop ongoing conflicts. Turkish Foreign Ministry once more called warring parties to cease fighting immediately. Ankara insisted in a confrontation based on the approval of 1974 Yugoslav Constitution that grants basic rights of the minorities. Turkey was seeking to secure small group of Turkish minority in the Kosovo region. Turkey had pursued a policy that prioritize the involvement of international community through diplomatic means rather than undertaking of a military action. Thus during clashes in the region Turkey did not primarily and actively concerned with Kosovo problem. Using its historical ties and limited influence in the region Turkey did not also play a main role as mediator directly between conflicting sides.

Turkey's stand in the Kosovo problem was determined by several causes. Turkey was favoring the territorial integrity of Balkan states. Also Turkey had been facing with separatist claims of PKK and Kurdish problem that refrained Turkey to support any minorities' separatist claims in international arena. Turkish FP also shaped with the influence of Albania, a close friend and ally in the region and Turkish public opinion was for Kosovar Albanians. Albanian officials were expecting Turkey to take much active role and convince U.S. for undertaking military operation under NATO forces and put more pressure on Belgrade. Ibrahim Rugova asked for support from Turkey and declared that they expected more active stance from Turkey than any other NATO member country.

Belgrade had rejected international calls for peace deals and remained not to compromise in peace agreements. In 1999 international peace monitors evacuated Kosovo and NATO prepared for air attack. Turkey also prepared its military forces for participating in a possible NATO strike. What's more Turkey established refugee camps in her lands and also supported camps that are established in Macedonia and

Albania. Turkey opened three air bases in located in Western Anatolia to American fighter jets as a logistic support to NATO forces.

NATO launched air strikes in March 1999. Turkey supplied eighteen jets to take part in the strikes and a fleet to Adriatic for supervising the embargo on FRY. In June 1999 FRY and NATO reached an agreement. UN established counseling group composed of G-7 countries, Russia, China, Greece, Holland and Turkey. Furthermore Turkey sent 1.000 troops to be deployed in Dragas and Prizren, regions that especially Turkish minorities live, under the Kosovo Force (KFOR). KFOR entered Kosovo shortly after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 under a United Nations mandate. Kosovo had been under United Nations administration until its declaration of independence in 2008. Turkey after the NATO engagement started to take active role in post war reconstruction efforts in Kosovo. Turkey participated in peacekeeping missions and reconstruction arrangements in the region.

Turks in Kosovo had been an important issue in the agenda of Turkish FP makers. In 2000 Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit officially visited Tirana and agreed with Albanian Prime Minister Ilir Meta on the protection of the rights of Turkish minorities in Kosovo. Ecevit in his visit stressed about the rights of Turks in Kosovo because Kosovar Albanians attempted to ban use of Turkish and Turkish education at schools after NATO intervention. This attempt was because of the negative image against Turks. Turkey had always called Turkish minority not to involve in demonstrations and no to leave their homes and jobs due to the Milosevic's government suppression over the Kosovo region and supported territorial integrity of FRY. This policy created negative image of pro-Serbian Turkey in the eyes of Kosovar Albanians. Turkey pursued such a policy since 60.000 Turks in the Kosovo region could not be effective in engaging retaliation against Serbs.

Turkish officials had met with officials in Tirana rather than meeting with Rugova and other Kosovar Albanian officials. However Turkish FP initiative that

denoted Albania as the leader of Kosovar Albanians was a mistake from several perspectives. Albanian and Kosovar Albanian leaders were not totally following a policy in harmony. After Democrat Party rule under the leadership of Berisha, Socialist Party took the government in 1997 and socialist Prime Minister Fatos Nano followed pro-Greek policies that decreased Kosovar Albanians' confidence to Albanian politicians. Nano accused of creating division within the UÇK. Rugova was not favoring the Nano's government.⁴¹

Status of Kosovo after the end of the Kosovo War in 1999 had become important issue in international fora. The UN Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 that stated establishment of an "international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia".⁴² Transitional UN administration demanded a withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and envisaged UN-facilitated political process to determine about the status of Kosovo. Kai Eide assigned to prepare a review about the situation at Kosovo by UN and in his report he recommended that the status process should begin immediately. In his report to UN Security Council he noted that "all sides need clarity with regard to the future status of Kosovo" and also he mentioned that "it is of great importance that the future status process takes place at a time when the international community is still present in Kosovo in sufficient strength".⁴³ Following this report UN Security Council issued a Presidential Statement to authorize the launch of a status process in 2005.

⁴¹ Didem Ekinci, "Turkey and The Balkans in the Post-Cold War Era: Diplomatic/Political, Economic and Military Relations", unpublished Ph.D. Thesis submitted to Dept. of International Relations, Bilkent University, 2009, pp.166-167.

⁴² UNSCR 1244 (1999) p.3.

⁴³ Kai Eide, "A Comprehensive Review of the Situation in Kosovo", report submitted to UN Security Council, 2005, p.5 on <http://pbosnia.kentlaw.edu/kai-eide-report-N0554069.pdf> accessed on 25/12/2009.

International negotiations began in Vienna in 2006 to determine the final status of Kosovo just after the death of Rugova in the beginning of the same year. Serbia's continued sovereignty over Kosovo but majority of the Kosovar Albanians sought total independence. Led by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari negotiations between Serbian and Kosovo delegations began in February 2006. Hence both sides did not agree upon the final status of Kosovo.

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials visited Kosovo in 2007 and restated Turkey's support for the ongoing process about the status of Kosovo. Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Çeku appreciated Turkey's support and asked Turkey to be their strong supporter in the process. In February 2007, Ahtisaari prepared a draft status settlement proposal to Kosovo and FRY. This draft UN Security Council Resolution proposed supervised independence for the Kosovo. Ahtisaari's plan was covering a wide range of issues about Kosovo's future and also providing specific clauses to protect Kosovo's non-Albanian minorities. The proposal included provisions about constitutional provisions, rights of communities and their members, decentralization of local government, justice system, international debt, security sector, European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) Rule of Law mission. Proposal without mentioning the word "independence" covered some provisions that could imply statehood for Kosovo.

Turkey announced its support for this draft resolution and stressed the importance of a solution to stabilize the region in long run would be achieved by recognition of Kosovo's independence. Turkey urged UN and UN Security Council members to support independence of Kosovo.

Ahtisaari's draft resolution, supported by U.S. and the European Union members of the UN Security Council, had been revised several times because of the Russian opposition. Belgrade was offering a substantial autonomy for Kosovo and rejected the Ahtisaari's plan. Russia backed a resolution that does not undermine the principle of state sovereignty. Russia as one of five permanent members of UN

Security Council had stated that it would not support any resolution which was not accepted by both Belgrade and Kosovar Albanians.

After many discussions at the UN Security Council Ahtisaari's proposal was not accepted due to Russian veto and internationally mediated talks ended without deal. Kosovar officials argued that they could declare unilateral independence. U.S. also declared that they would not support any more negotiations between FRY and Kosovo. Kosovo took the support of U.S. but was not able to receive such a support from all EU member states since all EU member states were not sharing a unified approach towards Kosovo's declaration of independence. Therefore Kosovo issue created a problem in relations between U.S. and Russia and also between some powerful EU member states and Russia.

The Assembly of Kosovo declared independence on 17 February 2008. Turkey recognized Kosovo on the next day and the Coordination Office in Prishtina is upgraded to an Embassy. Also Turkey is among the first countries that Kosovo Republic established an Embassy.⁴⁴ Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan mentioned about the important role and responsibilities of Serbia within the Balkan region in his statement about the recognition of Kosovo. Babacan stressed the significance of the regional and bilateral relations of Serbia and Turkey.⁴⁵ UNMIK lost its functionality after the declaration of independence and it is replaced by the civilian EU mission EULEX. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is the largest civilian mission ever launched under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Main goal of this mission is to provide assistance to the Kosovo authorities specifically in the rule of law area in the police, judiciary and customs spheres. Turkey is contributing to EULEX with 36 police officers.

⁴⁴ "Turkey's Political Relations with Kosovo" on official web page of Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-Kosovo.en.mfa accessed on 28/11/2009.

⁴⁵ "Sayın Bakanımızın Türkiye'nin Kosovo'yı Tanıdığına Dair Açıklaması, 18 Şubat 2008" on official web page of Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bakanimizin-turkiye_nin-Kosovo_yi-tanidigina-dair-aciklamasi_-18-subat-2008.tr.mfa accessed on 28/11/2009.

As it is clarified above regarding the Kosovo issue Turkey followed a policy approach aiming to secure Balkan's stability and maintenance of peace in the region. Turkey supported international crises management under UN and NATO that sought to solve status problem of Kosovo and establishment of a peaceful environment in Kosovo for Kosovar Albanians as well as the other minorities living in the region.

2.3.3. 1997 Pyramid Crisis

Albania after the communist rule that prevailed more than 40 years started to transform its state controlled economy into a liberal market economy. Although heavily relying on external financial assistances Albanian economy was still immature in 1990s. Along with political turbulences people were uncertain about their future. Under such conditions Albanians tied their futures to the incomes coming from Ponzi/pyramid schemes for earning easy money and to become rich quickly. Since 1993 these pyramid schemes attracted approximately two thirds of Albanian population. In 1996, 70 % of Albanian families invested in these schemes with a returning profit of 50 % of their deposits in a month.⁴⁶ DP government permitted these schemes to function because there were no effective financial system and just a few financial institutions such as banks operating widely in the country. Most of the money invested in pyramid schemes was coming from emigrant people who would like to invest at homeland and people living in south part of the country whom suffers from unemployment most.⁴⁷ Investment to pyramid schemes had been amounted to almost half of the country's GDP.⁴⁸

Although international institutions such as World Bank and IMF warned Albanian government for the fatal process of the pyramid schemes that signals total failure nothing done to stop these schemes. When the schemes could not afford for

⁴⁶ Rakipi, op cit., p.118

⁴⁷ Altunya, "Turco-Albanian Relations (1923-1997)", op cit., p.46

⁴⁸ Chris Jarvis, "The Rise and Fall of the Pyramid Schemes in Albania", *IMF Staff Papers*, Vol. 47, No. 1 on <http://imf.org/external/pubs/ft/staffp/2000/00-01/pdf/jarvis.pdf> p.1 accessed on 25/10/2009.

the profit payments as the number of investors increased rapidly pyramid schemes collapsed in January 1997. Albanians who had lost USD \$1.2 billion began to protest the government for its failure to protect them and implementing irresponsible fiscal policy that was unable to stop fraud in the schemes. Demonstrations begun in the Vlore⁴⁹ and spread all over the country and soon turned into an armed revolt against the state. Eventually these demonstrations caused to failure of the state. This revolt resembled the occasions that happened in 1991-1992. Albania after the end of communism faced the collapse of state once more. During the demonstrations and uprisings 2.000 people were killed.⁵⁰

Some Western journalist argued that the chaotic realm erupted in Albania was due to civil war between North / Ghegs; people living in north part Albania and South / Tosks; people living in south part of Albania based on ethnic and religious differences. However as Rakipi discussed this argument is invalid and not reflecting the real causes of the uprisings. Politically southern people are more associated to Socialist Party while majority of the northern people support Democratic Party. But this distinction did not rely on the religious or ethnic identities of Albanian people. Albania is a multi-religious country with a population that is indifferent to religion. Main reasons behind the uprising were; disappointment turned to aggression against extension of authoritarian rule of Berisha's government, widespread of corruption in state institutions, economic backwardness and loss of state legitimacy in the eyes of Albanians.

Armed clashes were occurring among state's armed forces namely military, police and secret service members and rebellion groups. Masses were ruining state and private properties including military arm storages. State was unable to stop rebels and can not maintain security all over the country. People were blaming Berisha for not undertaking necessary steps on time to stop collapse of schemes and

⁴⁹ Şule Kut, *Balkanlar'da Kimlik ve Egemenlik*, İstanbul Bilgi University Publishing, İstanbul, 2005, p.113.

⁵⁰ "1997 rebellion in Albania" on en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_rebellion_in_Albania accessed on 26/09/2009.

also they were accusing him with alleged cooperation with pyramid schemes to raise money for electoral campaign of DP in 1996. On the other hand Berisha accused opposition parties for manipulating rebellions and blamed rebellions for initiating armed conflicts in the country. Berisha tried to stop escalating tensions between state and rebellious people to finish the prevailing anarchy. He released leader of SP Fatos Nano from prison, banned activities of political parties and declared “martial law” on 1 May 1997. Furthermore he gathered all political parties under the Forum for Democracy and established a new government. Government of National Conciliation was formed and a member of SP Bashkim Fino appointed as the prime minister. Yet demonstrators demanded the resignation of President Berisha.⁵¹

Berisha’s efforts had not been completely successful to cease prevailing anarchy. Backed with Italian and OSCE's initiatives Berisha’s call for foreign action was discussed in UN Security Council and by the Resolution 1101 temporary and limited multinational protection force sent to Albania. UN allowed voluntary participation within this force. Multinational Force titled Operation Alba was composed of soldiers from Italy, France, Spain, Romania, Greece and Turkey. This force arrived Albania in 15 April 1997 for a three month period of mission to secure flow of humanitarian aid to Albania.⁵² Riots in forms of armed clashed had not been very influential in Tirana, Government of National Conciliation achieved to calm down the uprisings and order was maintained in the country. A decision of early general elections was confirmed by parties.

When pyramid crises became a serious threat for Albanian state Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Tansu Çiller announced that Turkey is ready for any kinds of help.⁵³ Following this declaration Turkish military and civilian officials paid official visits to Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia to find solutions to the chaotic

⁵¹ Paul Kubicek, “Albania's Collapse and Reconstruction”, *PERCEPTIONS, Journal of International Affairs*, March-May 1998, Vol.III, No.1 on www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume3/March-May1998/ALBANIA.PDF accessed on 25/10/2009.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.48

⁵³ Yasemin Dobra, "Turkey Must Act to Strengthen a Weak Albania", *Turkish Daily News*, 21 March 1997

situation in Albania. Turkey as it is noted above took part in the multinational force and Turkish troops arrived in Albania on 21 April 1997. Also Turkish stance with Albania was appreciated by Albanians. At the times of the chaotic realms of the crises there were some allegations that Greek officials were manipulating the Greek minorities in the southern part of Albania and as a part of strategy for annexing that territory.⁵⁴ It is still very alive in the memories of some Albanians that Turkey's support and declarations of Tansu Çiller had been influential to halt conspiracy theory on Greeks' plans through the region.

During the crises 250 Turkish nationals living in Albania gathered in Tirana and sheltered in the Turkish Embassy in Tirana and in the dormitory of Turkish school at Tirana. There were no drastic riots at the capital but still Turkish people evacuated from country.

Berisha's credibility was exhausted on the eyes of the international institutions and Western states that seek interest in the affairs of Albania. According to a poll held by an US Information Agency in 1996; 86 % of the Albanian citizens had a opinion that economy was getting better and 70 % of the Albanian population had a favorable opinion of Berisha.⁵⁵ On the other hand after the claims of alleged fraud in the 1996 elections opposition parties boycotted parliament and did not recognize the results of the general elections. US support for Berisha's government was also lessened after 1996 elections. "The American Embassy in Tirana boycotted inaugural session of the newly elected legislature"⁵⁶ This boycott had a symbolic meaning to warn Berisha's authoritarian ruling that underestimated rule of law and conduction of fair multi party elections.

⁵⁴ Yasemin Dobra argued in her article on Turkish Daily News that "Balkan countries may have had a role in fueling the uprising in southern Albania, where Greece has close ties to the ethnic Greek minority. Some suggest that because of the manner in which events unfolded, the mafia and other intelligence services may also have had a finger in stirring unrest. It is argued that a strong Albania, with oppressed Albanians in neighboring countries who long for a recognition of their rights, could be a reason for destabilizing or dividing Albania." Ibid.

