CHAPTER - 1

Turkey's Evolving Security Relations in the Post - Cold War Era: Implications for the Gulf

Turkey's place in the Western security system has changed considerably since the end of the Cold War. Uncertainty prevails in many respects and its dissipation will not be easy and will need time. In the time of global strategic confrontation between the East and West, Turkey was the important instrument of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) south-eastern flank. It contributed to the policy of credible deterrence in the European theatre and its national security was guaranteed by its inclusion in the alliance. At present, there is no longer a viable European theatre of NATO, and direct military threats to Turkey have been greatly diminished. Ankara and its allies are entering a new security policy phase that has been described “as a period of transition and transformation that calls for reorientations and new architectures.” ¹ In this new order Turkey is being challenged to find a place for its allies and partners that will decide whether it will continue to be an asset for Western security policy or if and to what extent it may become a liability.

In Ankara the question may arise for the first time as to whether the strong links with the Western security system can still be regarded as an undisputable asset or may become a liability to the country's security interests. A general feeling of risk and uncertainty has arisen because of the increased complexities of the new conflicts in the country's immediate neighbourhood many of which might have direct repercussions on its security. Additionally, NATO's search for a new role, strategy and organization has been creating a certain uneasiness in Turkish security policy circles about the real

political and military value of the country’s existing alliance bonds. A feeling has been growing that the existing alliance is only of limited value for guaranteeing military security against the new risks the country is facing. So far the Turkish security policy establishment does not see a viable alternative to the existing security relationships. There are no new comprehensive alliances or other security structures that could effectively replace the existing ones; nor will Turkey be able to reach a status of security self-sufficiency in the near future. Its political and economic strength will remain weak with respect to single handedly developing a national security capacity that would enable it to meet all the relevant challenges. In addition, its military and political elite stick to the firm conviction that the continuation of the Kemalist Westernization of Turkey does not allow a loosening of ties with the Western security system.

As a result of this complicated situation, the Turkish military leadership and its civilian followers in the government apply a multiple strategy that does not block any option for the medium term. First, Turkey has made strong efforts to develop and strengthen its national military and industrial capabilities for guaranteeing its national security. For this purpose the military leadership has developed a programme for a comprehensive overhaul and modernization of the armed forces amounting to US $150 billion in the next thirty years\(^2\). Ankara is well aware of the necessity of foreign support and cooperation for reaching this goal. The improved military cooperation with Israel has to be seen in this perspective, given a growing European reluctance in continuing defence aid to and military-industrial cooperation with Turkey and the continuing, uncertainty over the American ability to fulfil its respective commitments towards the country because of recurrent disagreements between the administration and congress.

Ankara has tried to keep its links with the existing institutional framework of Western security policy as close and comprehensive as possible. NATO remains the central pillar for the country's inclusion in the Western network. Consequently, Ankara shows certain reluctance to approve a too quick comprehensive institutional, organizational, and political overhaul of the alliance, including its enlargement towards the east. The Turks show a special reluctance to Europeanizing NATO that would entail a marked reduction of the American role in the alliance.  

At the same time, Ankara is eager to be fully included in the emerging more independent European security structures that seem to evolve in connection with the reformed European Union. In the view of Turkish officials, European security includes a military and an economic-social part, the former mainly being provided by an enlarged NATO and the latter by the enlarged European Union. One problem with its attitude towards the post-cold war transition of the European and transatlantic security framework is that Ankara has political goals and ad-hoc policies with regard to its special interests but has failed to develop ideas as to how the new framework should be structured. There is no Turkish "grand strategy" that would comprehensively describe the country's place in the new architecture. This is no surprise as we know that volatile and sometimes chaotic domestic political situation with its rapid change of government of different ideological outlook and composition has not favoured developing sound national strategies of whatever kind. Thus the power of definition concerning its pressing security policy challenge remains with the military leadership, which tends to be conservative in its decisions.

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All plans and discussions about a common security policy element of the reformed European Union that would eventually include elements of common defence and would be the backbone of a more autonomous European participation in the allied security structure have completely left out considerations of Turkish role, implicitly leaving the answer to the “Turkish problem” to the United States, as has been the case for most of the cold war period.

For Ankara the question of how the coming European security architecture would be developed and what could and should be Turkey’s place is of permanent importance. The answer will ultimately decide whether Turkey can continue with its established multinational security policy or whether the Turkish leadership has to make stronger efforts at developing specific national concepts for dealing with the country’s security challenges. Developing a more national approach towards security matters need not necessarily mean severing ties with the alliance, but it would lead to a stronger accent on a specific national policy plus, perhaps, a reduction deriving from unsettled border dispute or ethnic strife; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, especially in Middle East and South Asia; international terrorism, organized crime, drug-trafficking and uncontrolled illegal immigration; and environmental risks deriving from either modern industrial plants, transportation of dangerous substances, or military-related environmental damage. From a special future-oriented perspective one could add “information war” or “Cyber war” to this list.\(^5\)

These security risks can be seen in the violent conflict in the former Yugoslavia and its resulting enforced larger refugee movements to other European states. The weakening and sometimes total breakdown of public order furthers the spread of networks of organized crime that thrive on illegal immigration from the southern

Mediterranean. Together with the fear of increased number of violent Islamic fundamentalist groups such immigration was an important reason for the sharpened political awareness of NATO and the Western European Union with respect to the southern Mediterranean. Some states in the greater Middle East enjoy special attention from the Europeans because of their proven or assumed capability of acquiring or developing weapons of mass destruction and the delivery means that could pose a threat to some parts of southern Europe. Iran, Iraq and Libya are especially mentioned.6

**Turkey as a Transregional Actor**

As Turkey's European vocation came under growing strain and as developments on the European periphery gained prominence in Western discussions, its policy makers appeared more comfortable with portraying their country's importance in extra-European terms. Fashionable interest in Caspian energy and in routes for the transportation of oil and gas to world markets has contributed substantially to the new debate on Turkey's external role. This may reflect a growing tendency among Turkish strategists to discuss Turkey's importance in terms aligned with what they consider a US rather than European world view.7 The emerging conception of Turkey's new geopolitics is inherently transregional, an approach that reflects concrete changes in the strategic environment and avoids the somewhat artificial tension between the country's role as a bridge or a barrier.