⁵⁵ Rakipi, op cit., p.120

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Neighboring countries of Albania had interests over Albanian domestic affairs. Massive immigration flows coming from Albania was juxtaposing social and economic conditions of these countries. Particularly Italy and Greece had been involved into the domestic affairs of Albania to prevent emigrations as it was witnessed during 1991-92 crises. Besides Albania has had strategic importance and key role regarding issues of ethnic Albanians living in Kosovo and Macedonia. Thus Albania's stand had been considered very important in defining strategies of US and other Western countries over the Balkan region. Since public opinion eventually turned against Berisha's government that rules the country for 5 years and Albanian state lost its legitimacy under his rule this new elections of 1997 was considered highly important for maintaining peace and stability within the country and region.

1997 elections was resulted with the victory of SP under the leadership of Fatos Nano and other leftist alliances gained two thirds majority in the parliament. Following leftists' success President Berisha resigned. International observes together with OSCE carefully monitored the elections and did not report any vital violation during the elections.

2.4. Political relations between Turkey and Albania after the end of Cold War

2.4.1. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Balkans in post Cold War period

After the collapse of Soviet Bloc long frozen disputes among Balkan states became more visible. During the Cold War period Balkan states were divided among West and East confrontation and only Turkey and Greece were on the side of Western world. With the collapse of communist regimes in the region and retreat of Soviet influence there emerged a power vacuum. Balkan region renowned as "powder keg" slipped into turmoil due to territory and border disputes based on ethnic-religious differences and also independency claims of some nations caused wars and ethnic cleansing for the first in Europe after the World War 2. Throughout this chapter the situation in the Balkans after the end of Cold War and changes and continuities in the

Turkish Foreign policy orientation towards the region with a specific reference to relations between Albania and Turkey will be scrutinized in detail.

Strategic importance of Balkans as a connecting route from East to West, its Mediterranean coasts as a gateway to European and African ports and its population capacity had been evoked interests of great powers and hegemonic states towards the region. Thus external interventions towards the region continued historically. Additional to these external influences, domestic fractions and disputes among ethnically and religiously diverted Balkan people and states had made it difficult to maintain stability in the region.

However during the Cold War disputes among Balkan states were balanced due to the bipolar structure of the international system that prevented ethnic and religious tensions and territory disputes in the region.⁵⁷ Collapse of communist regimes in the region brought new challenges for Balkan states in order to transform their state and economic structures into liberal democracies and free market economies. Lack of democratic culture and free market economy experiences raised setbacks to existing states in this transition period. On the other hand emergence of new states with disintegration of Yugoslavia caused establishment of new weak states which seek for protection of great powers and international institutions for surviving and securing their basic requirements such as protection of their territories and implementing state authority within their borders.

As Uzgel argues there were some commonalities and similar tendencies of Balkan states, in which some of them paved the way for future clashes among certain states within the region. Spread of nationalism through the region, obstacles to establishment of liberal democracy that in a short period of time resulted replacement of liberal democratic governments with ex-communist parties that pursued nationalist policies, interventions of new external powers that sought interest in the region to fill

⁵⁷ Güner ÖZTEK, "Situation in the Balkans and Turkey's Balkan Policy", *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, OBIV, 2003, p.5.

the power vacuum after the decrease in the influence of Soviet bloc, emergence of new states after disintegration of Yugoslavia, one dimensional vision in domestic and foreign policy making that prioritized integration into Western system and institutions and common difficulties that faced in most of the Balkan countries in transition period were the commonalities and tendencies that would be examined in Balkan states after the end of Cold War.⁵⁸

Integration into Euro-Atlantic international institutions and to become a member of EU and NATO were the top priorities in the foreign policies of Balkan states with exception of Yugoslavia. U.S. influence in the region was accelerated since survival and protection of weak Balkan states were depended on the protection of a great power and U.S. was considered as the sole great power in unilateral new world order. On the other side U.S. was seeking a foreign policy by establishing new ties with Balkan states to avoid enduring influence of Russia in the region. Maintenance of stability and security in the region considered as a vital goal in U.S. and other European states' foreign policies. Starting from 1990s ex-communist Balkan states have signed international treaties with European international bodies such as Paris Charter within the context of Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) aiming to construct cooperation among Balkan states and Western European states basically on the matters of security, human rights and control of conventional arms in Europe. This cooperation furthered between Western European and Balkan states by implementation of PHARE Programmes and establishment of North-Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991 and Partnership for Peace (PFP) project in 1994 for improving Balkan states' capacities in possible NATO membership.

While ex-communist states' struggles were continuing to overcome domestic political and economic obstacles in their transitions, disintegration of Yugoslavia

⁵⁸ İlhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler", in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Volume 2, 1980-2001*, 1st ed., İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, pp.481-483.

brought turmoil in Balkan region. Bosnian war followed by Kosovo crises increased the interest of regional powers and U.S. into the Balkans. What's more some international principles re-conceptualized and new intervention patterns emerged specific to Balkan region later on constituted basis for further global actions and discourses particularly functionalized for U.S. hegemony in worldwide. After active involvement of western institutions lead by U.S. in Bosnia war and Kosovo issues through military operations of NATO under the auspices of UN, definition of security had been reconsidered, concepts and principles of international law; non-intervention, right to self determination and territorial integrity were re-conceptualized. Balkans became a stage for the rise of NATO as once the rival of Warsaw Pact now enhanced its role as a peace-keeping and crisis preventing organization world wide by taking actions out of its authorization areas. In this respect NATO's Kosovo operation was a great challenge in the history of the alliance. "For the first time a defensive alliance launched a military campaign to avoid a humanitarian tragedy outside its own borders".⁵⁹ Lack of armed ready for action military forces of UN and any other European Union organization made it possible for NATO to expand its influence as it is witnessed in Balkan wars after the end of Cold War.

Apart from U.S. involvement into the region Germany, Italy, Greece and Turkey increased their concerns towards the region while Russia was supporting Serbs in Yugoslavia to remain her influence over the region. Germany had strong economic ties especially with Croatia and Slovenia whereas for Italy coastal shores of Adriatic Sea particularly Albania had more strategic importance. Although Greece had strong economic investments and developed foreign trade relations with Balkan states it had complicated relations with Albania and Macedonia because of problematic issues with regard to ethnic Greeks living in Northern Epirus and territorial disputes with Macedonia and rejection of the name Republic of Macedonia.

⁵⁹ Javier Solana, "NATO success in Kosovo", *The Balkans and American Foreign Policy*, Foreign Affairs Editors' Choice Book Series, NY, 2002, p.121.

Foreign policies of regional powers such as Turkey and Greece had coincided in several cases mainly because of security concerns. Both countries in early 1990s supported unity of Yugoslavia and developed policies on the same vein. Both Greece and Turkey along with US supported the integrity and unity of Yugoslavia according to their interests.

One of the main and unchanging tenets of Turkish FP towards Balkan is the maintenance of peace and security in the region. Turkey has important historical ties with Balkan countries mainly based on ethnic and religious ties. There are millions of Balkan originated people living in Turkey. And a huge number of Turks live in the Balkan region. (1 million Turks live in Bulgaria and 150.000 Turks live in Greece). Also there are Turks living in Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia. During the Cold War period millions of people both ethnic Turks and non Turks immigrated to Turkey, escaping from suppressions and violations of basic human rights. Majority of these Balkan immigrants well adapted to Turkey, they asserted Turkish identity appropriately thus they have been living peacefully. Naturally they are very sensitive to developments in Balkans and demand Turkey to be involved more into the problems of the region. To this end Balkan people living in Turkey evoke public awareness and opinion and call for Turkish policy makers to take actions for defending their rights. Also some of the people that have Balkan origins organized under associations which function as social and political pressure groups. Hence Turkey's policies towards the region is constructed by other domestic and external factors such as historical ties with the region, geographical proximity, Ottoman past and as some scholars argue Ottoman legacy and global partnership and cooperation with international institutions and bilateral allies.

Maintaining stability in the Balkans had always been essential for Turkey's security. After the end of the Cold War and collapse of communist and isolationist regimes this fact gained more importance since turmoil in the region caused anxiety among neighboring, European countries and U.S. Balkans geographically connects

Turkey to Europe and Turkey's strong historical, social and cultural ties with the Balkan people were always an important factor in her relations with the region. Within this framework Turkish FP makers followed a peaceful approach in their engagements through the region with exception of few occasions.

During the Cold War, Turkey's FP in the Balkans was shaped mainly by three factors: well-being and protection of Turkish minorities living within the borders of Balkan state especially in Bulgaria, Greece and Kosovo, its recurrent disputes with Greece, and the ideological confrontation of the Eastern and Western blocs in the region, in which Turkey was an important player on the Western side along with Greece.⁶⁰ Turkey was trying to maintain *status quo* in the region and pursued a policy that offers reasonable solutions to the problems of Turkish minorities living in the region. Turkey did not escalate the tensions with neighbor countries when a crisis emerged. As it was the case in the relations with Bulgaria when Bulgaria suppressed and tried to assimilate Turks, Turkey did not responded aggressively and gave time to Bulgarian government for stopping violations of human rights and crimes against Turks. “Whenever there is instability and conflict in the Balkans there is always a migratory pressure on Turkey”.⁶¹ Thus Turkey implemented a policy to enable “Turkish minorities living in the democratic and secular Balkan countries to join the political, economic and cultural life of these multinational states and thus be their loyal citizens.”⁶² Turkey encouraged Turkish minorities living in Balkan states to be actively involved in the politics of the country that they live in and Turkey supported that hosting states should secure Turkish people’s free participation in the administration of their countries.

⁶⁰ İlhan UZGEL, “The Balkans: Turkey’s Stabilizing Role”, in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (ed.), *Turkey in World Politics, An Emerging Multiregional Power*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2001, p.50.

⁶¹ Ali Karaosmanoglu, “Turkey, Southeastern Europe and Russia” in *War and Change in the Balkans Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation*, Brad K. Blitz (ed.), Cambridge University Press, NY, 2006, p.188.

⁶² Güner Öztek, op cit., p.13.

“Turkey adopted a Balkan strategy based on harmony with the policies of global actors, while preventing any regional actor from becoming a hegemonic actor in the region.”⁶³ Additionally Turkey is highly sensitive to emergence of an adversarial major power competition within the region that could cause turbulence and division as it was occurred several times throughout the history.⁶⁴ Regarding this strategy Turkey’s Balkan policy in the 1990s sustained balance between exaggerated public expectations and limited national means of action for creating stability without jeopardizing Turkey’s interests.⁶⁵ Turkey supported integration of Balkan states to the Euro-Atlantic institutions and strongly backed the admission of Bulgaria, Romania and Albania in NATO. On the other hand Turkey supported Balkan cooperation from within and believed that by development of cooperation, interdependency of Balkan states would increase. Interdependency among Balkan states could enhance security and confidence in the region which help to improve the domestic structure of the states for strengthening their emerging democratic and liberal spheres in politics and economics.

In early 1990s President Özal introduced active foreign policy approach into the Turkish FP. This was a new direction and role designed to improve Turkey’s leadership capacity and potential in its region. It is backed by the government’s program and declared in the Turkish Grand National Assembly that Turkey would pursue active FP.⁶⁶ This new approach was a break with Turkish traditional policy of non-involvement in regional conflicts and the term “opening” coined in Turkish foreign policy and external relations. Özal gave a new breath to Turkey’s vision and FP initiative starting from 1980s as a prime minister and from 1991 until his death in 1993 as a president. After the end of Cold War there emerged the idea that Turkey’s

⁶³ Mustafa Türkeş, “Türkiye’nin Balkan Politikasında Devamlılık ve Değişim”, *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 14, No:1, 2008, p. 253.

⁶⁴ Ali Hikmet Alp, “Balkan Challenges: A Turkish Perspective”, *AKDENİZ İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi* (2) 2001, p.131.

⁶⁵ Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey, The Challenge to Europe and the United States*, Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p.147.

⁶⁶ Ekinci, op cit., p.16

importance in international area will be lessen since main causes of Western support to maintain Turkey in the Western Bloc were abolished. However Turkey tried to create a new FP approach to expand its influence in local and global matters. To achieve this goal Özal's struggle was to make Turkey a well developed and powerful state that act individually and took initiative when necessary in FP matters. Referring to his responsibilities as President and Head of the National Security Council he declared his opinions to evoke public opinion and secure Turkey's interest in international realm without even consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁷ Özal challenged the "elite-formulated" pro-status quo FP approach by his new so called active FP approach. As a result of this new direction in FP "the Özal administration signed more international agreements than any other administration in Turkish history"⁶⁸ until that time.

In 1993 Özal paid official visits to Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia and Croatia. Activities of Turkey through Balkans were soon raised suspicions of Greece and Yugoslavia.⁶⁹ Soon these countries claimed that Turkey was initiating so called Ottomanist and Islamist approaches in the region to balance Orthodox Christian and Slavic structure of the region. Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria claimed that Turkey might play the Muslim card along with the kinship card to increase her influence in the region. Ottoman period is harshly criticized by some Balkan people and they are blaming Ottoman rule for their backwardness and causing erosion on their European ties. Therefore "demonization" of Turks was a way to accuse Ottoman legacy. As Gangloff argues that fear has emerged in Greece about Turkey's efforts to build an "Islamic arc" expands from Istanbul to Bosnia Herzegovina through Bulgaria,

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.17

⁶⁸ Muhittin Ataman, "Leadership Change: Ozal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy", *ALTERNATIVES Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, on www.alternativesjournal.net/volume1/number1/ataman.htm accessed on 28/11/2009.

⁶⁹ Gazmen Xhudo, op cit., p.51.

Macedonia, Albania, Sandjak that disconnects Greece from its hinterland.⁷⁰ But a careful examination of Turkish FP towards the region shows that Turkish FP makers take the advantages Muslim identity for realizing their interests in the region and also some times to tranquilize emerging discontents of their own public. Turkey had carefully brought Bosnia and Kosovo issues into agendas of members of international Islamic organizations and Muslim countries. But Turkish FP makers had not argued Balkan conflicts as a form of “religious wars” in international arena.

The term “active foreign policy” first introduced in the Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz government program also mentioned in the Demirel-İnönü government program and also reproduced under similar jargons in the discourses of İsmail Cem, Hikmet Çetin, Abdullah Gül and lately in the FP orientation of Ahmet Davutoğlu. Main logic behind the FP basically laid on Turkey’s leadership capacity in its region and at the same time over its region. Turkey is a world state according to these lines of FP orientations that occurred after the end of Cold War.

Turkey has well established and good relations with almost all Balkan states principally based on respect for territorial integrity and independence. Besides Balkan countries’ membership applications to EU is supported by Turkey. Turkey signed bilateral free trade agreements with all Balkan states. This economic concern is also constitutes an important aspect of EU membership process that Turkey urges other Balkan states to be included in this process. Yet Turkey’s trade and economic relations are still behind Turkey’s political enthusiasm toward the region.

After the end of Cold War U.S. became major partner and ally of Turkey in its construction of Balkan policy and its implementation. In 1992 Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel paid a visit to Washington and during this visit cooperation

⁷⁰ Sylvie Gangloff, “The Impact of the Ottoman Legacy on Turkish Policy in the Balkans (1991-1999)”, CERI working paper on www.ceri-sciencespo.com/archive/nov05/artsg.pdf, p.3, accessed on 25/11/2009.

between these countries conceptualized as “enhanced partnership”.⁷¹ Turkish - American cooperation in the Balkans had not been criticized neither by public nor by policy makers. What else U.S. used military bases of Turkey for its military engagement in the Balkans. Also there had been a consensus among foreign policy makers and public about Turkey’s decisive actions and role during the conflicts occurring in the Balkans in harmony with policies of U.S., some European countries and many other Islamic countries. In following Turkey’s involvement and engagements towards the Balkans will be analyzed within the framework of Turkish FP towards the region after the end of Cold War.

At the beginning of the Bosnia crisis the Turkey supported Yugoslavia's unity. Because disintegration could cause severe conflicts and endangers security in Europe with a spill over effect through Balkans. But on the other hand, supporting the unity of Yugoslavia became impossible with the slaughters of Serbian military forces. In addition, increase in the suppression of the Serbs stimulated Turkish public and politicians to take action to stop violence and bloodshed. Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence ad EU and U.S. recognized its independency on 7 April 1992. Later Bosnian Serbs occupied more then two thirds of Bosnia’s territory. U.S. had ceased to support the unity of Yugoslavia and emerging developments in the region necessitated U.S. involvement to end the conflict. U.S. took the initiative to protect the possible spread of the conflict towards south in the Balkans, including Greece and Turkey into the conflict. Over this occasion interests of the United States, the European Union, Turkey, and Greece converged.

During the Bosnian war Turkey supported Bosnia's efforts for survival and independence. Turkey secretly provided arms to the Bosnians despite the UN arms embargo. But Turkey was seeking for stronger actions and decision to lift the arms embargo and decided to engage in military actions towards Serbian positions in

⁷¹ İlhan Uzgel, “The Balkans: Turkey’s Stabilizing Role”, in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişci ed., *Turkey in World Politics, An Emerging Multiregional Power*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2001, p.50.

Bosnia under multilateral and international organizations. On the other hand Turkey presented an action plan to end the violence and maintain peace to the United Nations, Organization of the Islamic Conference, OSCE, and the Council of Europe.

The continuation of the war in Bosnia showed that U.S. and European countries should undertake more strong actions to stop the violence. Lead by U.S., Bosnian Muslims and the Croats united their efforts and forces against the Serbs. In March 1994 Bosnian Muslims and Croats signed federation agreement in Washington and Turkey played a role in this settlement. Turkey supported the Dayton Agreement that stopped fighting between the Serbs and the Bosnians and assisted for implementation of the agreement. Turkey contributed 1.000 troops to the peacekeeping forces (Peace Protection Force) based at Sarajevo and Zenica. Turkey actively participated in “train and equip” program initiated by U.S. to strengthen Bosnian Muslim and Croat Federation’s military capacity. Within this program Turkey trained 150–200 Bosnian officers. Turkey considered that a strong Bosnian Federation army is necessary for regional stability. Military cooperation between Turkey and Bosnia strengthened political relations between these two countries as it was the case in the relations with Albania and Turkey. With these sorts of military cooperation Turkey enhanced its own importance and influence in the Balkans. However these military assistances were not realized with same influence in economics. Turkey offered USD \$80 million of Eximbank credits for reconstruction of the country and actually granted USD \$26 million. Since Bosnia offers a limited market which is dominated especially by Italian investments Turkey could not expanded economic relations to expected levels.

Turkey's relations with Bulgaria improved after the Cold War. During 1980s assimilation policy of the Todor Zhivkov regime over one million Turkish minority living in Bulgaria was a huge problem between Turkey and Bulgaria. But transition to democratic system in Bulgaria caused changes and improvements in the minority's status. Turkish community in Bulgaria had chance to establish their political party namely Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) and this party had a significant

role in political sphere. This development effected betterment of Turkish-Bulgarian relations and reduction of enmity.

Turkey closely concerns with Bulgaria's geographic position along with Greece since these two countries are on the route to Europe. If Bulgaria develops close relations with Greece as it was seen at the time of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu's government Turkey feels endangered mainly because of security concerns. After the end of communist regime, Bulgaria pursued a balanced policy towards Turkey and Greece and chose to remain outside of the polarization in Balkans.

Bulgaria was facing severe economic problems after the collapse of Soviet Bloc. Its economy was mainly relied on agricultural productions. Bulgaria decided to participate in Euro-Atlantic institutions and its determination to achieve this goal led Bulgaria to initiate a policy of reconciliation in the Balkans. Bulgaria was well aware of the fact that respect for human rights and minorities rights is prerequisite for inclusion into Western world. Bulgaria's search for security and its good neighborhood policies contributed to Turkey's security as well. Turkey and Bulgaria signed several military agreements especially concerning the security of borderlines. Turkey supported Bulgaria's membership in NATO. Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania at a summit meeting in Sinaia in 1999 issued a joint declaration that invites NATO to accept membership applications of Bulgaria and Romania.

Bulgarian Turkish relation has been based on mutual interests. Turkey with the establishment of Republic ceased any territorial claim over Ottoman lands. Thus Turkish FP makers always advised Turkish minorities living in other countries to stay within the territories of the host countries as loyal citizens who participate in the political realm to defend and improve their rights and status. In line with this policy, Turkish minority in Bulgaria had never shown a separatist claim. Bulgaria's balanced FP was important for Turkey. Bulgaria just by not taking side of Greece, Russia or Yugoslavia released Turkey from possible encirclement of these rival countries.

Turkey's good relations with Romania during the Cold War period was not challenged with a serious problem and started to improve after the end of Cold War. Turkey supported Romania's membership in NATO. What else Romania had been one of the most important trade partners of Turkey. Turkey initiated trilateral agreements with Bulgaria and Romania especially to increase economic relations and to end PKK activities in those countries

The Republic of Macedonia (Turkey recognized this official name of the country), was the only country that gained independence from Yugoslavia without any serious conflict. But Macedonia was one of the least developed parts of Yugoslavia and had facing severe economic difficulties along with ethnic problems of Albanian minority that constitutes approximately one quarter of the total population. Macedonia was endangered by ethnic and historical problems with her neighbors that encircled Macedonia. Turkey recognized country nearly one year after their declaration of independence in 1991. Turkey is the second country to recognize Macedonia and the first country that opened embassy in Skopje.

Facing with Greek's hostile policies, Macedonia tried to develop her relations with Turkey. Greece had prevented EU members to recognize Macedonia with the name of "Republic of Macedonia". Also Greece blocked EU funds and grants for Macedonia. For Turkey Macedonia's survival and stability was essential for stability in the Balkans. What's more Turkey had concerns over the Turkish minority in Macedonia. 80.000 Turks lives in Macedonia and they established a political party titled the Democratic League of Turks (DLT). Macedonian government is careful about inclusion and representation of Turkish minority in the government. Turkey granted some humanitarian assistance to Macedonia and supported the recognition of this country in international platforms. Turkey had supported Macedonia's membership application in NATO. Besides Turkey offered military equipment grants to Macedonia. On the other hand Turkey's strong bilateral relations with states such as Macedonia with a Christian majority of population helped Turkey to silence false

accusations claiming that Turkish policy tended to create an Islamic bloc in the Balkans.

Along with establishing bilateral relations Turkey took place in regional multilateral agreements and initiatives as well. Establishment of Southeast Europe Multinational Force (SEEMNF) was decided at a meeting of defense ministers in Tirana in 1998. Under the framework of U.S. sponsored Partnership for Peace program SEEMNF was established with members from Balkan region (Turkey, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Italy) and U.S. as an observer. But Greek-Turkish rivalry overshadowed well functioning of this group and SEEMNF could have become operational in 1999. For advancement of regional cooperation mainly in economic and environmental problems Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI) launched in 1996. Turkey took active part for improving this initiative and suggested a project for cooperation among stock exchanges of the member states and this project welcomed by other member states.

Another aspect that shaped Turkish Balkan policy was the rivalry between Turkey and Greece. Both of these states claimed a leading role in the region. They considered each others actions and policies towards the region suspiciously and accused each other for seeking hegemonic strategies. Greece hostile towards some Balkan countries was based on the false premise that Greeks are the only indigenous race in the Balkans and that they alone ingrate the entire Balkan Peninsula.⁷² Greece also accused Turkey for creating an Islamic arc and seeking a strategy to be protector of Muslims in the region. Turkey had strong links with Bosnia and Albania, countries that have Muslim majority of population but secular state structures, but at the same time Turkey had developed relations with Macedonia and Bulgaria countries in which majority of the population is Orthodox Christian. Yet Turkey was well aware of the fact that seeking a religious policy toward the region would be against her own interests. As some scholars argued; Greece's foreign policy in 1990s was shortsighted

⁷² Lou Giaffo, *Albania: Eye of the Balkan Vortex* , Xlibris Corp, Princeton, 1999, p.323.

and counterproductive that Turkey had a chance to benefit from it.⁷³ Greece had always problematic issues with all its neighbors until 1995. Disputes with Greece pushed her hostile neighbors to develop their relations with Turkey. This was the case especially in the disputes of Greece with Albania. Illegal migration of Albanians to Greece to search for labor was increasing the tensions between Greece and Albania. Additionally, Greece's territorial claim in the Northern Epirus region problem was another problematic issue that challenges the relations between these two countries

Albania had been an important factor for Turkey's Balkan foreign policy regarding the rivalry between Turkey and Greece in post cold war period. Political relations of Albania and Turkey had been influenced according to the position of Greece. In this respect Albania along with Macedonia were two main allies of Turkey after the initial years of post cold war era. Turkey quickened to sign an Agreement on Trade with Albania in 1986. But Greece also hastened to develop friendly ties with Albania in 1987. A group of high-level Greek government officials headed by Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias paid a visit to Albania that opened a new chapter in Greek-Albanian relations. Greece and Albania signed agreements on economics, health, and banking. Before this visit, Greek and Albanian relations were among the worst between two Balkan countries and "diplomatic relations were restored only in 1971"⁷⁴. In 1987 trade volume between Greece and Albania was amounted to USD \$ 70 million and Albania was seeking external assistances from other countries including Greece to ease the effects of its economic crises and backwardness. Only two days after the Greek delegation had left Albania, Tirana's Deputy Foreign Minister, Sokrat Plaka, paid a visit to Ankara to promote relations with Turkey⁷⁵. Albania was trying to balance Turkey and Greece to secure its political and economic interests in those years. This rationale was reasonable for a

⁷³ Uzgel, "The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role", op cit., p.63.

⁷⁴ "A New Phase In Greek-Albanian Relations", Louis Zanga, RAD Background Report/233 on www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/4-4-9.shtml accessed on 12/02/2010.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

small sized country that was in turbulence after the end of communist regime and long period of isolation in international fora.

In the beginning of post cold war period Greece had not well constructed relations with its neighboring and regional countries in Balkans. As an EU member Greece was expected to support Albania and Macedonia in their reconstruction. Instead of this Greece managed to be hostile towards all her neighbors. What is more Greece suspected “the reversal of the Zhivkov anti-Turkish policies and the ensuing rapprochement between Sofia and Ankara”⁷⁶. Albanian minority living in Greece and Greek minority living in Albania had increased the tensions between Albania and Greece. Greece vetoed European funds dedicated to Macedonia. Greek irredentism in Macedonian lands was an important political factor that worsens the relations between two neighboring countries.

But after the mid 1990s Greece redefined her strategy over the region and directed her efforts to strengthen economic ties with neighboring states. This change of Greek foreign policy mainly derived from the increasing influence of Turkey over the region at that period. Turkey was perceived as guarantor of Balkan Muslims and states such as Albania, Bosnia and Macedonia.⁷⁷ In 1992 Sali Berisha became the Prime Minister of Albania and Albania’s relations with Turkey started to develop more while its relations were worsening with Greece. In addition Macedonia had found Turkey as an ally after Turkey’s recognition of country. Turkey was developing and constructing close relations with Albania and Macedonia mainly because of its rivalry with Greece. “Greece quickly found herself politically isolated on her conflicts with Macedonia and Albania, which on the other hand damaged the potential for profitable Greek investment there”⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ Panayote Elias Dimitras, "Efforts to Rationalize Greece's Balkan Policy: the Kosovo Case" on www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/407.html accessed on 12/02/2010.

⁷⁷ Dimitris Keridis, “Political Culture and Foreign Policy: Greek-Turkish Realties in the era of European Integration and Globalization”, A NATO Fellowship Final Report, Cambridge, June 1999, p: 19.

⁷⁸ Dimitras, op.cit.

In mid 1990s, Greece perceived the increase of Turkey's influence over the region as an "encirclement" of itself within the region and changed its foreign policy. Newly elected Prime Minister Kostas Simitis initiated more constructive policies towards neighboring countries. In 1997 Socialist Party lead by Nano won the elections in Albania. Socialist Party was criticizing former Prime Minister Berisha for pursuing pro-Turkish policies and considering Turkey as a supporter of Berisha. Albania in those years started to develop close relations with Greece. Also Macedonia after 1995 started to develop its relations with Greece. Turkey on the other hand was occupied with domestic problems in those years and Turkey's interest in the Balkan region had been deteriorated.

Greece had also deepened its military cooperation with Albania after 1997. Greek parliament approved construction of fully equipped military hospital in Gjirokaster and renovation of a military base in Durres. Total cost of these projects will be €9 million. Greece also granted USD \$ 7 million and USD \$ 63 million credit with a low rated interest rate to Albania in 1998.⁷⁹

Greece became the biggest foreign investor and leading trade partner in Macedonia and Albania. As of 2001 total investments of Greece in the region had nearly amounted to USD \$3 billion.⁸⁰ Turkey regarding the Greek foreign policies expanded its political and economic relations with Albania. Turkey had also expanded her investments in Albania. Turkish investors started to give special attention to the opportunities in the region especially after 2002. Close relations between Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdogan and Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha for example gave the opportunity for opening strategic and profitable investments in Albania to Turkish investors. But relations between Erdogan and Berisha were not always very close due to political conjuncture. Greek-Turkish

⁷⁹ Hasan Ünal, "Arnavutluk İyice Yunanistan'a Kayıyor", 9 January 1998, *Zaman*.

⁸⁰ Uzgel, "The Balkans: Turkey's Stabilizing Role", op.cit., p.64.

competition was also examined in regional infrastructure projects. Turkey agreed to the establishment of West-East Motorway in 1993. Main goal of this Motorway project was to connect Turkey to the Adriatic Sea starting from Istanbul and crossing Bulgaria, Macedonia and finishes at Durres port in Albania. Greece was excluded in this project. Greece initiated another motorway project that connects Greece to Russia by crossing through Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.

To sum up the main characterizations of Turkish policy toward Balkans after the end of Cold War it could be stated that there are some continuities and changes in the overall vision and practice of Balkan policy. Turkey actively involved in the issues occurring throughout the Balkans during the 1990s. Turkey sent peace troops and officers in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo and improved its political and economic ties with almost all Balkan states. In return Balkan states appreciated efforts of Turkey for its contribution to regional stability and maintenance of peace and democracy. Thus Balkan states find Turkey as a reliable ally and tried to gain Turkey's support to solve their disputes and problems. During the disintegration period of Yugoslavia on one hand officials from Yugoslavia and on the other hand Macedonian, Bosnian and the Kosovar representatives were all seeking for the support of Turkey. Turkey had an advantageous position when hostile Greek policies resulted in advancement of Turkey's hand in the region. On the other hand Russian policies were not strong enough to influence the region at all. Russian support for Yugoslavia for example can not be considered successful that at the end NATO engaged military operations in Yugoslavia. Also American support for Turkish FP towards the region and overlapping interests in the Balkans gave leverage to the significant role that Turkey inescapably had to play. Main goal of Turkish policy after the end of Cold War in the Balkans was to preserve Turkey's security by actively involving in the regions' affairs.

As it is stated above, Turkish FP towards Balkans had been constructed by several domestic and external factors. Strategies shaped by Ministry of Foreign

Affairs were some times by- passed with strong and active interferences of Özal, the president in 1990-1993. Also during the Refah-Yol coalition government Islamic ideologies came into front as factors to affect FP discourse of the time. Besides “new Ottomanism” also became very popular and gained popularity with growing criticism to some European states’ unwillingness and lateness to stop massacres and ethnic cleansing during the Bosnia and Kosovo wars. Collapse of communist regimes in Central Asia and Balkans reconnected the kinship and cultural ties towards these regions. Many scholar and politicians discussed about the new role of Turkey as a regional power. Thus neo Ottomanism along with Islamist approaches in FP accepted as a new ideological supply to legitimate Turkey’s involvement in the Balkan affairs. But these ideological supplies did not realized with their original assumptions. Turkey continued its traditional foreign policy according to realist and national interest-based foreign policy formulation.