In political terms, there is a growing interrelationship between events in Europe, the Middle East, and Eurasia. Ankara is unique among NATO members in the degree of its concerns about Russian aims in the Balkans, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Gulf. These concerns have ranged from arms transfers and military assistance for Cyprus (for

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6 For more details see Ian O. Lessar and Ashley J. Tellis, *Strategic Exposure: Proliferation around the Mediterranean*, MR-957-1MD (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1998)

example, the planned deployment of S-300 surface-to-air missile, diverted to create under pressure from Ankara) to technology transfer to Iran to alleged support for Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorism. Moscow has also been seen as a leading opponent of Turkish routes for Caspian energy exports. Whether or not these problems are part of a concerted Russian strategy or simply a product of opportunism against a background of anti-Turkish experience, they strike many as evidence of a revived security challenge from Russia - a challenge Ankara might be left to face without adequate reassurance from its allies.

Further, the West is rediscovering the energy security - more properly, "energy geopolitics" - questions that were a key part of the strategic landscape in the 1970s and early 1980s. Turkey is at the center of this new debate, which is more about the politics of alternative transport routes than about supply and demand per-se. Existing pipelines across Turkey from the Gulf, together with the still uncertain prospect of the Baku-Ceyhan route for Caspian oil, suggest a key place for Turkey in the future oil-supply system. Taking into account the likely increase in oil tanker traffic through the Black Sea and the Turkish straits, Turkey's role appears even more prominent. Future routes for Caspian oil have received considerable attention, but the infrastructure for gas supply is also undergoing rapid expansion. Turkey's own energy security will be strongly affected by new arrangements (for example, with Iran or Turkmenistan) and by additional imports from Russia. Turkey's emerging role as a major distributor as well as consumer of natural gas will likely be an additional factor binding together the longer term energy security interests of Europe and Turkey. Future discussions of Turkey's strategic importance to the West is likely to focus heavily on these inherently transregional issues,
especially Ankara's influence on the security environment within the "strategic energy ellipse of the Caspian and the Gulf".8

Finally, many of the most prominent security challenges facing Turkey and the West cut across traditional definitions of "European", "Middle Eastern", and "Eurasian" security. Turkey is, again, at the center of this phenomenon. At one end of the spectrum, Turkey is the Western ally most directly exposed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the means for their delivery at longer ranges. Some of the world's leading proliferators - Iran, Iraq and Syria - are on Turkey's borders. The potential for conflict with each, while varied, is high enough to create a tangible concern about WMD. Turkish attention to WMD and missile risks has increased significantly since the Gulf War, when potential scud attacks on Turkish territory caused concern. Turkey, along with the US, is among the NATO countries most interested in deploying effective theater ballistic missile defences (TMD). Cooperation with Israel could be an important vehicle for acquiring missile defence technology, as well as early warning data and intelligence related to WMD. Further cooperation with Jordan and the US could provide the basis for a regional missile defence architecture.

Proliferation trends are the most dramatic aspect of Europe's growing exposure to Middle Eastern instability and the possible consequences of Western action, including intervention, outside Europe. Issues concerning proliferation and counter proliferation are certain to occupy a prominent place on the agenda in future security relations between Turkey and its Western partners.9 Turkey's preference likely will be to address proliferation risks through multilateral regimes and through NATO's deterrent posture. If, however, Ankara loses confidence in its NATO link, a decision to acquire a national deterrent capability (e.g. medium range missile) cannot be ruled out. Obviously this

9 Ian O. Lesser and Ashley J. Tellis, Strategic Exposure
would have implications for security perceptions and the military balance beyond the Middle East - in the Aegean, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. WMD and proliferation issues emerged as a key facet of NATO's April 1999 Washington Summit. Turkey will be a leading beneficiary of any further allied initiatives in this area. At the low-intensity of the spectrum, Turkey is exposed to cross-border spillover of terrorism, political violence and other unconventional security problems. Many of these emanate from the Middle East or Eurasia and also affect the security of Europe.

From the European perspective it often appears that Turkey is part of the problem in relation to unconventional security challenges. European officials in particular have been very clear in blaming Turkish traffickers for much of the drug trade in Western Europe and identifying Turkey itself as an important trans-shipment link to the Middle East and Central Asia. The Susurluk scandal reinforced concerns about links between terrorism, counterterrorism, and narcotics trafficking. As the EU becomes more actively engaged in addressing “third pillar” issues, including transnational crimes, this aspect of relations with Ankara will likely increase in importance.

Between the spectre of proliferation risks and low-intensity spillover lies a set of conventional security problems on Turkey's borders. Although a direct military confrontation between Turkey and Russia is very unlikely, the prominence of this relationship in the security perceptions of both countries and the high degree of suspicion on each side suggests that a confrontation cannot be ruled out. The growing significance of nuclear weapons in Russian military doctrine is also a source of concern and will bear on Turkish attitudes towards NATO and the Western security guarantee.

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10 Washington Summit Communiqué, NAC-S (99) 64 and Strategic Concept Document NAC-S (99) 65, April 24, 1999.
The potential for conflict with Syria - reduced but not eliminated by Öcalan's departure from Damascus and by agreements aimed at improving bilateral relations - suggests the possibility that European security institutions may be engaged in countering a direct territorial threat from the Middle East. Concern about Syria has grown in Turkish security perceptions since the Gulf War and now features more prominently in Western analysis of Turkish security. Turkish concerns were fourfold: Syrian claims on the border province of Hatay, friction over Tigris and Euphrates waters, Syrian WMD and missile programmes, and Syrian support for the PKK. Of these concerns, the last has been by far the most consistently dangerous.

Emerging trends in Western strategy also encourage the portrayal of Turkey as a key actor in a transregional security environment. As Western military establishments continue to restructure themselves for power projection and crisis management rather than territorial defence, and as states such as Germany overcome their reluctance to engage in military operations outside Europe, security relations with Turkey will loom larger for the simple reason that Turkey is the best way to reach key areas of concern. A striking number of post-Cold War flashpoints are on Turkey's borders or in the immediate neighbourhood, and access to Turkish facilities and airspace will be important for the projection of Western military power to the Caspian and the Gulf. Moreover, as Turkey pursues an ambitions military modernisation programme and improves its capacity for mobile operations, its own ability to contribute to Western operations on the European periphery will increase. But against the background of growing Turkish sovereignty concerns, and in the absence of a substantial redefinition of the Turkish-Western security relationship, the precise role Turkey will play along these lines is not easily predicted.

12 Turkish officials (2000-2001), interviews by the researcher, Mehmet Tesar, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara; Emre Kocaoglu, Deputy of ANAP, Istanbul; Hüseyin Kansu, Independent Deputy, Istanbul; Ali Serdengeçti, Deputy of MHP.
Convergence or Divergence in Security Policies

At the broadest level Turkey-Europe and the US share a stake in regional stability and a status-quo-oriented, rather than revolutionary, outlook in international affairs. Yet at the level of regional policies and approaches, the picture is less straightforward. Are Turkish and Western security policies bound to converge in key areas? A brief look at regional security challenges suggests important points of divergence. In many instances these are part of broader policy divisions between the US and Europe. In other instances, Turkey has unique interests at play.

Despite some Westerners' fear of unilateral Turkish involvement in the Balkans, Ankara shows every indication of preferring a co-ordinated, multilateral approach to crisis management in the region. Turkish participation in the Implementation Force (IFOR), Stabilisation Force (SFOR), and the air and humanitarian operations in Kosovo are evidence of this preference. Europe's role in the Bosnia crisis was severely criticised in Turkey, but US policy on Bosnia - at least in the final phase of the crisis - and allied policy on Kosovo were very much in line with perceptions in Ankara. The risk of the serious policy divergence over the Balkans is probably low.

Turkish and Western interests in long-term Russian stability and integration with the west are congruent, but assessments of present Russian behaviour and longer term risks are divergent, possibly increasingly so. Ankara's concern about Russia is growing, and its is unclear whether this concern is shared with even nearly the same intensity elsewhere in the west. So far there has not been a sharp divergence in Turkish and Western policies towards Moscow (and indeed there are elements of co-operation as well as friction in Ankara's own policy towards Russia), but it might arise, particularly if Turkish policy makers perceive that their interests are ignored by Western partners. In the Caucasus, Ankara could well find itself under pressure to adopt a more forward
leaning policy than do its Western partners toward the conflict between Armenia and Azarbaijan or toward separatist movements in the region, such as Chechnya's.

In the Caspian, the US and Turkish policies are much in congruence. United States has sought to support Turkey as balancing factor in the Caspian against the expansion of Russian and especially Iranian influence. Washington openly backed the construction of an oil pipeline route from the Caspian basin through Turkey as part of its policy to support multiple pipelines in the region. European countries by contrast, have not been explicit in their policy pronouncement on Caspian oil issues, especially regarding the pipeline issues. Moreover, there is no strong agreement among the United States and its European allies on what Turkey's role in the region should be. Turkey is seen by some countries, especially the United States, as a potential western "bridge" to the Caspian region and Central Asia due to its cultural and ethnic ties to many of the countries of the region.13 In the Middle East, policy differences are more pronounced but are part of more generalised trans-Atlantic differences. On Iraq, Ankara is more tolerant of the reassertion of Iraqi sovereignty in the North, provided that this results in additional pressure on the PKK. Certainly, Turkish opinion favours an early end to the costly economic sanctions on Iraq and the resumption of full Iraqi oil exports through Turkish pipelines - a view increasingly in line with much European opinion but unattractive to Washington. Ankara will most likely remain uncomfortable with the idea of placing Turkish facilities at the disposal of a US-led coalition in a renewed confrontation with Saddam Hussain, unless the operation convincingly aims at permanently altering the regional order - in which case Turkey will wish to secure a seat at the post-conflict table.

With regard to Iran - concerns about the export of Islamic revolution aside - Turkish policy is essentially in the European mainstream and favourably disposed toward

political and economic engagement. In this respect it is at variance with Washington's continued attachment to "dual containment" in the Gulf. Any increase in Iranian tolerance for the PKK could, however, bring Turkish policy closer to the US position.

Turkey shares an interest in the Middle East peace process but has concerns about the containment of Syria. Turkey's strategic relationship with Israel is viewed very favourably by the US, although Turkish observers may overstate its effect on congressional attitudes toward Ankara. European governments are generally less enthusiastic about Turkish-Israeli ties, and many tend to view the relationship as a complicating factor in the Middle East equation - one inclined to reinforce a US centered approach to regional security. Meanwhile, Ankara would prefer a much tougher Western stance toward Syria on the PKK issue and on proliferation.

In the Aegean and on Cyprus, Turkish policy is already at variance with broader US and European interests. The West as a whole has an overwhelming stake in crisis prevention and management in the eastern Mediterranean. For Turkey, the various points of friction with Greece are important tests of sovereignty and national interest and, in practice, are primary impediments to a closer relationship with Europe.

Beyond current conflicts in the Southern Balkans, relations between Greece and Turkey may well be the most dangerous flashpoint in the contemporary European security environment, if efforts at rapprochement begun in 1999 prove ephemeral. The consequences of a Greek-Turkish clash would not be limited to the region. At a time of profound change in the scope and mission of the Atlantic alliance, a conflict between two NATO allies could severely complicate the process of NATO enlargement and adaptation. However, the risk of Balkan crises "drawing in" Greece and Turkey - a factor often cited by US policy makers in explaining Western interests in the Balkans - is in all likelihood rather low.
Turkey, NATO and the European Security

Alongside its bilateral links with the United States, Turkey's membership of NATO continued to be a vital part of its links with the West, since this was the most important Western institution of which it was a full member, and in which it enjoyed clear treaty rights. Occasionally, Turks voiced doubts about whether NATO would honour its security commitments to Turkey, now that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. As an example, Germany's response in the context of the NATO decision to send allied reinforcements to Turkey during the Gulf crisis, has left lingering doubts about the dependability of the NATO guarantee in the absence of a Soviet threat. Yet, the NATO connections retain tremendous symbolic and material importance. Above all, participation in the alliance is seen, rather like the prospect of EC membership, as a symbol of Turkey's membership in the Western democratic "club". It also gives Ankara a greater voice than it might otherwise have in international affairs. For the most part, Turkish commentators continued to emphasise the importance of NATO for Turkey, and vice versa. The same point was confirmed on the NATO side: as Javier Solana, then NATO's Secretary General, put it in 1996, "in a world of rapid change, Turkey's partnership in the alliance is more vital than ever".14 During the 1990s, the main shadow over Turkey's position in the Western Alliance arose from plans by the EU to build its own security structures which would, at least to some extent, be independent of both NATO and the United States. The danger for Turkey was that since it was not a member of the EU, it might be shut out of the new European security structure, or at least left in a 'half-in, half-out' situation, as it was within the EU itself. Unfortunately, there was little discussion of this issue in the press or parliament, and the debate was effectively

confined to a small circle of professionals. However, it was of great potential importance for Turkey's relationship with the Western powers.