Until mid 1990s Turkey gave strong importance to develop its bilateral relations with Balkan states and in return gain allies in the region. In late 1990s Turkey involved in the Balkan wars with its military power under NATO along with international community. Turkey followed its pro *status quo* stance in the region but adopted its policy according to developments and involved into the region with international community when it was perceived as necessary and inevitable. Turkey’s traditional realist FP approach remained in 1990s. Özal’s activist FP approach was in this respect not presented a grand break from traditional Turkish FP. Turkey cautiously followed its policy towards the region. Turkey carefully tried to balance the influences of other regional powers over the region. Greece was the main rivalry in Turkish Balkan FP. Turkey developed its bilateral relations especially with Albania and Macedonia. Also Greece developed its relations with these countries especially after mid 1990s. Turkey use multilateral forums and adopted constructive policies especially in its Balkan policy. Thus as some scholars argue Turkey was a

‘benign regional power’ that plays an active and stabilizing role particularly in its neighborhood.⁸¹

After the turn of the century, Turkey had faced some transformations in its domestic affairs. A liberal Muslim oriented party AKP won the elections in 2002 and single party government was established. Changing lines in the Turkish domestic and external policies became more visible in Turkey. Mindset of State establishment more densely criticized and new orientations started to be formulated for Turkish FP. AKP in a sense harmonized the former foreign policy approaches of Özal, Erbakan, İsmail Cem and Mesut Yılmaz with defining a new vision to Turkey in international area. AKP redefined strategies of Turkish FP. Chief FP advisor to Erdoğan, Ahmet Davutoğlu set out some principles in ‘new foreign policy’ of Turkey. Basic principles of this new Turkish FP were; zero problem policy toward Turkey’s neighbors, develop relations with the neighboring regions and beyond, adherence to a multi-dimensional FP and implementing rhythmic diplomacy.⁸² Also neo-Ottomanist ideological supplement was underlined in this new FP. Turkey under AKP rule initiated foreign policies to maximize its economic relations with its neighboring countries and beyond. Turkey initiated new strategies to open and develop its trade relations starting from its neighboring countries. Turkey also developed trade strategies towards Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific regions. Turkey’s foreign trade volume rapidly increased with its neighboring countries. Turkey activated its diplomacy in international and regional organizations and accelerated its activities within these organizations.

Turkey under AKP rule attached more importance to its relations with its neighboring countries and stressed the historical ties and legacy of Ottoman past in these regions. Within this framework new foreign policy orientation of Turkey

⁸¹ Kemal Kirişçi, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy in turbulent Times”, ISS Chaillot Paper, No: 92, September 2006, p: 34.

⁸² Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007”, *Insight Turkey*, January - March 2008, Vol. 10, No: 1, pp: 77-96.

determined its vision as a strong regional power in Balkan region. However traditional pro-western and pro-status quo elements of Turkish FP were not challenged by AKP's new foreign policy⁸³. Turkey changed its non-involvement policy in post Cold Period and started to involve more actively in regional affairs. Turkey continued this policy approach but not challenged security concerns of state establishment in its implementation of FP. Turkey continues to stay out of conflicts in its FP implementation and refrains from unilateral involvements to emerging conflicts. Turkey tries to strength its position as a mediator in international disputes. Also AKP continued pro-western orientation in its FP by only accumulating multi-faced dimension to activities of Turkey in international arena. As a result Turkish Balkan FP and particularly relations between Albania and Turkey in this new period continues within the traditional FP framework of Turkey.

In its political relations between Albania, Turkey primarily concerns with the stability and security of the country and Turkey struggles to develop its economic relations with Albania. To this end Turkey tries to further its bilateral relations with Albania and support Albania in its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Turkey as a member of NATO and applicant to EU, regarded as an important regional power in Albanian politics. But if Turkey pursue a neo-Ottomanist element in its relations with Albania this move would not be tolerated by Albania. Albanian state officials are highly sensitive to Ottomanist ideologies and what's more majority of the Albanian population is indifferent to religion and against ethno-religious policies of foreign countries.

Main tenets of Turkish FP towards Balkan region had been presented above. Relations between Albania and Turkey had been developed also in same vein. In the following the relations between Turkey and Albania will be analyzed over some topical issues that emerged in the post Cold War period.

⁸³ See Hasret Dikici Bilgin, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Turkey's Pro-Islamist Parties: A Comparative Study of the AKP and Refah", *Turkish Studies*, Vol: 9, No: 3, September 2008, pp: 407-421.

2.4.2. Political Relations between Turkey and Albania

Albanian FP was adjusted according to the developments that emerged after the end of the Cold War. In post Cold War period great transformations in political and economic realms had been occurred. During Cold War period under the rule of Enver Hoxha, Albania developed a FP orientation based on developing relations with a powerful state to receive critical economic assistances and political support in international arena. Underdevelopment in economic structure of the country and lack of experience in tradition of state necessitated implementation of this orientation in FP. Later on Hoxha conducted an isolationist FP and he adopted an economic policy that is based on self sufficiency of economic resources without any external assistance. This line of isolationist FP ended up by the death of Hoxha in 1985 and transition into an open FP orientation had begun. In post Cold War era Albanian FP orientation aiming to integrate with Western alliances and institutions had not been significantly changed under different governments' rules. U.S. and European countries concerned with the affairs of Albania and supported its policy for establishing relations with Euro-Atlantic institutions. Collapse of communist regimes in the Balkan region and disintegration of Yugoslavia were important developments to be considered by Western countries since stability and peace in the region could not be achieved without assisting to emerging states and states in transition.

Albania was transforming its political structure into a democracy and changing its economy into a liberal market economy. These efforts supported by U.S., European states and other regional states. On the other hand Albanians had ground influence over the region. There are Albanian Diasporas in most of the Balkan and European states. Albanian minorities are living in neighboring countries of Albania. Thus Albania had always been considered as one of the key actors in the region by great and regional powers.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Oktay Göktaş, "Balkanlar'ın Anahtar Ülkesi Arnavutluk", unpublished Masters Thesis submitted to Dept. of International Relations, Gazi University, 1995, p.117.

Albania had increased its bilateral relations with U.S., EU, Italy, Greece and Turkey during 1990s. These countries offered humanitarian aid and financial assistances in several occasions in which Albania was in need of external assistances. It should be not neglected that in U.S., EU, Italy, Greece and Turkey there are Albanian minorities living and they are concerned with developments in Albania. These people immigrated for labor or sought sheltering in cases of severe conditions that occurred in Albania or in other Balkan states. In post Cold War period U.S. became the top ally of Albania followed by EU and Italy. Importance of Turkey and Greece changed in this classification during this period according to Albania's balance in her bilateral relations. Turkish and Italian interests in Albania by some circles had been considered as a revival of political domination that occurred in the past. But these claims had never impeded the development of cooperation and advancement of bilateral political and economic relations of Albania with these countries.

Tirana handled the Kosovo issue without crediting ultra nationalist or extremist ideologies and followed policies of international community which had ended with declaration of independence by Kosovo. Regarding the relations with Macedonia, Albania has concerns about the Albanian minority in the region. But relations between Albanian minority and Macedonia are usually in conformity and do not cause grand problems. There is a political party formed by Albanian minority in Macedonia. Following some armed clashes between Albanian minorities and Macedonian security forces international community reinforced both sides to agree on common grounds. In 2001 Ohri Agreement signed among the four biggest political party leaders in Macedonian parliament and Albanians received many minority rights via this agreement.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Kader ÖZLEM, "Dış Politika Ekseninde Balkanlar'da Arnavutlar ve Arnavutluk" on www.turksam.org/tr/a859.html accessed on 24/10/2009.

Consequently Albanian FP after the end of Cold War prioritized integration into Western institutions and improvement of good neighborhood relations with Balkan states. Albanian domestic crises aroused some security concerns over the region. But through cooperation and granting assistances mainly from U.S. and European countries Albania achieved to prevent these crises to cause a major turbulence in the Balkans.

After the end of ideological confrontation among Western and Eastern bloc countries, long frozen historical, social and cultural ties came into the surface along with shared regional and international policy concerns. Relations between Turkey and other Balkan countries based on common policy goals to maintain peace and security in the region. Turkey developed its bilateral political connections in same line with this goal. Turkey had long history in her struggle to establish Western democratic and modern type of government and statehood. During the Cold War Turkey were on the side of Western bloc. Turkey had been a powerful member in NATO and member of Customs Union since 1995, and seeking EU membership as one of the FP priorities. These specialties make Turkey a sincere member of international community in the eyes of most of the Balkan states. In addition Turkey undertook several initiatives in its region by establishing international institutions such as BSEC and participating in international agreements, projects or organizations as founding member such as Council of Europe. Convergence in the foreign policy goals with other Balkan states is one of the assets that Turkey enjoys in her relations towards Balkan region. Also Turkey is interested in the well being of Turkish and Muslim entities in the region. Turkey considered some of the Balkan states as natural allies due to ethnic, religious and historical ties. This was the case in relations with Albania. Albania had been a loyal country under the Ottoman rule. Many of the founders and politicians of independent Albania were also people whom had education in Ottoman institutions or were officials in İstanbul. Turkey taking advantages of these ties tried to initiate an active foreign policy approach in the region. Balkans is one of the most important regions that Turkey had a leadership potential over the region. Turkey has a capacity to become more like a middle sized

regional power in the region. But the positive image of Turkey among Balkan states calls for more enhanced status for Turkey. Also great powers especially U.S. considers partnership with Turkey as an important strategy. Since Turkey could be a good mediator with Muslim and Turkish entities within the region international community naturally considers Turkish policy cohesion with international bodies as a determinant factor in regard of the regional politics. Within this context relations between Turkey and Albania started to develop on more concrete bases.

Bilateral relations between Turkey and Albania mainly started with initiating cooperation in economic and military issues. High level officials paid several visits reciprocally during 1990s. During this visits exchange of thoughts and agreements on several specific matters strengthened relations of these two states. President Demirel paid an official visit to Albania and Macedonia in 1999 to particularly discuss about the Kosovo issue, stability in Albania and situation of the refugees. Following year Demirel again visited Tirana to talk about Kosovo issue and some other regional and international issues regarding the interests of Turkey and Albania. In 2000 Albanian Prime Minister Ilir Meta visited Ankara to ask for advancement of economic cooperation between two countries. Regarding the cooperation in the field of military in 2000 Albania and Turkey together with Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan realized a military tactical operation named Peaceful Star-2000 at HQ of Military Academy. It is evident from the frequency of high level official's visits that bilateral relations of Turkey and Albania developed strongly during 1990s.

On the other hand, Turkey and Albania furthered their good relations under multilateral and regional cooperation organizations. With this respect, Turkey and Albania are founding members in the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) with other regional states. The SEECP is a forum for diplomatic and political dialogue among Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Romania, Serbia and later joined Moldova Croatia, Montenegro. This initiative was launched in Sofia in 1996, during a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of South-East European countries to foster multilateral cooperation

among participating states in strengthening stability, security and good-neighborly relations, economic development, humanitarian, social and cultural issues, justice, combat against organized crime, illicit drug and arms trafficking, and terrorism.⁸⁶

One of the most important characteristics of SEECP is that it is an original form of co-operation among the countries in the Balkan region launched by their own initiative.⁸⁷ And the SEECP is complementary to the Stability Pact and other European initiatives that try to strengthen economic and political relations among member states. Thus the SEECP enable its members to approach the Euro-Atlantic structures. Albania chaired the SEECP in 2001-2002. Turkey first chaired the SEECP in 1998-1999. After 10 years of its first chairmanship, Turkey again is the Chairmanship-in-Office of the SEECP starting from 5 June 2009. Turkey had chosen "From Shared History to Common Future" as the slogan of its Chairmanship to stress Turkey's perspective for the common future of the Southeast European region.⁸⁸ Through the summits of the SEECP Balkan countries agreed upon on several political, economic and social issues ranging from regional economic cooperation to the elimination of stereotypes from school textbooks. Cooperation between Turkey and Albania within the framework of this process is significant since solutions to the problems of the Balkan region could be found from within through this sort of multinational and regional structures.

In 2000 guidelines for relations with Albania mentioned in the Turkish government's program. The principles of this program are as follows:

1-to pursuit a policy that supports Albania's transition into democracy and market economy,

⁸⁶ See official web page of SEECP on www.rspcsee.org accessed on 24/12/2009.

⁸⁷ "The Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office of The South East European Cooperation Process " on www.seecp-turkey.org/index.php accessed on 24/12/2009.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

2-finding ways to solve and internationalize Albanian problem with respect to the commitments emerged from international agreements on the Albanian problem,

3-prioritizing the relations with U.S. and Western European countries which have strong traditions of well functioning democracy with respect to Albanian efforts for establishment of strong democracy,

4-following the integration process of European countries and integration with political and economic institutions of Europe,

5-prioritizing the relations with Germany and Italy,

6-continuing to support the recognition of minority rights of Albanians living in former Yugoslavian states and take an initiative to stop suppression over the Albanians living in former Yugoslavian states,

7-recognizing Macedonia on the condition that Macedonia recognizes the rights and free movement of Albanian minority,

8-take an initiative for recognition of Republic of Kosovo and government of Kosovo by other states and working for peaceful solution to Kosovo issue in international arena.⁸⁹

Implementation of this program was significant for Albania. Albania tried to gain support of powerful states to legalize its domestic transformations and receive necessary assistances. Also receiving support of powerful states to solve its disputes within the region was essential for Albania. Thus Albania appreciated supports of Turkey and Turkey regarded Albania as natural ally and a key actor for endurance of stabilization in the Balkan region.

From here on political relations between Albania and Turkey will be analyzed over their cooperation within international organizations. Albania and Turkey are members of BSEC, OIC and NATO and also they are both applicants for full membership in EU. Turkey strongly supported inclusion of Albania and other Balkan

⁸⁹ Yılmaz, op cit., pp:112-114.

states into regional and international organizations. Membership of these close allies in international organizations more possibly increases the political power of Turkey. Mutual concerns and common FP initiatives with Albania and some of the other Balkan countries enhances Turkey's hand in international fora since these countries could take the side of Turkey and give necessary support to Turkey when it is needed.

i. Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)

As it is stated, Turkey started to develop its relations with Albania by signing agreements on defense and military issues since 1992. Cooperation in these fields paved the way for increasing relations between Turkey and Albania under multinational bodies such as BSEC. The BSEC was created on June 25, 1992 during the İstanbul Summit of the heads of state and government from 11 countries. BSEC had been established as an organization to encourage political and economic cooperation between member states in order to ensure peace, stability, prosperity and good-neighborly relations in the Black Sea region.⁹⁰ Founding members of BSEC were Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. In 2004 Serbia became the 12th state to join the organization.

BSEC was established with the idea of President Turgut Özal. He saw it as a mean to extend Turkish soft power into Black Sea and Balkan region. At the time the BSEC was established, most of the founding states had hostile relations against the other member states. As a result, during the BSEC's early years some countries had become members just to balance the power structure within the organization. Currently BSEC faces difficulties as the lack of enthusiasm among member states for trying to make the organization work. This organization in cooperation with EU institutions offers a proper stage for Black Sea and Balkan countries to develop their

⁹⁰ www.bsec-organization.org accessed on 21/11/2009.

cooperation.⁹¹ Yet Turkey never ended up its eagerness to make BSEC more functioning and influential organization. Turkey hosts the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and the organization's administrative center in İstanbul. Including Balkan and Caucasus states BSEC is also an important organization for integrating ex-communist states into world market.