Under the Maastricht treaty of 1991, the EU countries undertook to develop their 'defence vocation', as 'an integral part of the development of the Union'. The vehicle for this was to be the Western European Union (WEU), a body which had been virtually moribund since its foundation in 1954. The WEU's role would be to 'strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance and to formulate a common European defence policy'.

Within this, France and Germany proposed the creation of a "European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) to be developed outside NATO." In 1992, Turkey, along with Norway and Iceland, became associate member of NATO but not of the EU. Turkey's main complaint about this arrangement was that, although it participated in all the military activities of the WEU and had a seat (though no Veto Powers) in the WEU council, it was excluded from EU decision which had a direct bearing on the WEU's activities. As Kamuran Inan, a foreign minister who was then on the opposition benches, asked in June 1996: 'Why should Turkey contribute to the defence of Europe if there is no guarantee that the WEU would contribute to the defence of Turkey.'

Admittedly, critical defence issues were still settled by the NATO council, in which

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18 In addition, there are now five 'observers' (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden) which either originally were or have since become full members of the EU, but chose not to become full members of the WEU for political reasons, and nine 'associate partners' from Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, the Czech Rep., Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) making up a total of 27 members of the WEU family.
20 Quoted in Kemal Kirisci, "Post Cold War Turkish Security and the Middle East", *MERIA Journal* (Published on Internet) no. 2, 1997.
Turkey fully participated, so that in practice the WEU was not much more than a talking shop. Nonetheless, the idea that they might be excluded from future defence structure under the EU aegis was profoundly disquieting for the Turks. More broadly it is also likely that the main cause for Turkish resentment was psychological that is to say that, as in the case of EU, the west Europeans were treating the Turks as no more than distant relatives, allowed into the European garden, but not into the house. A simple way out of this problem, suggested by Stephan Larrabee\textsuperscript{21}, would have been to give Turkey full membership of the WEU, but not of the EU, at least for the interim. However, the existing EU members tended to oppose this on the grounds that it would make it impossible to integrate the WEU (or its successor organisation) into the EU, which was seen as an ultimate, though not undisputed, aim.

In response to the Turkish complaints, it has been argued that in practice "Turkey's associate membership of the WEU is no different in operational terms from full membership"\textsuperscript{22}. Turkish officers participated fully in the military planning of the WEU, Turkish diplomats attended the biweekly meetings of the ambassadors of all the WEU states and associates, and its parliamentarians participated in the WEU Assembly, meeting twice a year.\textsuperscript{23} The relationship between NATO and WEU (and hence Turkey's position) was also a complicated one. At a NATO council meeting in Berlin in June 1996, the alliance adopted the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces, as multinational formations, under which forces assigned to NATO could be used for operations led jointly or entirely by the WEU. The Berlin meeting also decided that the ESDI concept would be developed within NATO, not outside it. A WEU Ministerial Declaration issued in Erfurt in November 1997, made it clear that "Turkey would have the right to full role

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\item \textsuperscript{21} F. Stephan Larrabee, "US and European Policy towards Turkey and the Caspian Basin", in Robert D. Blackwell and Michael Sturmer, eds., \textit{Allies Divided}, p.169.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Aybet, "\textit{Turkey and European Institutions}", p. 109.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Kramer, "\textit{Turkey's Place}", p. 16.
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of participation and decision making in any WEU-led operation using NATO assets and capabilities" (including multinational formations), whether or not it included these formations. However, this was accompanied by declaration by Tansu Çiller, then Turkey's Foreign Minister, that Turkey might veto the use of NATO assets in such operations.

In general terms, the idea that a 'European pillar' could eventually replace NATO, or operate without it, was also disputed. In 1991 Manfred Worner, then the Secretary General of NATO, suggested that 'we must be realistic and realise that neither the emerging European Political Union nor the WEU will have the foreseeable future an operational defence capability able to be developed without US/NATO assistance. This prediction turned out to be justified by experiences in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, as the EU members signal failed to develop an effective common foreign policy, and military interventions were conducted under the auspices of the UN or NATO, not the WEU. The point was made with particular force during the bombing campaign of 1999 against the Serbs, which was conspicuously dependent on US air power. As Heinz Kramer has pointed out, most of the NATO assets which could be made available for WEU-led operations are in fact US assets, making the WEU's ability to act on its own very limited.

Nevertheless, by the late 1990s, leaders of the EU states seemed to be determined to proceed with the development of the ESDI concept. At their meeting in St. Malo in December 1998, the British and French Prime Ministers called on the EU 'to develop the capacity for autonomous action and the means to effect this', though they also made it

25 Kiriçi, "Post Cold War".
27 Kramer, "Turkey's Place", p.17.
clear that one objective of this was to 'enhance the vitality of NATO'. They also agreed that the WEU would eventually be absorbed into the EU. This challenge was taken up at the NATO conference held in Washington on 23-24 April 1999, the alliance's fiftieth anniversary. A critical question was whether, in the resultant declaration on the ESDI project, the WEU would be allowed to use NATO assets and capabilities automatically. If so, then, as the Turkish side argued, Turkey would be excluded from decisions on the use of such assets. In Washington, President Demirel claimed that this 'would be tantamount to pushing Turkey out of all European decision-making bodies and asking us to become soldiers to die for a decision that we have been allowed to make no contribution in reaching.' Fortunately for the Turks, the United States came round to accepting this view. Accordingly, Article 30 of the final declaration on 'The Alliances Strategic Concept' confirmed that decision to allow the WEU to use NATO assets would only be made 'on a case by case basis and by consensus'.

In spite of the Washington declaration, the prospect remained that the EU would try to press ahead with establishing its own defence institutions, and that the WEU would be dissolved or be absorbed into new structures established by the EU. In fact, at the meeting of the European council in Cologne in June 1999, the EU leaders agreed that all the necessary decisions to achieve this would be taken by the end of the year 2000. Later, at the European council meeting in Helsinki in December 1999, they adopted a plan to set up a rapid reaction force of up to 60,000 soldiers to conduct EU-led military operations. If this occurred, Turkey could apparently be locked out of the new structure.

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29 Aybet, "NATO's Developing Role", p. 53.
31 For the full text of the declaration. See Aybet, NATO's Developing Role, p. 84-101. The Quote appears on p. 90.
unless or until it was accepted into the EU as a full member. This approach could be strongly criticised, since Turkey's geographical situation, between the Balkans, the Middle East and Transcaucasia, placed it at the heart of the zone where challenges to European security were most likely to arise. As Gulnur Aybet concludes, 'a European security architecture cannot be envisaged without Turkey'. In December 1998 the British foreign secretary, Robin Cook, appeared to have conceded this point when he told the North Atlantic council that 'as we take this project forward, we do not just seek the tolerance of colleagues who are not members of the European Union, we want their enthusiastic support for the enterprise in which we are engaged and also their participation wherever it is appropriate.'

So the debate over the future arrangements for European security was not the only one, which affected Turkey's relationship with NATO during the 1990s, it was certainly the most important. Among other issues, the application of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty limiting conventional forces in Europe, signed in 1990, had some important effects for Turkey. One of these was that, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the successor state took over the limitations on conventional weapons which the treaty had stipulated. However, during 1993, Russia applied for a relaxation of these limitations, on the grounds that it needed to deploy increased military forces in the Caucasus for 'peace-keeping operations'. This proposal was strongly opposed by Turkey, and by rest of NATO, although there was subsequent evidence that Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as Russia, were all exceeding the CFE limits. Meanwhile, Turkey was able to keep a broad stretch of territory along its borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran

32 Ibid, p. 53-55 and Sunday Times, 12 December, 1999. Other Countries in the Same Position were Norway and Iceland plus the new NATO members in Eastern Europe - that is the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.
33 Aybet, "Turkey and European Institutions", p. 109.
34 Quoted in Gommershall, "NATO", p.77.
outside the zone of application of the treaty. Eventually, at the OSCE summit in Istanbul in November 1999, the CFE treaty was revised, so as to provide for national ceilings in five categories of conventional weapons, with sub-limits on separate flanks. However, since Russia was still violating these ceilings in the Caucasus, through its campaign in Chechnya, the Western signatories, including Turkey, agreed not to submit the revised treaty to their national legislatives until Russia fulfilled its part of the bargain.

Elsewhere, the CFE treaty had a paradoxical effect on the conventional arms holdings of Greece and Turkey since it stipulated ceilings which in several cases were higher than their actual inventories at the time the treaty was signed. Moreover, it did not prevent qualitative improvements, providing the numerical ceilings were adhered to (for instance, the replacement of obsolete aircraft by modern machines). In a process known as 'cascading', other NATO members were able to transfer modern hardware which was disallowed by the treaty in the central European front to Greece and Turkey. As a result, Turkey received over 1000 modern tanks and 60 armoured cars from Germany and other NATO countries, and ended up with a modernised arsenal 25 percent bigger than when it had started the CFE process. In effect, both as a result of 'cascading', and of separate purchases of new equipment by Greece and Turkey, disarmament in Central Europe had led to rearmament in the Aegean, and there seemed to be a good case for promoting a separate arms limitation treaty covering the two NATO countries.

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36 Briefing, 22 November 1999, p.17.

37 Tuck, "Greece-Turkey", pp.26-27.
US-Turkish Relations

As Turkey's relation with Europe deteriorated, relations with the United States appeared to enter a new, somewhat more positive phase. Nevertheless, the bilateral security relationship established in the wake of the Gulf War has been troubled by numerous factors, some emanating from Ankara and Washington, others the product of more general changes in the Post Cold War security environment. It is often observed - somewhat unfairly - that the US has no Turkey policy in its own right. Rather, the policy toward Turkey has been a product of other interests, from Russian recovery to Balkan stability, from the Middle East peace process to the containment of Iran and Iraq. One of the very few positive consequences of the mid-1990s political turmoil in Turkey - particularly the period of the pro-Islamist Necmettin Erbakan's prime ministership and its collapse - was that it forced US policy makers and analysts to focus on developments in Turkey itself. Indeed, there is an emerging consensus that the future of Turkish relations with the West as a whole, including the US, will be driven above all by the evolution of Turkish society and politics. Moreover, this is an area in which US influence is likely to be quite limited.

As Turkey's security concerns expanded and the foreign policy debate became more active, US-Turkish bilateral differences became more pronounced. The problem of divergent security perceptions is central to the future of bilateral co-operation, because much of the value of the strategic relationship flows from the predictability of Turkish policy in regional crisis. Turkey's pivotal location and its ability to further US freedom of action in key regions is a theoretical and potentially hollow rationale for co-operation in the absence of shared perceptions and policies. For example, the US ability to use Incirlik air base in Southern Turkey for non-NATO contingencies will turn critically on
Ankara's own judgement about the consequences of any proposed action for Turkey's own regional objectives.

Many Turks regard with dismay the seeming contradiction between US declaration of interest in Turkey as a vital strategic partner and the inability of successive US administration to translate the interest into a stable defence relationship. A leading measure of the relationship from the Turkish perspective has been the declining level and quality - and, in 1998, the end of security assistance. Although Turkish policy makers are aware of the general trend toward reduced US security assistance worldwide, they tend to view the arms-transfer environment of recent years as a de-facto embargo engineered by hostile lobbies. Realistic observers are inclined to treat the long-delayed release to Turkey of frigates and other military items as the result of congressional bargaining rather than evidence of fundamental change. Further challenges for arms transfers, including likely requests for attack helicopters and main battle tanks, are on the horizon and will inevitably be seen as new tests of the bilateral relationship.

Although the Turkish military has a clear preference for US equipment, the difficulty of completing major transfers with Washington drove Ankara to explore avenues for diversification. The extensive defence-industrial relationship with Israel is a significant development in this regard and has been accompanied by less sophisticated acquisitions from Russia and elsewhere.

US criticism of Turkey's human rights situation, including Ankara's handling of the Kurdish insurgency in the Southeast and the circumstances surrounding the end of the Refah-led government, also emerged as a source of resentment. Although official US criticism of Turkey on this score was less pronounced than Europe's human rights and democratisation concerns it clearly complicated the bilateral relationship at many levels.
The diversity of criticism aimed at Ankara since the Gulf war encourages the impression that Turkey has been treated as 'part ally, part rogue state'.