Albania was the chair of BSEC from 1 May 2008 for six months period. The 19th meeting of Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of this organization was held in Tirana and chaired by Albanian Foreign Minister Lulzim Basha. During the meeting "Guidelines for the Increase of the Effectiveness of the BSEC Organization" were discussed. Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha stated in his speech that "Albania held BSEC presidency in a time when the Black Sea region was rapidly developing and turning into an important geo-political and geo-economic factor"⁹² and stressed the significance of the BSEC. He also mentioned that BSEC "contributes to securing peace and stability among the regional countries".⁹³ During BSEC Tirana meeting current international financial crisis is also reviewed. Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan proposed a closer cooperation, considering it as "the cornerstone of regional stability".⁹⁴

Albania is the most distanced country that has no coastal border or such a proximity to Black Sea compared to other member states. But still it was meaningful that it took part in the organization. This was as important sign that shows Turkey's policy to gather Balkan countries under regional co-operations to establish a forum for dialog and cooperation and endure stability within the region.

⁹¹ Gareth Jenkins, "Is the End of the BSEC in Sight?", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol.5, Issue 76, 2008 on www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33571 accessed on 24/11/2009.

⁹² Albanian Daily News, 24 October 2008.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

ii. Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

The Organization of the Islamic Conference was established on 25 September 1969. OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has 57 member states.⁹⁵ Main goal of the organization is to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world and promote international peace. Turkey is a member of the Organization since its establishment and Turkey sought to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with Islamic States in the political, economic, cultural, scientific and social fields.⁹⁶

Based on the principles of respecting sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each member state the OIC became a common platform for member states to promote, both in domestic and international levels, good governance, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.⁹⁷

Albania is the second greatest country with majority of its population is Muslim after the Turkey in Balkan region. Also Albania is a secular state as Turkey. It is a fact that most of the Albanians are indifferent to religion but still membership to OIC was an advantageous political and economic movement for Albania. Albania became member of OIC in 1992. In 1993 Albania received financial assistance from Islamic Development Bank, a branch of OIC.

Albanians are highly sensitive to fundamentalist religious structures. Meaning of religion and its implications could be more understandable by examining not only political but societal perception of religion in Albania. After the end of communism in Albania legal ban over the religious believes and practices was abolished. Many missionaries find ways to spread their religious ideas all over the country. European as

⁹⁵ www.oic-oci.org accessed on 07/12/2009.

⁹⁶ www.mfa.gov.tr/the-islamic-conference--_oic_.en.mfa accessed on 07/12/2009.

⁹⁷ www.oic-oci.org accessed on 07/12/2009.

well as Arabic religious ideas are rooted especially among the Albanian youth. Although Turkey had not accepted a religious orientation in its policy towards Balkans Turkey through Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, supported Muslims in the region by offering them scholarships at theology departments of Turkish universities. Muslim Community of Albania, an independent institution that represents the Sunni Muslims in Albania is also supported by granting religious education to students in Turkey elected by the Community and by organizing common activities.⁹⁸ Turkish NGO's religious activities are not taking reactions neither by the most of the Albanian officials nor Albanian people. After the terrorist attacks on 9/11 Albanian officials banned some of the salafi communities' activities in the country by following the advice of U.S. Embassy in Tirana. That was an opportunity for some of the Turkish religious communities to expand their activities under the so called "Turkish Islam model".

Turkey is also interested in the Bektashi Community in Albania which constitutes 20% of the Muslim population in the country. In fact many of the leading Bektashi babas (leaders) in Turkey were of Albanian origin. In 1925 Atatürk's republican government banned all religious orders and closed their *tekkes*. Then *dedebaba* (the highest rank of Bektashi leaders), Salih Nijazi Dede, left the Tekke of Haji Bektash in Turkey and in 1930 he moved to Albania.⁹⁹ Today Bektashi World Center is under construction in Tirana with the supports of many foreign countries and Albanian Bektashis. In 1993 Bektashi community of Albania had selected Baba Reshat Bardhi to be the new *dedebaba* as the leader of the Bektashi's all over the world.

As there are different sects among Muslims in Albania there are also Orthodox and Catholic Albanians living in the country. That's why, Albanian

⁹⁸ see Anne Ross Solberg, "The Role of Turkish Islamic Networks in the Western Balkans", *SÜDOSTEUROPA*, 55 (2007) 4, pp.429-462.

⁹⁹ Huseyin Abiva, "Bektashism and Its Presence in Albanian Lands" on www.bektashi.net/history-bekbalkans.html accessed on 13/12/2009.

membership to an Islamic organization caused reactions against Prime Minister Berisha's decision. Opposition leaders accused Berisha to pursue Islamic orientation in his decision to join the OIC. Opposition leaders tried to manipulate public opinion over the fear that Albania is shifting its foreign policy orientation from integration into European and Western structures to Islamic structures. Yet these accusations were not sound. Berisha declared that this decision was to gain economic and political supports of Islamic countries and not an alternative to integration into Western institutions.

Turkey and Albania brought their problematic issues into the agenda of OIC organs to gain support of Islamic states. In Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) held in Istanbul Turkey sought for the support of Islamic countries over the Cyprus issue and urged Islamic states to back the Cyprus Turkish State plan as it is envisaged in the UN Secretary-General's comprehensive settlement.¹⁰⁰ Also, in Istanbul Summit, Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu was elected as the Secretary General of the Organization for following four-year period.

In 1999 Deputy Foreign Minister Pellumb Xhufi met the Secretary General of the OIC Azedine Laraki. In this meeting Xhufi, thanked for the support of some OIC member countries for a solution for Kosovo issue. And Secretary General Laraki announced the readiness of the OIC members to increase cooperation with Albania especially in the economic field. He also underlined the important role of Albania that contributes to the stability of the region and appreciated Albania in its efforts for integration into the European economic structures. Xhufi and Laraki condemned the atrocities in Kosovo.¹⁰¹

Albania also initiated diplomatic efforts for reaching a consensus among the members of OIC over the declaration of Independence by the Assembly of Kosovo.

¹⁰⁰ www.mfa.gov.tr/the-islamic-conference--_oic_.en.mfa accessed on 07/12/2009.

¹⁰¹ Albanian Telegraphic Agency, 08/11/1999 on www.hri.org/news/balkans/ata/1999/99-08.ata.html#09 accessed on 23/12/2009.

One of the resolutions on political affairs adopted by the 36th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held on 23-25 May 2009 was about the independence of Kosovo. OIC member countries reaffirmed their strong interest regarding the Muslims in the Balkans and stressed the importance of the progress made towards strengthening the democracy in Kosovo. In resolution it is stated that establishment of peace and stability in Kosovo is also important for the maintenance of peace over the whole region. Additionally it is affirmed in the resolution that deployment of EULEX throughout Kosovo according to the UN guidelines is significant for foundation of institutional and legal framework for Kosovo.¹⁰² Last but not least it is stated in the resolution that OIC members appreciated the cooperation of Kosovo with the OIC's economic and financial institutions and OIC members called "the international community, to continue contributing to the fostering of the Kosovo's economy".¹⁰³

Consequently, Turkey and Albania both sought for support in their foreign policy initiatives from OIC member countries and took the advantage of participating in an international organization for urging Islamic countries to back their thesis in international disputes.

iii. NATO

After the collapse of Warsaw Pact, Balkan countries faced drastic changes in the established political balances. Following the disintegration of Yugoslavia new states emerged in the region along with the establishment of new democracies in existing ex communist states. At the Roma Summit in 1991 NATO took an initiative to form institutional cooperation regarding the political and security issues between the Atlantic Alliance and the countries of former Warsaw Treaty. NATO established North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and Albania became member of this

¹⁰² OIC Resolution RES.14/36-POL p.33.

¹⁰³ OIC Resolution RES.14/36-POL p.34.

Council in June 1992.¹⁰⁴ All Balkan countries except Serbia in their foreign policies had prioritized integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions and NATO was one of the most important organizations that could help maintenance of peace and security in the region.¹⁰⁵

At the Brussels Summit in 1994 with strong support of U.S. NATO introduced the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative. Participation in this initiative would give the opportunity to Balkan states to hold direct consultations with the Alliance for their concerns in the security issues. Additionally NATO's intention was to enhance democracy, free market economy, "good relations with neighbors, democratic control of the military and the establishment of a military compatible with the standing forces of NATO"¹⁰⁶ especially in Balkan states. Albania was the first country among the former communist block that signed the PfP Document.

Albania also applied officially to join NATO in 1994 which is not accepted at that time. Hence Albania had been one of the best allies of NATO in the region until her full membership. Albania supported many of the NATO-led operations in the region. Albania contributed to the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and provided all its aeroportal facilities during the military engagement of NATO. Albania contributed troops to KFOR and supported "Allied peacekeeping operations in Kosovo by hosting a logistics support command, which became a regional military headquarters, NATO HQ Tirana, in 2002".¹⁰⁷ In addition Albania had contributed to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

¹⁰⁴ www.mfa.gov.al accessed on 29/12/2009.

¹⁰⁵ All Balkan countries except Serbia had signed the Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreement with NATO. See Albert Rakipi, *ibid.*, p.183.

¹⁰⁶ Elena Zamfirescu, "NATO and the Balkans", *Perceptions*, Vol.VI, No.1, March-May 1999 on <http://www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume4/March-May1999/zamfirescu.PDF> accessed on 05/10/2009.

¹⁰⁷ www.nato.int/issues/nato_albania/index.html accessed on 29/12/2009.

Albania, Croatia, Macedonia and the U.S. signed “The Partnership Charter” in 2003 that indicated the common vision for peace and stability in Balkans. Accession of Albania to the Alliance had been considered as an important decision by NATO members since members of the Alliance appreciated the constructive role of the Albanian foreign policy for regional stability. As a result during the Bucharest Summit in 2008 Alliance invited Croatia and Albania to become its members. NATO accession protocols were signed between Albania and the Alliance on 9 July 2008 and the process of the ratification of the Protocol by all the Member States had started. Turkey ratified the protocol on 26 November 2008. Finally Albania officially became a NATO member on 1 April 2009.

NATO and Albania cooperate in various spheres with emphasis on defense and security sector reforms. What’s more NATO supports Albania for advancing its democratic and institutional reforms. Turkey, as a powerful member of the Alliance, had always supported Albania in her application for full membership to the Alliance. Turkey sought a foreign policy that emphasizes intervention under international structures for the maintenance of peace and security in the Balkan region. Turkey abstained from involving unilaterally during Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts. This was apparently the case in the military engagements of NATO in Bosnia and Kosovo wars. That’s why Turkey was for the inclusion of regional states into international bodies to enable multilateral involvement regarding the Balkan affairs.

Turkey bilaterally developed its military cooperation with Balkan states especially with Albania in post Cold War period. During Turkish officers visits to Albanian officials Albania asked for military assistances including arms aid. In 1996, 40 Turkish officers had been assigned to cooperate with Albanian officers in Peaceful Eagle 96 military exercise about the use of weapons, first aid training, mine sweeping, reconnaissance and security drills that took placed under the NATO’s PFP

program. U.S., Italy, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania also took part in this military exercise.¹⁰⁸

In 12 August 1998 Turkey and Albania participated in a military exercise under the auspices of NATO in Albania. Within this exercise an amphibious Turkish division had been sent to Albania. In this exercise, titled the Cooperative Assembly 98, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, U.S. and the United Kingdom and three PfP countries; Albania, Lithuania and Russia took part. The maneuvers carried out within Albanian and Macedonian territories. Turkey along with the amphibious division sent four F-16 fighters, a transport plane, a frigate and other logistic support.¹⁰⁹

During the military engagement of NATO in Kosovo Turkey supported NATO led forces. In May 1999 part of a Turkish military unit joined NATO force deployed in Albania. Turkish troops took part in the distribution of humanitarian aid to the Kosovar Albanian refugees. Also Turkey participated in the NATO air strikes with 11 of its jets stationed at a military base in Italy.¹¹⁰ Additionally Turkey opened three air bases for the use of NATO planes which located in Balıkesir, Bandırma and Çorlu. Yet there had not been a need for using these air bases during air strikes of NATO.

In 2002 Chief of General Staff Gen. Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu's official visit to Albania further promoted military relations between Turkey and Albania. Kıvrıkoğlu visited both political and military officials during his visit. He was received by Albanian President Recep Mejdani and Mejdani stated that relations between "Turkey and Albania fostered stability and peace in the region and drew importance

¹⁰⁸ "Turkish Troops Take Part in Military Exercise", 15/06/1996, *Turkish Daily News* cited in Didem Ekinci, op. cit., p.263.

¹⁰⁹ "Turkey to take part in NATO exercise in Albania", 8 August 1998, *Turkish Daily News*

¹¹⁰ "First group of Turkish soldiers leaves for Albania", 17 May 1999, *Turkish Daily News*

to the rebuilding of Turkey's Kucova airport".¹¹¹ Both sides expressed their willingness to develop military relations between the two countries. Kıvrıkoğlu then met with Prime Minister Pandeli Mayko and agreed upon the continuation of Turkish military assistance to Albania. "Turkey's assistance of Albania's efforts to integrate into NATO was discussed at the meeting".¹¹² Kıvrıkoğlu during his visit signed a logistics application protocol which establishes the provision of \$2.5 million worth of assistance to help the Albanian army reach NATO standards with Albanian Defence Minister Luan Rama.¹¹³

As it is noted above Albania had been very enthusiastic to become member of NATO. Albania hosted several NATO exercises within its territory and tried to participate in many of the special force missions and activities abroad. Turkey welcomed efforts of Albania and supported Albania's membership to NATO. Albanian membership in NATO would contribute to maintenance of peace and security in the region. One of the main tenets of Turkish Balkan FP is to endure security in the region and thus Albanian membership to NATO was an important step in achieving this FP goal of Turkey.

For weak states such as Albania integration into international alliances means beyond a mere membership. This integration assists to advancement and modernization of these countries' political and military capacities. Furthermore integration of Balkan states under such organizations improves security and peaceful settlement within the region. On the other side membership to NATO in Albania motivated Albanians to foster their willingness to participate more with international structures. Albanians celebrated their accession to NATO by organizing huge concerts and crowded meetings all over the country. In the ceremonial welcome at the airport when Prime Minister Sali Berisha returned from Brussels he wished everyone a "happy first day to NATO membership...the day of our confident

¹¹¹ "Kivrikoglu visit fosters military ties with Albania", 6 July 2002, *Turkish Daily News*

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

future."¹¹⁴ From these words and lively celebration events throughout the country it could be understood that meaning of membership to NATO was a grand issue for Albanians regarding their efforts to be a part of the Euro-Atlantic sphere. Albania also re-adopted its traditional FP of increasing its relations with a great power by becoming reliable ally of U.S. in new millennium¹¹⁵. Albania supported U.S. involvement in Iraq and American cause in its global war on terrorism. In line with this efforts Albanian primary FP goal to become a member of EU is highly important for the future of the country and region.

vi. EU

Today enlargement of EU is one of the most complex issues that European countries deal with. Within the framework of enlargement and unification of Europe, membership of Albania and rest of the Western Balkans to EU has been set as a priority by the EU enlargement officials who had reiterated that "the future of the Western Balkans lies within the European Union"¹¹⁶.

EU considers the Western Balkan region as an inseparable part of the 'new' European zone. The Western Balkans includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. Western Balkan region is still the most unstable, poorest and the least developed¹¹⁷ region of the continent. The integrating policy of the EU toward the Western Balkans seeks to tie the Balkan

¹¹⁴ "Albania celebrates its new membership in NATO with concerts", 5 April 2009, *Associated Press*

¹¹⁵ Dilaver, op. cit., p: 207.

¹¹⁶ "Western Balkans: Enhancing the European perspective", Communication from the Commission To the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2008) 127 final, Brussels, 5/3/2008 on http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/balkans_communication/western_balkans_communication_050308_en.pdf, p.2, accessed on 08/12/2009.