Turkey's political crisis, its troubled security relationship with the US, and its uncertain relations with the EU combined to galvanise concern in Washington and Ankara. Turkey's leadership appears interested in repairing the country's image and is inclined to open an active dialogue aimed as redefining bilateral strategic relations to address post-Cold War concerns, including such high profile issues as security. There is also a growing awareness on all sides that a more diverse - that is, less security - heavy - bilateral relationship is likely to be more predictable and sustainable. Yet the overwhelming role of the US as a regional security actor, may place neutral limits on this diversification.

**Turkish-Israel Strategic Cooperation**

The signing of the Oslo agreement of September 1993 between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) gave a boost to Turkey's relations with Israel. The PLO's recognition of Israel lessened the necessity of following an agonizingly balanced approach towards the Arab states and Israel. However, the headlines of the Turkish daily *Milliyet* reported in May 1996 that, the origins of the formation of the Turkish-US-Israel triangle for strategic cooperation in the post-cold war Middle East goes back to 1995 when Israel's new Prime Minister Shimon Peres indicated Israel's acceptance of a US offer (1993) to conclude a defence 'pact' between the two countries. According to sources, the whole idea behind this move was the mutual sense of security threat emanating from "Iran, Iraq and Syria as the state supporters of international terrorism in the region and the terrorist organization that these states support". In the view of US and Israeli planners, the preparations for this pact were

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supposed to proceed along two distant tracks. The agenda for the first track included measures such as speedy arms transfers, mutual cooperation on intelligence gathering and international terrorism. The second track involved plans to set up "the chain of regional alliance for defence of the Middle East".

The US-Israeli pact was not supposed to include in any direct manner, other regional states. In this respect the US officials clarified that the purpose was not to revive the Baghdad pact of 1950s. Instead, it was meant to be supported by "the chain of regional alliances" which was to develop in the future into something like a "multidimensional" regional security plan. According to the above mentioned scheme, the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation was to be located at the centre of "the chain of regional alliance for the defence of the Middle East" which also included a variety of plans of the regional states like Jordan, Oman and Qatar.

The regional developments unfolding since the beginning of 1996 appear to fit the above mentioned scheme. Turkey and Israel concluded an agreement on "Military training and cooperation" on February 1996, to be followed by the conclusion of an anti-terrorism agreement between Israel and the US. In a statement intended to offer an explanation about the US and Israeli preparations to conclude this "pact", a US State Department official is reported to have stated that these preparations would be "open to the knowledge and contribution" of Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and some Persian Gulf countries, i.e. Oman and Qatar.

It is to be noted from the above accounts that the title "pact" was used only in reference to a "Defence Agreement" to be concluded between the US and Israel, the arrangements of which were officially declared in a joint announcement made by the

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40 Ibid., May 13, 1996, p.18
42 TDN, May 9, 1996 p.15
43 Milliyet, May 9, 1996, p.16
Israeli and the US authorities. Evidently, the agreement on “Military Training and Cooperation”, officially signed between Turkey and Israel in February 1996, was supposed to be an integral part not of Israeli “Mutual Defence Pact” but of regional cooperative schemes i.e. “coalitions” that were expected to grasp in order to make a correct comparison between Turkish-US and Israeli approaches to the notion of “comprehensive peace” which they all declare they support.

Turkish–Israeli Military Cooperation Agreements and its Impact on Regional Cooperation Schemes

While economic cooperation and political traffic between Turkey and Israel have proceeded smoothly, military cooperation became controversial in Turkey and between Turkey and the Arab states. From the very beginning, not only Syria, Iran and Iraq but also more moderate Arab states vehemently criticised the “nascent alliance” as they characterized Turkish-Israeli cooperation. Repeated Turkish assurances that this cooperation was not directed against any third party and was only one agreement among many others Ankara had signed, including many with Arab countries, could not calm down Arab anxieties and anger. The Turks emphasise that cooperation with Israel is not a “military pact” directed against any regional states; it is a typical cooperation in military “training” which shares the same characteristics with similar cooperation agreements Turkey had concluded with 27 different states in the past. It developed as a consequence of a new international environment brought about by the peace process in

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45 The Secretary General of the Arab League Muvaflk El-allaf viewed the Turkish-Israeli Agreement of February 1996 as an “Agreement of Aggression”. See, Cumhuriyet, April 9, 1996, p.11. For Syria, the same agreement was intended for spying against Syria and to put pressure on her to make peace with Israel without any preconditions. See the statement made by the Syrian ambassador to Tehran, El-Alunet El-Hassan to that affect, Cumhuriyet, June 24, 1996, p.12. For a revealing Arab perception of the Turkish-Israeli Agreement of February 1996 at the popular level, see, Hasan Telsin, Saudi Gazette, September 24, 1998 in Arab View, accessed over internet. For similar reactions by Arab states. See Milliyet, April 16, 1996, p.17.
the region and, finally it is an element that will help the peace process to keep moving.\textsuperscript{46} Arab criticism has been constantly deemphasized by the Turkish governments under pressure from the military leadership. Even during the Islamist interlude of Necmettin Erbakan’s premiership, the Refah wing of the government was not allowed to interfere substantially in the emerging cooperation policy, and Erbakan had to swallow his disagreement with that policy, which he had so vehemently voiced when in opposition.\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, many in Turkey’s political circles believe that Ankara does not have much reason to care for Arab political feelings because Arab countries have not shown special understanding of or support for Turkey’s interests in the past. This holds especially true with regards to the Cyprus issue and compensations for Turkey’s losses from the 1991 Gulf war.

There are, however, also those who point out that Turkey, because of its inescapable involvement in Middle Eastern affairs, should be careful not to alienate the Arab countries by developing a one-sided relationship with Israel. This seems also to be the opinion of the Ecevit government. In pursuing its line of a more regionally accentuated foreign policy, Foreign Minister Ismail Cem visited various Arab countries to improve relations and calm down Arab concerns of a one-sided Turkish policy in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{48}

As for the place of the Turkish – Israeli Military co-operation in the scheme of the regional cooperation, the Turkish denies that the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement does not constitute a “Pact” which would normally be expected not only to


\textsuperscript{47} In late 1996 Prime Minister Erbakan tried in vain to stall an agreement on upgrading Turkish F-4 fighter planes by the Israeli Aircraft industries. He was regularly left out of the political process according to high ranking military official, who shortly before the end of the Refahyol asked the Turkish press, “since when, up to now, has the Prime Minister played a role in the decision-making process in relation with Israel?” Metehan Demir, “Erbakan’s remarks over Maneuvers with Israel stir controversy”, TDN, May 15, 1997.