¹¹⁷ Heinz Kramer, "The European Union in the Balkans: Another Step Towards European Integration", *Perceptions*, Vol.V, September-November 2000 on www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume5/September-November2000/VolumeVN3HEINZKRAMER.pdf accessed on 29/10/2009.

states to Western values. The integration would construct the framework that is necessary for new democracies to develop and prosper.¹¹⁸

Albania endured its key position as a factor of stability and a strong ally of U.S. and Western European countries in the divided and unstable Balkan region. Thus after the end of the Cold War Albania undertook an FP initiative that's based on integration into European institutions. Albania started its diplomatic relations between the European Economic Community in 1991. Since then Albania had been engaged with EU (EC) institutions. Regarding the economic and political crisis after the end of communist regime in Albania the European Community announced an emergency plan worth of USD \$45 million. After a short while Albania became eligible for funding under the EU's PHARE programme.¹¹⁹

Security and stability of Albania had always been an important issue for the security of the EU as a whole. The process of integration is expected to secure stabilization and sustainable development, and economic and social unity with the EU. As a result integration is not just a political objective of all Albanian political parties but in societal terms more than 90% of the Albanians strongly support the unification.¹²⁰ After initializing diplomatic ties with European countries Albania has adopted pro-Western FP and tried to enhance its ties with the EU. Following this policy "the primary strategy that Albania has adopted for integration in the global arena has been that of orienting its internal developments and external relations towards the EU".¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Enika Abazi, "Albania in Europe: Perspectives and Challenges", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2008, p.238.

¹¹⁹ "Albania - EU-Albania relations" on

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/albania/eu_albania_relations_en.htm
accessed on 27/11/2009.

¹²⁰ Abazi, "Albania in Europe: Perspectives and Challenges", op cit., p.243

¹²¹ Alish M. Johnson, "Albania's Relations with the EU: On the Road to Europe," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* Vol. 3, No. 2, 2001 cited in ibid. p.244.

EU Ministers in Royaumont (France) initiated the Royaumont Process for Stability and Good Neighbourliness in South-Eastern Europe in 1995. The main objective of the Royaumont Process was to guide the implementation of the Dayton Peace Plan. However, this perspective had not been followed by Balkan states as it was expected since it was not accommodated to the needs of each single country and also had not offered a clear perspective of European Integration.¹²²

After the Royaumont Process was launched, the EU decided to take other initiatives to offer a clear perspective to the Balkan states. EU General Affairs Council adopted a regional approach that laid down the EU political and economic conditions for the further development of bilateral relations.¹²³

EU launched the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) for the five countries of the Western Balkans (Macedonia, Croatia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina), in a new effort to enhance Balkan states' commitments to political, economic, trade and human rights reforms in May 1999. And Albania became part of SAP.

As a fact EU is the largest donor to developing countries in the world and also leading donor to the Western Balkans. EU has provided over 7 billion Euros to assist reconstruction and infrastructure and to promote democracy, economic and social development and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans since 1991 mainly is to ensure peace, stability, freedom and economic prosperity in the Western Balkans.¹²⁴ Within this framework Albania started to benefit for the CARDS program that was established in 2000 replacing PHARE.

¹²² Gjergji Vurmo, "Relations of Albania with the EU", CEU study paper, June 2008, p.21 on web.ceu.hu/cens/assets/files/publications/Albania_EU accessed on 29/11/2009.

¹²³ "EU-Albania relations" on official web page of Ministry of European Integration www.mie.gov.al/?fq=brenda&d=4&gj=gj2&kid=234 accessed on 29/11/2009.

¹²⁴ Abazi, "Albania in Europe: Perspectives and Challenges", op cit., p.239

The Thessaloniki Summit, held in June 2003, strengthened the SAP by introducing new instruments to support the Western Balkan countries' reform and European integration efforts it also underlined the need for enhanced co-operation in the areas of political dialogue and the Common Foreign and Security Policy, parliamentary co-operation, support for institution building, and the opening of Community programmes.¹²⁵

In 2007 the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) was established for the Western Balkans. European Council adopted IPA to assist projects during the pre-accession period. IPA substituted existing instruments (PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS). The IPA offers transition and institution building assistance together with cross-border cooperation, regional and human resources, and rural development. IPA aimed to provide effective assistance according to Albania's needs and evolution and within this program Albania had received funding worth of €21.9 million between the years 2007 and 2009.

Regarding the Albanian Question in the Balkans developments in Kosovo had paved the way to a revised approach to Albania and its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. The integration of Albania in the Euro-Atlantic structures became more important element within the context of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Also during the 1997 pyramid crisis in Albania, The European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid decided to provide humanitarian assistance to cover urgent needs of the Albanian people that consisted of food and medical supplies. The European Commission also supported OSCE for organizing elections in 1997.

The negotiation for the association process of Albania began in 2003 and was finalized with the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, Current relations with Albania and the EU are based on the principles

¹²⁵ Vurmo, op cit., p.24

that mentioned in this agreement. The Agreement entered into force on 1 April 2009 with the ratification of all member states. In this process Greece was the last country that ratified the agreement between Albania and EU.

The Albanian Government prepared the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 (NSDI) for the implementation of the European Partnership. NSDI consist of medium and long-term commitments of the state with regard to the EU and NATO integration, the democratization process, consolidation of the rule of law and socio-economic development.¹²⁶

Albanian policy that prioritizes membership to EU and NATO is basically derived from the desire and need to be integrated into regional and global politics. As Rakipi argues both organizations have assisted to Albania and Macedonia in three approaches; both NATO and EU have offered these countries a common future, both organizations have taken an active role in the state building processes that these countries are going through and both organizations have intervened militarily or set up a military presence in these countries.¹²⁷ Turkey regarding the good relations between Albania and other Balkan states considered that Albanian integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions contribute peace and enhance the security capacity of the region.

EU defined conditions for countries that are applying to membership. Also many of its conditions are applied to countries that are looking for partnership with EU. As for Albania, EU conditionality includes necessary transformations and restructuring its institutions mainly related to areas of justice, economic and social development and democratic stabilization.¹²⁸ Thus EU does not have asymmetric relation compared to U.S.'s asymmetric relation with Albania. Integration of Albania

¹²⁶ "National Strategy for Development and Integration" on official web page of Department for Strategy and Donor Coordination <http://www.dsc.gov.al/dsc/sdc.php> accessed on 29/12/2009.

¹²⁷ Rakipi, op cit.,p.91

¹²⁸ Dilaver, op. cit., p: 202.

into EU is a middle or long-term goal of Albania. Yet partnership with U.S. presents more immediate opportunities especially in political and security spheres for Albania.¹²⁹ Considering the conditionality aspect of EU membership, Albania carefully balances its bilateral relations with other regional powers in the Balkan region. In that respect Greece worked to consolidate its advantageous position in the region¹³⁰ by using her EU membership to strengthen her position towards Albania. Whereas Turkey adjusts its economic relations according to EU regulations with Albania, it does not conditions her financial assistances tied to specific conditions.

On the other hand Turkey carefully follows the integration process of Balkan states into EU since Greece as a member of both NATO and EU enhance its capacity of influence as an important actor in the Balkan region. With the membership of Turkey to EU; Balkan states for the first time in the history could integrate by their independent will without any external enforcement.¹³¹ Thus membership of Turkey along with the other Balkan states would create more peaceful and stable environment for Europe. Last but not least to mention that Albania and Turkey are the only two secular states with majority of their population is Muslim. This common specialty of Turkey and Albania contributes much to the improvement of the dialog between civilizations in broader sense.

2.5. Economic Relations of Turkey and Albania

2.5.1. Economic Outlook of Albania after 1990

Albania was the least developed Balkan country after the end of Cold War due to the autarky and strict communist central economy policies during Enver Hoxha rule.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p: 205.

¹³⁰ Mustafa Türkeş, “Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans: Quest for Enduring Stability and Security” in *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post Cold War Era*, Ed. İdris Bal, Brown Walker Press, USA, p: 204.

¹³¹ Uluç Özülker, “Balkan Policy of the European Union and Turkey” on www.abdulteni.org/en/articles-and-commentaries/81-avrupa-birliinin-balkan-politikas-ve-tuerkiye.html accessed on 29/12/2009.

Albania started to transform and reform its economy into market economy in 1991. Main tenets of the new market economy regulations were liberation of price and exchange rates, fiscal policy and rigid income policy.

Albanian commercial sector could be examined in three periods.¹³² First period was between 1990 and 1995. Within this period privatization programs were launched and free trade mechanisms formed and functionalized. Economic reforms in 1990s in Albania regarded as a model by other Western countries. Berisha government with the financial supports of IMF and World Bank undertook proper economic reformations that especially brought success in privatization and banking sector. Hence finance and industrial production sectors did not developed as it was planned. Remittances from abroad had been one of the most important revenues that supplement Albanian GDP and help compensate the large foreign trade deficit. Smuggling, money laundering, decrease in the immigrant remittances and off-record and uncontrolled border trade were some of the main obstacles before 1997 pyramid crisis. Legal regulations were so weak to stop illegal money flows of pyramid schemes and pyramid schemes were not controlled properly by state authorities. Entrepreneurs up to the 1995 benefited from countries' own resources and services particularly agricultural products and daily needs were supplied to the markets. Trade was based on importation of cheap and low quality products from countries such as Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Macedonia.

Most of the agricultural land was privatized in 1992 which largely improved peasant incomes. Albanian economy mainly depends on agricultural production. Agriculture is one of the promising sectors in the country but in last years service sector developed more then the agricultural sector. Albanian governments offers beneficial tax reduces and investment supports to local and foreign investors. But lack of electricity causes negative effects on industrial development. Turkey exported

¹³² “Arnavutluk Ekonomisindeki Gelişmeler” on official web page of Turkish Office of the Commercial Counsellor
www.musavirlikler.gov.tr/altdetay.cfm?AltAlanID=2698&dil=TR&ulke=ARN accessed on 09/12/2009.

USD \$3.2 million worth of electricity to Albania via Greece and Bulgaria in 1990. However Albanian industrial infrastructure needs a huge rehabilitation. Great factories that were built in Enver Hoxha's times do not have capacity and technologic equipment for efficient production. Thus Albanian government encourages foreign investors to invest in hydroelectric power plants. Electric and water shortages were happening frequently until 2008. Albania imports electricity from Greece and Bulgaria to fill its demand gap.

In mid 1990s, East-West Motorway Project had been prepared to construct a road crossing over Turkey, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania. These four Balkan countries signed a protocol in 1995. This project along with another unfinished project Corridor VIII aimed to increase the economic relations between countries through which the motorways passes. Through these projects officials sought to connect Black Sea region to Adriatic region by constructing motorway and railway routes from Turkey to Durres (Albania) and sea transportation from Durres port to Bari (Italy).

Second period in Albania's commercial sector was between 1996 and 2003. Albanian traders in this period started to import high quality commodities due to the consumers' growing interest in qualified products. Thus within this period Albanian entrepreneurs started to run big size industrial enterprises. However financial crisis in 1997 and severe effects of Kosovo war led economy into a depression. New government that is established after 1997 general elections called for international financial assistance. IMF initiated an urgent financial assistance package and World Bank provided rehabilitation credit for recovery of economy. Government undertook a new stability and reform policy that succeeded recovery of economy and macroeconomic stabilization in the country.

Albanian economy recorded a sustainable growth between 1991 and 2002. Throughout these years rapid growth rate, low inflation and increase in the fiscal deficit indicate robust developments in the economy of Albania.¹³³

Starting from 2003 and currently ongoing period of Albanian commercial sector unveils that entrepreneurs tended to invest to export commodities. Albanian businessmen accumulated necessary capital resources for expanding their investments. Also Albanian businessmen initiated long run fiscal plans which were not possible under former severe economic conditions that made the predictability of the market almost impossible.

Albania especially beginning from late 2006 achieved to privatize state owned firms. Government initiated a 3 year economic growth program to undertake structural reforms especially regarding taxation and development of customs. Grey economy constructs the 50% of whole economy according to the IMF predictions. Still government reformations about tax collection, infrastructural developments and regulations on properties had not reached the desired levels. In contrast to these economic obstacles Albania's economy succeeded sustainable development after mid 2000s with an annual growth rate of 6%.

Albania's GDP was USD \$10,4 billion in 2007 with a portion of 51,1% service sector which was the largest and most dynamic sector of Albanian economy. Portion of the industrial sector was 27,4% followed by 21,5% of agriculture sector in Albanian economy. Service and industrial sectors growth had accelerated while growth rate in agriculture sector was sluggish. Personal income according to power of purchase parity was USD \$3.300 in 2007.¹³⁴

¹³³ "Arnavutluk Ülke Bülteni (Mart 2007 DEİK)" on www.tarimsalbilgibankasi.com/makale.php?id=6856 accessed on 09/12/2009.

¹³⁴ Economic data, growth rates and other indicators are accumulated from official web page of Turkish Office of the Commercial Counsellor on www.musavirlikler.gov.tr accessed on 09/12/2009.

Economic growth realized mainly by locomotive sectors such as; transportation, trade, telecommunication, hotel and restaurant businesses. Contracting sector on the other hand tended to decrease its portion in the overall economy due to obstacles in obtaining construction permits from official agencies. In 2007 contracting sector decreased by 19% compared to last year performance.

In 2008 Albanian economy developed with a 7,2% of growth rate and GNP was amounted to USD \$13 billion. Inflation rate was 3,4 and personal income increased to USD \$3.900 in the same year. Foreign trade volume was more then doubled in period between 2004 and 2008. Albania's commodity import amounted to USD \$ 5.230 million and its export value was USD \$1.353 million in 2008. Public debt was 37,64% of GDP in this period. Albania tried to finance its public debt and foreign trade deficit by privatizing its state owned firms. In 2007 Albanian telecommunication firm *Albtelekom* sold to Turkish firm Çalık Holding. *Albtelecom* is the largest fixed line and internet provider of Albania and Çalık Holding runs this firm by increasing its market efficiency by individual and corporate customers. In 2008 Albanian petrol firm *Armo* and electricity distribution company *OSSH* was privatized. These privatizations were the most important events in Albanian economy which enabled foreign companies to invest in profitable businesses in Albania.

Foreign investment had been increased slowly starting from 1990s. Following the collapse of Pyramid schemes in 1997, foreign direct investments to the country started to decrease until 2000. Amount of foreign direct investment was USD \$ 1.257 million between 1995 and 2004.

Privatization in Albania is regulated by Albanian Parliament, Ministry Cabinet, Ministry of Economy and other related institutions. Some important privatizations between 2000 and 2007 are as follows;

-60% of Albanian National Trade Bank acquired by Kentbank and remaining two 20% of the Bank was sold to EBRID and IFC,

-Cement Factory in Kruja was sold to consortium of Seament and United Quarries (Lebanese and British) for USD \$12,5 million,

-Mobile telecom firm AMC was sold to Telenor/Cosmote (Norwegian for USD \$200 million,

-State owned telecom firm Albtelecom was sold to Çalık Holding,

-Albanian electricity distribution firm KESH (Albanian Power Corporation) was privatized,

-Petroleum and natural gas firms ARMO, Albpetrol and Servcom were privatized,

-Albanian insurance company INSIG and Tobacco Factory had been privatized¹³⁵.

In Albania there are more than 1.000 foreign owned companies which are owned by Italy, Greece, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Bulgaria, UK, USA, Lithuania and some other countries.¹³⁶ In 2003 foreign direct investment had been totaled to USD \$ 178 million. In that year, most important foreign investment was the privatization of public Albanian bank to Austrian Raiffeisen Bank for USD \$ 126 million. Major foreign investors in Albania are Petroleum Bankers (Canadian Oil and Gas Production Co.), AMC (Greek Telecommunications Co.), KÜRÜM (Turkish Metallurgy Co.), Vodafone (Greek Telecommunication Co.), Edil (Italian Manufacturing Co.), Consortium Atermon s.a– Roder & Blackwell (Greek Energy Co.), Titan Cement Group – Antea Cement Sh.a (Greek General Manufacturing Co.), Lockheed Martin (American Telecommunication Co.), ÇALIK Albtelecom (Turkish Telecommunication Co.), EVN (Austrian General Manufacturing Co.), Raiffeisen Bank (Austrian Banking Co.), InterAlbanian-Aspis Group (Greek Insurance Co.), Sigal -Uniqa Group (Austrian Insurance Co.), Bechtel and Enka (American-Turkish Construction Co.), Airport Partners-Hotchtief (German Infrastructure Co.), Alumil (Greek Manufacturing Co.).¹³⁷

¹³⁵ “Arnavutluk Ülke Bülteni”, DEİK, September 2009, p:23.