\textsuperscript{48} Alparslan Esmer, “Caught in Mideast Quandary,” Turkish Probe (Ankara), July 12, 1998.
designate certain common enemies but also uphold a pledge for a joint action to be taken against it in case the potential threat it represents materializes, is also repeated by the Israeli statesman.\textsuperscript{49} However, indistinct language involving terms like “axis” or “regional security framework” makes it unclear as to whether or not they share a common approach to the question of the contribution the Turkish-Israeli agreement of February 1996 could be expected to achieve a “Comprehensive Peace” in the region.

The Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu went on record as wanting “military pact with Turkey” when he reportedly stated that he viewed the Turkey-Israel relationship as “the main axis” of what to him must become “a regional security framework” on the ground that Turkey and Israel “are surrounded by radical regimes in states developing ballistic missiles with unconventional warheads.”\textsuperscript{50} Further, Premier Netanyahu reportedly called upon regional states “to play key roles” in support of this “axis.”\textsuperscript{51} However, Israeli officials reportedly clarified that when Netanyahu mentions “framework” he has an arrangement like the “Helsinki Agreement” in mind.\textsuperscript{52}

The reaction to Netanyahu’s remark came instantly from the Turkish Ambassador to Israel, Barlas Özener, who stated in blunt terms that the expectation of creating a regional framework in the Middle East in the absence of peace between Israel and her Arab neighbours is unrealistic. He rejected comparisons of the present Middle East with the Europe of twenty years ago which had given rise to the Helsinki agreement. The diplomatic relations that existed between all the European states at the time, he said, “...Served as a basis for dialogue...(which) does not exist today”. In his view such a dialogue “...needs to occur in the Middle East before there is a regional framework”. He further adds that he “...would not object to the term axis as a beginning

\textsuperscript{49} For Example, See interview with Israel’s Ambassador to Ankara Uri Bar-Ner, Cumhuriyet, July 7, 1998, p.4 Reproduced in \textit{Ha'aretz} July 10, 1998.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ha'aretz}, September 6, 1998 and September 3, 1998.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
block for a regional framework (understood as such)". However, he said, "...if axis signifies a military alliance, then I would object because this could only mean to divide this region into "us" and "them". Clearly, Ambassador Özener was mainly repeating here the same theme that Turkish statesmen have been continuously repeating in the post cold war era in connection with the regional development that have suggested some revival of regional blocs in the process of the Middle East Peace Process. 53

What in the beginning could have been regarded as a cooperative undertaking of the two most powerful states in the region to encourage the establishment of a new regional order developed into a special relationship with unclear perspectives. Syria, Iran and Iraq felt directly threatened and most Arab states were wary about a new "military front" developing in the area that would be "ultimately protecting Israeli and American interests and containing those states that opposed their policies". 54

The military dimension of Turkish-Israeli relation has almost completely monopolized the political discussion as a consequence of its scope and speed of development. What started with the military training agreement of February 1996 has quickly developed into a board cooperation including almost any type of military-related activity. 55

At the core of the relationship is a semi-annual strategic dialogue, an Israeli idea, that started in Ankara in December 1996. With the participation of a large number of high-ranking military officers, the talks normally concentrate on regional threat assessment as seen by both sides and include an exchange of intelligence information. Such undertakings not only help improve the personal acquaintances of leading military personnel but are an indispensable prerequisite of any eventual common military action.

53 Milliyet, January 6, 1996, p.15.
Such an eventuality cannot be ruled out, given missile acquisition by Iran, Iraq and Syria, which is regarded as a threatening action by both Turkey and Israel.\textsuperscript{56}

The second most important part of Turkish-Israeli military cooperation is weaponry and hardware development. In late 1996 Israeli Aircraft Industries gained a contract against international competition for upgrading fifty-four F-4 fighter jets and also won a bid to upgrade forty-eight Turkish F-5s in a US $80 million project. This will include increased fire power and maneuverability as well as improvement of vision and electronics. The project has started in Israel and will be finished in the Turkish air force’s repair centre at Eskisehir, which means that considerable technology transfer to the Turkish military industry is involved.\textsuperscript{57}

Accompanying the upgradation of the F-4s is the purchase of 200 Israeli PopeyeI standoff missiles by the Turkish air force as well as plans for the common production of hundred of Popeye II missile with a range of 150 kilometers. They can also be used in Turkey’s F-16s. The states also signed a memorandum of understanding concerning the joint development and production of a medium range antitactical ballistic missile system after the United States rejected the inclusion of Turkey in the US-Israeli development of Arrow ATBM\textsuperscript{s}.\textsuperscript{58}

Turkey has also expressed interest in Israel Phalcon early warning aircraft, unmanned air vehicle, special fences, and radar control system to seal off its borders with Iraq and Syria and the Galil infantry rifle to replace the G-3s Turkey presently uses. Israel Military industry with its Merkava III battle tank is among the bidders for Turkey’s US $ 4.5 billion project to co-produce hundred of state of the art tanks to

\textsuperscript{56} See Ambassador Kandemir, "Turkey May Allow Israel to Retaliate against Iraq", \textit{TDN}, February 21, 1998.

\textsuperscript{57} Saadet Oruc "Turkish-Israeli Ties on the Eve of the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century (Part-1)", \textit{TDN}, December 3, 1997.

replace the aging Turkish equipment.\textsuperscript{59} With all these projects, Israel is about to become Turkey’s main military industrial partner. This development is sought by Turkey’s military leadership which is looking for alternative to the United States and West European partners in procurement and co-production in order to get rid of the political conditionality concerning human rights, the Kurdish issue, and so forth that is often attached to that cooperation.