¹³⁶ “Fact Sheet No. 1: Investment Climate”, ALBINVEST, March 2008, p:1.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

From 2004 to 2007 amount of foreign direct investment was Euro 1.263 million. But in 2008 foreign investment reached the highest level in history with Euro 619,2 million. Biggest foreign investors are mainly European countries and Italy and Greece are the top two states that invest most in Albania. In 2008 significant privatizations of public firms and huge investments in cement industry had resulted 42 % increase in the foreign direct investment compared to last years' investment rate. Privatization of ARMO and KESH were the main reasons behind this increase. Foreign direct investment was totaled to 7,2 % of GDP in same year.

Italian investments are mostly close to Adriatic Sea and western part of Albania and composed of investments in construction (35%), textile (21%) and food (21%) sectors. Italian firms are taking the advantage of low cost labor in the region. Whereas Greek investments are concentrated in South part of the country that is close to Greek border. Greek investors are mostly busy with trade sector.

Export composition of Albania includes textile and shoes (43,4%), construction equipment (19,9%), minerals, fuel and electricity (18,1%), food and tobacco (7,3%), machinery (4%)¹³⁸. Import composition is similar to export composition with changing ratios within the total amount of import. Machinery (22,1%), minerals, fuel and electricity (17,9%), food and tobacco (19,6%), construction equipment (15,4%), chemicals (10,3%) are the basic components of import items of Albania.¹³⁹

Major export trade partners of Albania, according to data's of 2008, are Italy (61,8%), Greece (11,8%), Kosovo (6,6%) and Turkey has the 8th largest share in Albania's export with 1,8 per cent in total export rate of Albania¹⁴⁰. Major import

¹³⁸ "Arnavutluk Ülke Bilgi Notu", DTM, September 2009.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. and "Arnavutluk Ülke Raporu 2008" on www.musavirlikler.gov.tr accessed on 09/12/2009

partners of Albania are Italy and Greece followed by Turkey, China and Germany respectively.

Also Albania has rich natural resources. Albania has rich chrome, copper and nickel resources that could not be manufactured efficiently. Export rates of these minerals are decreasing due to the recent global financial crises that caused shrinking in the demand for these minerals and also reserves are diminishing in Albania. Yet Albania has the richest chrome reserves in Europe.

Albania is a member of World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2000. In addition, economic relations with EU are developed more after SAA entered into force. Within the framework of this Agreement Albania also signed Interim Agreement that consists of regulations on trade. Albania is a part of Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). These developments in Albanian economy paved the way for Turkish investors and exporters to increase their interest to this country.

2.5.2. Economic Relations between Turkey and Albania

Albania offers advantageous investment opportunities for Turkish firms. It has strategic ports that open to Mediterranean countries and geographical proximity to European countries as well as to other Balkan countries.

Economic relations between Turkey and Albania had been started in 1986 with the Agreement on Trade and later the Agreement on Economic, Commercial, Industrial and Technical Cooperation in 1988. Since then Turkish exports and investments were increased towards Albania. Economic and commercial relations between Albania and Turkey are further developed following the Free Trade Agreement between Turkey and Albania that entered into force in 1 May 2008. Agreement provided Turkish exporters equal opportunity of competition with EU exporters in Albanian market and also encouraged Turkish and Albanian

businessmen to increase their joint investments. With the FTA Turkey annulled the custom duties to Albanian originated industrial commodities and Albania annulled the duties for more than 80% of Turkish originated industrial products and Albania agreed to totally abandon custom duties in 5 years period. Both sides also agreed to recognize and implement any advantageous adjustment in custom duties that is compromised to EU originated industrial commodities.

In addition, with FTA both countries recognized to abolish custom duties for unlimited or quoted quantities of some agricultural products. Albania and Turkey abolished custom duties for processed agricultural products, dried fruits, fresh vegetables and fruits reciprocally.

Turkey has overwhelming surplus in its foreign trade balance with Albania. Trade volume between Turkey and Albania increased to USD \$318 million in 2007. Exports by Turkey to Albania increased to USD \$294 million while imports from Albania increased to USD \$24 million in the same year. Turkey's total export value to Albania was USD \$ 114 million in 2003 and it is almost tripled in 2008 with an amount of USD \$ 306 million. Albania's total export towards Turkey was USD \$ 5 million in 2003 and it reached USD \$ 37 million in 2008. In 2008 foreign trade volume of these countries was amounted to USD \$ 342 million and Turkey had exceeded Albania with USD \$ 269 million in foreign trade balance.

Turkey had always surplus in foreign trade balance with Albania between the years 2000 and 2008. Turkey's export to Albania and import from Albania increased each year since 2003 but in the first 7 months period of 2009 it had been decreased compared to former years' same period.

Due to international financial crises and recession in the Euro zone trade region, within the period of January-July 2009 Turkey's export to Albania decreased 18% compared to former period of 2008 and total amount of export was totaled to USD \$ 151 million. Turkey's import in the same period decreased dramatically with

rate of 89% and total import from Albania to Turkey amounted to only USD \$ 3 million.¹⁴¹ In 2008 Albania was the 68th country that Turkey realized most of its exportation and in 2006 and 2007 Albania's rank were 63rd and 60th respectively. Turkey was the 105th country that realized most of its importation from Albania in 2008. In 2006 and 2007 Turkey was the 114th and 110th country respectively which had realized most of its importation from Albania.¹⁴²

Turkey mainly exports iron, steel, textile, electronic products and iron products to Albania. Turkey basically imports metal gem, leather, animal and herbal raw sources and cafe and cacao from Albania.¹⁴³ Ten items that most frequently imported to Turkey from Albania constructs 95,8% of all Albanian exports to Turkey. This rate implies the concentration of Turkish importation from Albanian market. Most frequently traded items are copper ore (33,4), steel scrap (27%), pharmaceutical and cosmetic seeds, fruits and vegetables (10,6%), crude oil (10,6%), electricity switch (3,8%), leather (3,7%) and chrome ore (2,8%).¹⁴⁴

On the other hand, ten most frequently exported items from Turkey to Albania amounts 28,5% of total exports of Turkey to Albania. Most frequently exported items from Turkey to Albania are superchargers and concrete pipes (9,4%), pharmaceutical drug capsule (3,1%), copper frames (2,7%), infrastructure equipments (2,6%), light-refined fuel (2,1%), synthetic fiber trousers (2,0%), tricot shirt (1,9%), raw copper (1,7%), biscuits (1,6%), cement additive (1,4%).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹“Arnavutluk Ülke Bilgi Notu”, op. cit.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ “Arnavutluk Ülke Profili” on www.dtm.gov.tr/dtmweb/index.cfm?action=detay&yayinID=236&icerikID=210&dil=TR accessed on 12/12/2009.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

There are 70 big, middle and small sized Turkish companies listed in the records of the Turkish Office of the Commercial Counsellor in Albania.¹⁴⁶ These Turkish companies are operating in various sectors within Albania from banks to dentists and from educational services to mining sector. Turkey is the 3rd greater investor country in Albania after Italy and Greece with a total investment value of USD \$ 115 million. 80 Turkish nationals, 2.553 full time and more than 300 part time Albanian nationals are employed in the Turkish companies operating in Albania.¹⁴⁷

Biggest Turkish companies that operate in Albania are Çalık Holding, Kürüm Iron-Steel Joint Stock Company, ALPET and Tepe Construction Joint Stuck Company. Çalık Holding had become one of the main players of the communication sector of Albania by acquiring *Albtelecom* and GSM license in 2007. Çalık Holding invested more than 50 million Euros to GSM operator *Eagle Mobile* which is the 3rd biggest GSM operator in the country.¹⁴⁸ Çalık Holding also runs *BKT* the third biggest bank in Albania.

Kürüm Iron-Steel Joint Stock Company had rented the iron-steel factory located in Elbasan for 20 years and had started its production. The same Company also prepares to construct an electric central to provide necessary energy in the country. In addition Kürüm acquired Polish shares of Durrës port. Albanian officials decided to sell ROT oxygen factory to Kürüm which is also located in Elbasan.¹⁴⁹

Ber-Öner Co. holds the right of navigation and process of mine reserves in ore rich regions of the country for 30 years. Everest Co. that is producing polyethylene packing supplies has USD \$2 millions worth of machinery and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ “Arnavutluk Ülke Bülteni”, DEİK, op. cit., p: 11.

¹⁴⁸ “Çalık Holding grows in Europe with investments in Albania” on www.calik.com/news_item.aspx?id=32 accessed on 12/12/2009.

¹⁴⁹ “Arnavutluk Ülke Bülteni”, DEİK, op. cit., p: 11.

equipment in Albania. Aksoy Group invested in flour factory which already has investments in textile and providing employment to 218 Albanian staff.¹⁵⁰

ALPET entered Albania in 2005 and invested more than USD \$15 million to spread its gas station network all over the country in 80 different locations. Today ALPET is one of the best qualified and trusted gas stations in Albania.

Turkish firms are active in contracting sector as well. Turkish tenders had completed USD \$61,5 million worth constructions throughout Albania. Tepe İnşaat A.Ş. had successfully completed the restoration projects of Vlore and Shkodra hospitals.¹⁵¹

Big-sized construction companies namely ENKA, TÜMAŞ and GİNTAŞ undertook several tenders in Albania. ENKA participated in the American army support program for Albanian immigrants, TÜMAŞ won the tender for rehabilitation of petroleum fields and GİNTAŞ rehabilitated Vlore Pasha Port Military Base and constructed several housing sites in Tirana.

Su Yapı Company took the tender for advising to rural infrastructural development project of Albania. This project is financed by Islamic Development Bank and includes 65 different projects for construction of schools, health care units, water pipe systems and rural roads.¹⁵²

Turkey entered into financial sector businesses in Albania. Turkish entrepreneurs decided to open branch of Ziraat Bankası in Tirana and reserved USD \$3 million for this project. However financial crises and insecure banking system of Albania prevented Turkish businessmen to undertake this project.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

BDDK and Albanian Central Bank signed a mutual cooperation agreement for institutionalizing financial system of Albania in 2001. Within the framework of this agreement both countries agreed to cooperate in regulating and monitoring of abroad activities of financial institutions and also some training programs arranged to develop experiences of both parties.

Construction of Durres-Kukes Highway project is one of the biggest projects that initiated by Albania with an amount of Euro 418 million. One of third of public investment budget is dedicated for this project. This Highway will connect northern part of Albania to Durres port. Also from Kukes this highway will be connected to Kosovian city of Morina. This link will be very important for landlocked country Kosovo to reach Albanian port of Durres. This project is financed by Albanian government and international organizations. Enka Construction Company with a joint consortium of American Bechtel Company won the international bid for this project. Completion of 57 km portion of the highway between Durres and Kukes was celebrated in 26 June 2009. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha attended the ceremony and they both gave speeches underlying the growth of Albanian-Turkish cooperation and economic relations in recent years.

Türk Eximbank: granted and offered several credits to Albania. In 1992 Türk Eximbank rescheduled the financial debt of Albania totaled to USD \$17,6 million. Türk Eximbank erased the interest of this credit and rescheduled payment plan to be completed in 15 years.

In 2000 Turkey signed an agreement to postpone credit debt of Albania and Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit offered USD \$10 million credit. Albanian Prime Minister İllir Meta requested an additional USD \$ 10 million credit from Turkey during his official visit to Ankara. This request accepted by Turkey and Prime Minister Ecevit offered USD \$ 20 million credit to Albania. Yet still Albania has not applied for this credit.

Developments in the economic relations between Turkey and Albania are welcomed by both countries and highest representatives of these countries reiterate the importance of increase in economic ties in several occasions. Turkish President Abdullah Gül, on a formal visit to Albania, attended Turkey-Albania Business Forum meeting together with his Albanian counterpart Bamir Topi that took place in Tirana on 11 December 2009. In his opening speech Minister of Economy, Trade and Energy Dritan Prifti stated that Turkey was "number one partner" in Albania's foreign trade. Albanian President Topi also described Turkish-Albanian relations as "excellent" since 1992.¹⁵³ The motto of the 4th Turkish Products Exhibition that is organized by Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade in March 2009 was "Albania and Turkey: Who does not know this friendship?". Hence economic relations between Albania and Turkey are still not at the desired level to be called excellent literally.

In post cold war period liberalization and economic transformation of Albania brought several economic opportunities especially for regional and neighboring countries in the Balkan region. Trade relations of Albania and foreign direct investments to the country reveal the economic interest of Turkey in Albania. Turkey considered Albania as an important trade partner and a gateway to European markets. Turkish investors search for profitable investment opportunities in the country. On the other hand main trade partner of both Turkey and Albania is EU countries. Within this regard Turkey adjust its trade relations toward Albania according to EU regulations. Competition between Greece and Turkey also continues in economic realm. Both countries are seeking to enlarge their share in Albanian market by acquiring privatized state owned firms. Economic diplomacy is gaining more importance in Balkan policies of Turkey and Greece. Within this regard Albanian-

¹⁵³"Albania says Turkey number one foreign trade partner" on www.worldbulletin.net/news_detail.php?id=51150 accessed on 12/12/2009.

Turkish Business Council was established in 1992. This Council organized many business forums and investment promotion meetings with participation of highest level Turkish political and economic representatives. President Demirel, Prime Minister Ecevit, and President Sezer with their Albanian counterparts hosted meetings and forums of the Council especially after 2000. Turkey and Greece struggle to seize their political influence by enlarging their economic ties with Albania. Turkey could further develop its economic ties with Albania by increasing its investments in the country.

2.6. TİKA's Activities and Projects in Albania

Turkey provided technical and humanitarian assistance to Albania for contributing its economic and democratic development in post cold war period. Turkey's official technical assistance institution Turkish International Development and Cooperation Agency (TİKA) undertook several activities and projects in social, economic and cultural areas in the region. TİKA was established following the collapse of the Eastern Block and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, mainly to provide development support to the newly independent states in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkan Region. The historical and cultural ties between these new and/or transforming states and the Republic of Turkey have brought cooperation opportunities in various fields. Main purpose of TİKA is defined as to help Turkish speaking states and neighboring states in their efforts for development in economical, trade, technical, social, cultural, educational realms through implementing cooperation projects and programs.

TİKA fully grants the whole finance to receiving country in its projects. Thus in post cold war period TİKA played an important role as an instrument of Turkish foreign policy especially in neighboring and Central Asian countries. TİKA undertook projects and activities to develop social and cultural ties between receiving countries. TİKA's projects are intended to reach the attention of local population to strength or establish new ties with the people of receiving countries. TİKA functions

through its project coordination offices abroad. These local offices collect, organize and initiate projects that are necessary for technical development of the receiving countries. TİKA offices also consider assistance requests directed from legal and official institutions.

With the Protocol signed on 31 January 1996 between Turkey and Albania, TİKA Project Coordination Office was established in Tirana as the regional office responsible for managing projects in Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia. Since then dozens of projects had been finalized ranging from publishing books on Turkey and Albania to restoration of Turkish heritages through out the country.

TİKA's activities in Albania could be classified in several categories. TİKA coordinates grand projects in regional and international scale by supporting meetings, forums, conferences and training programs that gathers experts from Balkan, Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasian regions. TİKA aims to organize a common ground for experts coming from different regions to share their experiences and develop their cooperation in their related subject fields. OECD – TİKA Multilateral Tax Training Center is an example of this sort of international projects. OECD – TİKA Multilateral Tax Training Center was established in Ankara according to the protocol signed in 1993 between OECD, the Ministry of Finance and TİKA for organizing international training programs about management of taxation regulations. TİKA supported 363 Albanian experts for their participation in the program at the Center from 1993 to 2003. Other multilateral project that TİKA had supported was the establishment of Center for the Development of Private Sector in Istanbul. This Center was founded in 1994 in collaboration with German government and TİKA to organize programs about strategies related to private sectors to promote their development. The number of the Albanian experts that are supported by TİKA in this program was 131.

On the other hand TİKA initiated and supported several regional training and project programs for the Balkan countries. Training Project for the Development of

Small and Medium Size Enterprises in Balkan Countries initiated in 2000. Experts from Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia–Herzegovina joined the program which was held in May 2000. This project was managed to contribute to the development of industrial sectors and strengthen the legal and financial structure of the Balkan countries that are in the process of economic transformation to market economy. Another regional project that is supported by TİKA was the Custom Regulations and Implementation Program for Black Sea region countries. Albanian custom officials participated in this program with the financial support of TİKA.

TİKA organized and supported several other multilateral and regional cooperation programs in post cold war era. Within this sort of programs TİKA supported participation of Albanian experts to Forum on Management of Effective Assistance in Euro-Asian Countries in collaboration with OECD-DAC in 1995. TİKA and OECD-DAC organized this Forum to gather experts from assistance receiving and donor countries for discussing about the aid effectiveness in Euro-Asian countries. Also TİKA supported Public Management Expertise Program Albanian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Kazak, Kyrgyz, Moldavian, Turkmen and Ukrainian experts for these training programs that had been organized from 1995 to 1999. Professional Education Program for Foreign Young Diplomats also supported by TİKA. This program had been initiated in 1992 and since then continues each year. This program also includes one month Turkish language education at TÖMER for participant diplomats. Through this program more than 300 young diplomats received training in Ankara including some Albanian diplomats.

TİKA considering the tourism sector management in Black Sea Economic Cooperation member states supported local experts for participating in BSEC Countries Tourism Training Program. This program held in Antalya in 2001 in cooperation with Ministry of Culture and Tourism with participation of BSEC countries including Bosnia-Herzegovina. Last to mention, TİKA supported Albanian experts for their participation in Sustainable Urban Water Management Seminar in İstanbul in 1996 and Meteorology Meeting in Gebze in 1998.

TİKA supports Albanian businessmen's participation in Trade Fairs that are held in Turkey to encourage them to initiate trade relations with Turkish companies. TİKA linked to Prime Ministry of Turkey cooperates with Turkish Embassies and local Office of the Commercial Counsellor in organizing its trade related assistance programs.

Another category that TİKA manages its activities is bilateral cooperation with hosting country. Within this framework TİKA undertook several training and technical assistance programs with Albanian officials, experts and workers. This sort of projects in forms of trainings, expert exchanges and donation aim to contribute development of human capacity in official institutions, upgrade physical conditions of working places and contribute to labor effectiveness and thus incomes of Albanian people.

Expert training programs enabled many Albanian state officials to have specific courses and practices in Turkey about their area of specialization. Turkish Undersecretariat of Treasury had arranged a training program for 7 members of the Albanian Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (ANIH) in cooperation with TİKA. ANIH was founded in 2002 and functions under o the Albanian Economic Ministry. TİKA by supporting this training program aimed to develop human capacity of a young Albanian institution. In addition TİKA supported Albanian experts in their participation to training for the personnel of the Albanian Foreign Investment Agency. TİKA in cooperation with the Turkish Central Bank realized the program with the title of "Central Bank and Banking Trainings" in 2000 and 2002. Several Albanian experts have participated both of the programs with support of TİKA.

Turkish General Directory of Police started police training programs in specific areas in cooperation with Albanian police department. In this framework TİKA managed and financed police training programs with Turkey and Albania. Albanian Custom officials requested advisories to manage their customs and TİKA

arranged expert exchange from Turkey and two Turkish custom experts assigned in Albania in 2002 for training Albanian Custom staff.

TİKA in cooperation with State Planning Organization organized training courses in Ankara in 2004 for Albanian experts working at Ministry of Economy. Also TİKA organized a meeting between 10 Albanian judges with their Turkish counterparts to exchange their experiences in the judicial system.

In 1996, six offices of Albanian Company Registration Center rehabilitated by TİKA. All these aforementioned training programs are supported by TİKA to enhance the professional capacity of Albanian officials and improvement of psychical working spaces of official institutions for increasing political and economic relations of Turkey with Albania in a harmony.

After several meetings with Albanian representatives and field researches about the local situation in Malsi e Madhe and Shkodra; the project for animal husbandry and organization of union of producers had been initiated by TİKA. Purpose of this project was to provide the reproduction of a rank race of cattle, increase production of milk and to organize the producers under well managed unions. This project managed to be implemented for a four years period starting from 2000.

What's more starting from 2002 TİKA provides Turkish Language courses for Albanians free of charge under TİKA's Turkology Program. From the year 1999 TİKA financed organization of Turkish courses for the Albanian people free of charge. By the increasing of Turkish investments in Albania the need for Turkish speaking personnel increased. Also Albanians had employment opportunities within these Turkish firms. For this reason TİKA had opened Turkish courses in Tirana, Shkodra, Laç, Lezhe and Vlora. Today Turkish courses supported by TİKA are available in Tirana and Shkodra. Also in Shkodra there is a Turkish Cultural Center run by TİKA. TİKA also signed a protocol with Tirana University Turkology Department and in 2004 State Minister responsible from TİKA opened a Turkish

Culture Center in the Tirana University Campus. This Center equipped by TİKA and TİKA also supports Tirana University's Turkology Department. Turkish courses are continued in the TİKA Tirana Project Coordination Office as well. In December of 2009 President Abdullah Gül opened "Tiran Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezi" in Tirana and this Center will organize Turkish courses and activities to promote Turkish culture in Albania.

After 2003 official development assistances of Turkey to Albania through TİKA increased. TİKA started to undertake rehabilitation and equipment projects demanded from Albanian officials and locals. Within the framework of rehabilitations and equipment projects of TİKA in Albania: an IT lab equipped at Mustafa Kemal Atatürk High School in Vlore in 2004, sewerage system of region of Qyteti Studenti in Tirana rehabilitated in 2005, some studios of Albanian State Radio channel equipped in 2008 and 2009, marginalized women center in Bathore region in Tirana equipped, Vlore Blood Bank service at the Vlore Hospital equipped with medical equipments in 2009, drinking water system in Kavaja's 5 villages renovated in 2009, a kindergarten in Berat rehabilitated and equipped in 2009 and equipment and training project for the first children nephrology center in Tirana Hospital initiated in 2009.

After 2003 Turkey with its economic growth started to take care of the cultural heritages in neighboring countries. Cultural heritages of Ottoman period were turning into ruins especially in Balkan region since there are no eligible funds of hosting countries to protect and restore these sorts of historical monuments. TİKA in Albania in cooperation with National Center for Historical Monuments started a cultural program to protect and restore Turkish monuments in the region. As a result of this program TİKA aimed to contribute to revenues of cultural tourism in regions with Turkish historical monuments. TİKA supported restoration of the inner decoration of the "Parruce" mosque in Shkodra in 2008, and in same year TİKA reconstructed environmental site of graveyard of Hasan Rıza Pasha in Shkodra. In

this graveyard there are graves of important Albanian and Turkish commanders and also important political figures from the late Ottoman Empire period.

TİKA also contributed to development of social and cultural life of Albanian people. TİKA supported distribution of health guide to primary schools and initiated a project for digitalization of historical documents at state archives of Albania. TİKA supported printing of reference book about Ottoman History and photograph album titled “Social Life of Albanian People”. TİKA also provided humanitarian aid in cooperation with some local NGO’s and distributed supplies and food to 150 poor families in several cities in Albania.

Compared to assistances of Italy (between years 1999-2008 total amount of assistances were totaled to €330.558.773)¹⁵⁴ and Greece (between years 2002-2008 total amount of assistances were totaled to € 30.360.331), TİKA donated a humble amount of assistances in value (between years 2007-2008 total amount of assistances were totaled to €1.450.723) but, TİKA’s activities and projects contributed to the progressive development of relations between Turkey and Albania in political, economic, social and cultural realms in post cold war period.

¹⁵⁴ “Donor Projects”, Donor Database of Donor Coordination in Albania on www.aidharmonisation.org.al/?fq=mesi&gj=en&kid=219 accessed on 12/02/2010. The values indicated here include all national donations of Italy and Greece whereas covers only grant that TİKA had provided.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

This study has presented political and economic relations of Turkey and Albania in post Cold War era and has analyzed the continuity of Turkish foreign policy towards Albania without grand changes during the post Cold War period. Turkey contributed to Albania for enduring stability and peace by continuing its realist foreign policy implementation during the post Cold War period. Turkey refrained from unilateral interventions to Albania and aligned its FP to the common policies of international community. Turkey also cautiously followed the developments in Albania and did not prioritize neo-Ottomanist or Islamist ideologies in formulating and implementing its FP.

Turkey developed its bilateral relations with Albania in political, military and economic spheres. Due to the inclusive policies of Turkey within the region, multilateral relations were established with Albania and Turkey encouraged Albania for its participation in international institutions. In addition Turkey supported Albania in its integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

Relations between Turkey and Albania have common facades with the Turkish foreign policy towards Balkans which has continuities and changes starting from the dissolution of Balkan states from Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire ruled Albania for more than 500 years. Thus Turkey has deep rooted political, social and cultural ties with Albania.

Turkey attached strong importance to stability and security in the Balkan region. Turkey developed its political relations with Albania in early 1990s. Turkey followed constructive policies towards Albania and Macedonia. Thus these countries became allies of Turkey. Turkey enhanced its position against Greece in the Balkan region. But Greece transformed its hostile policies into more constructive policies

after mid 1990s and developed its political, military and economic relations with Albania.

Importance of Balkan region revitalized in Turkish foreign policy due to the security concerns derived from dissolution of Yugoslavia and transformations of ex communist Balkan states into democratic and liberal type of governments. Turkey started to follow an active foreign policy approach towards Balkan region. In this new epoch Turkey strengthen its political and economic ties with Balkan states and Albania within regional and international contexts.

This thesis discussed that Turkish FP towards Balkans had been constructed by several domestic factors. In the very beginning of 1990s FP strategies of Turkey constructed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials along with the strong interferences of President Özal. Also during the Refah-Yol coalition government and AKP's single party governments Islamist and neo-Ottomanist ideologies came into front as ideological supplies to FP approaches of Turkey. Yet these sorts of ideologies could not challenge the established formation of Turkish FP towards Albania and Balkans in general. AKP's definition of FP included some strategies of former Turkish politicians. Özal's activism, Erbakans' criticism about the FP perception of Kemalist state establishment, İsmail Cem's zero problem strategy with neighboring countries and Mesut Yılmaz's government program stressing the importance of more active FP had been combined and systematized in the AKP's 'new foreign policy' strategy. In the post Cold War period public opinion and pressures of Albanian and other Balkan originated people living in Turkey under some NGO's had been effective in the FP formation of Turkey. But Turkish FP towards Albania and Balkan region continued in line with the traditional characteristics of Turkish FP.

Turkey supported Balkan cooperation from within and believed that by development of cooperation, interdependency of Balkan states would increase and this interdependency could further develop security and peaceful settlement in the region. Turkey tried to gather Balkan states under some regional cooperation

organizations and initiatives such as BSEC, for contributing to strengthen government structures of newly emerging Balkan states and states that are transforming their structures into liberal Western democracies. On the other hand, Turkey pursued a foreign policy that is aligned to the Balkan policies of international community. International community especially U.S. and other Western European countries approached the region with policies aiming to maintain stability and peace. Albania's top priority was integration into Euro-Atlantic organizations after the end of Cold War. Turkey also supported Albania's integration into international organizations such as NATO and EU.

Turkey's policy approach towards Albania in post cold war era could be described as an active and cautious. Turkey preferred to involve multilaterally into the conflicts between Balkan states under auspices of international organizations. Turkey provided humanitarian assistance to Albania during 1991-92 crises along with other international donors. Turkey donated huge amount of humanitarian assistance and sent troops to Multinational Force titled Operation Alba for settlement of chaotic realm in Albania after 1997 Pyramid Crises.

In the dissolution process of Yugoslavia, Turkey carefully followed the developments and at the beginning of Bosnia and Kosovo wars supported unity of Yugoslavia. However ethnic cleansing towards Bosnians and Kosovar Albanians along with the increasing pressures of Serbs inescapably resulted autonomy of these two regions. Turkey supported independency of Kosovo and participated in the peace keeping troops under U.N. forces. Turkey pursued a similar foreign policy with Albania over the Kosovo issue. Turkey recognized Kosovo on the next day of the declaration of its independence.

Turkey initiated BSEC organization and Turkey and Albania are founding members in the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) with other regional states. It is possible to say that these organization and initiative are concrete evidences for Turkey's long affords to establish functioning Balkan Entente in a broader perspective over the region. Turkey encouraged Albania to participate in

Euro-Atlantic organizations as well as other organizations such as OIC. Albania has a population with majority of Muslim. Albania became member of OIC and tried to expand its foreign policy goals by gaining consents of other Muslim countries. In addition Albania sought for financial assistances from Muslim countries.

Albania was the first ex communist Balkan state to apply membership to NATO. Turkey supported Albania in this application process. NATO undertook several military engagements in Bosnia and Kosovo. These operations brought new perspectives and roles to NATO. After the end of Cold War mission definition and operation scope of NATO expanded due to its involvements into wars in Balkans. NATO became an important military organization within the context of new world order. Turkey also decided to participate in NATO's military engagements towards the region. What's more Turkey provided several military equipment and assistances to enhance the military capacity of Albania. These assistances had been provided to modernize and restructure the military organization of Albania to reach NATO standards.

Turkey and Albania have strong desires to become EU members. Within this context Albania struggles to adopt European standards in its political, economic, social and cultural spheres. The negotiation for the association process of Albania was finalized with the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU. Turkey along with most of the EU member states supports the membership process of Albania since this process promote democracy and development of well functioning market economy in the country.

Turkey pursued Balkan policy which is based on harmony with the policies of global actors, while preventing any regional actor from becoming a hegemonic actor in the region. Turkey cooperated with U.S. and EU in securing peaceful settlement in the region. Turkey faced rivalry with Greece over the Balkan region. Turkish Balkan policies are criticized especially by Greece and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. These countries accused Turkey for reviving Ottoman legacy and Islam in the region. Turkish foreign policy approach towards the Balkans is widely discussed among

politicians and scholars in Turkey as well. It could be argued that Turkey had not tolerated any ideological extremism based on New Ottomanism or Islamism in its foreign policy orientation towards Balkans. Turkey took the advantage of its strong historical ties with the region in its involvements towards the region. Thus Turkey emerged as an important regional actor in the region. Within this context Turkey considered Albania as an ally in the region as well as an ally in international fora. Albania also finds Turkey as an important supporter and ally in its domestic issues and international disputes.

Turkey increased its economic ties with Albania rapidly after the end of Cold War. There are many big Turkish firms that are investing in Albania. Trade volume between Turkey and Albania increased to USD \$350 million in 2009 from USD \$35 million in 2003. Free trade agreement was also signed between two countries. Turkey considers Albania as a strategic trade partner in the region. Albania is on the route between Turkey and European and other regional states. On the other hand privatization of state firms had brought investment opportunities for Turkish investors. As a result, recent economic indicators shows that in following years trade volume between Turkey and Albania would grow substantially. Also Turkey provided important technical and humanitarian assistances to Albania. Activities and projects of Turkish International Development and Cooperation Agency contributed to development of relations between Turkey and Albania in political, economic, social and cultural realms in post cold war period.

To conclude, political and economic relations of Turkey and Albania are developed more after the end of Cold War era within the context of Turkey's continuing realistic FP towards Albania. These two countries have remarkable cooperation in the region which would strength peace, stability and security in the Balkan region. Relations between Turkey and Albania contribute stability and prosperous development of the regional states and would quicken the process of their articulation in western structures.

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