Finally, Turco-Israeli military cooperation also involves military training. The Israeli air force has regular access to bases in central Anatolia to train pilots in long range flying over mountainous land, which is impossible in Israel but would be necessary in mission against Iran. Although details of the training agreement are not published, it is widely believed that Israeli pilots also use the possibility of flying close to Iran, Syria and Iraq to gather intelligence. Turkish F-16s regularly train for anti-missile reactions, electronic warfare and combat fighting in Israel’s Negev desert making use of Israel’s advanced training technology.\textsuperscript{60}

Syria and Iran which feel directly threatened, raised serious concern over the military cooperation. Possibly in reaction to Turkey’s advances toward Israel, Syria moved to improve its frozen relations with Iraq and kept up ties with Iran. Turkey and Israel view Iran with suspicion because of Tehran’s involvement in Middle East terrorist activities, from which Turkey and Israel have suffered. Furthermore, Iran’s weaponry build-up especially in medium and long range missiles and its potential nuclear capabilities deeply concern Turkish and Israeli security circles.\textsuperscript{61} Even without explicit

\textsuperscript{59} Metehan Demir, “Turkey, Israel to Hold Strategic Talks in May to Evaluate Threats”. \textit{TDN Electronic Edition}, 4 April 22, 1998.
defence agreements, which do not seem very likely, the military cooperation can serve as a strengthened security belt for both.

Israel’s position in an eventual military exchange with Iran would considerably improve if it could make use of the Turkish connection, whereas the fruits of the envisioned procurement and military co-production programme would further Turkey’s deterrent capabilities against eventual Iranian threats in a military conflict, however unlikely.

Turkey also has to see to it that its interests do not become victims of an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement. Ankara is especially concerned that after such an event Syria may be tempted to turn its military potential against Turkey to realize its claims on the Turkish province of Hatay, the former Sanjak of Alaxendratta, which Damascus had to secede to Turkey under French pressure in 1939. Furthermore, Syria could try to enforce its position in the water dispute by military threats after having been relieved of its military precaution measures against Israel, or there could even be Syrian-Israeli understanding of trading their common water problem with respect to the Jordan river against American backed common pressure on Turkey for giving in to Syrian demands on the Euphrates water allocation. If its military cooperation with Israel would harden Syria’s position concerning the advisability of peace talks, Turkey could not be totally displeased.

There is always some tension between a security-focused approach to Middle Eastern affairs, as preferred by the Turkish armed forces and a more politically inspired approach represented by Turkey’s foreign policy elite. The military is mainly guided by
considerations of strengthening Turkey’s deterrent and defence capabilities against possible hostile military activities from neighbouring states plus fighting actual threats to the country’s political and territorial integrity. The foreign policy elite normally take into account the broader spectrum of the regional correlation of forces and its possible development. This almost automatically leads to a more reluctant and more balanced policy toward regional developments and regional actors.

The military focus almost inevitably angers neighbouring states, who feel threatened by Turkish armament measures, and polarizes regional attitudes, as could clearly be seen by hostile Iranian-Arab reactions to the emerging military cooperation between Turkey and Israel. The political approach, despite many statements to the contrary by its proponents, distance Turkey from issues of regional concern and lessens the country’s influence on regional affairs, as can be seen in the minor role Ankara played in the peace process and the lack of influence Turkey has in the hegemonial conflict in the Persian Gulf between Iran and the Arab states.

Both approaches have their merits. As long as the Middle East continues to be dominated by interstate relation mainly driven by considerations of balance of power in which most events are viewed as zero-sum games, a long-term Turkish-Israeli alliance can improve regional stability “by serving as a powerful military deterrent against would be enemies”.64 This is especially the case if the alliance is backed by the United States, as it has been. Stability can be further improved by military cooperation in contingency planning.

This, however, brings up the delicate question of how far the Turkish military would be ready to engage itself in military eventualities that are not directed at Turkey. Its record indicates great reluctance to do so. Israel has also shown reluctance to become

intimately involved in Turkey’s security quarrels in the region, be they against the PKK or in water dispute with Syria. This was made abundantly clear by the Israeli government when the Turks had Öcalan expelled from Damascus. The Netanyahu government repeatedly declared that it had nothing to do with Turkey’s military threats against Syria. But the Syrian leadership did not dare call Turkey’s bluff for fear of a possible Israeli intervention. Therefore, although there are good reasons to expect that Turkish-Israeli military cooperation will not grow into a real alliance, the Arab states still harbour their suspicions. As long as they do, the deterrent potential of the cooperation is functioning.

From the viewpoint of the Turkish military, the rationale for cooperation will be the strengthening of Turkey’s capabilities to defend its national interest in the region and in the possible bolstering of Turkish-American relations. Turkish Israeli cooperation can only be welcomed by the United States as a strengthening of pro-western elements in the Middle East. This may improve America’s inclination to respond positively to Turkish interests in deepening the mutual relationship. If it engages the American Jewish community in supporting Turkish interests, the resistance of other lobbies in Washington could be more easily neutralized.

Implications of Turkey-US-Israel Triangle for Turkey's Post - Cold War Middle East Policy

The evolution of regional politics in the post - cold war era suggests that the Middle East is neither entirely the same nor entirely different from the Middle East of the preceding era. It is different in the sense that both the Arab states and Israel have apparently come to realise their inability to pursue their national goals mainly by using military force or the threat of using it. The rise of the United States to play a paramount role in an attempt to lay the foundations of a new international order has made the regional states more receptive to the wishes of the United States in her attempt to achieve
"comprehensive peace" in the Middle East. This includes the establishment of a security regime in the sense of a managed balance of power based on, limitations on the use of force, agreements on arms control, and a certain level of institutionalization.\textsuperscript{65}

However, the 'new' post-Cold War Middle East is evidently still far from representing a "security - community" where the use of force or the threat of it has ceased to be a legitimate means of foreign policy for the states composing it.\textsuperscript{66} In theory, there appears to be nothing wrong with the Turkish-Israeli and the US wish to create "a regional security framework", like the Helsinki process that started in Europe in 1975, while pursuing a deterrence policy through cooperating among themselves in a region that showcase the above mentioned characteristics of change as well as continuity. In fact, as Stienberg puts it, the CSCE experience in Europe suggests that it may even be highly desirable to pursue such a scheme simultaneously with the pursuit of the deterrence policies.\textsuperscript{67} These policies could contribute to the finalisation of the Middle East Peace Process by increasing the effect of the above-discussed factors that started it in the first place.

In reality, nevertheless, the regional states remain unconvinced by Turkish assurances that Turkish-Israeli military cooperation is not a military pact directed against third parties in the region. That Iran, Iraq and Syria have increased their cooperation with one another seems to be motivated by a concern to pose a counterbalance to the threatening posture of the combined powers of the triangle. For example Syria and Iraq, who had held no contact with one another for more than fifteen years out of their Ba'ath rivalry and mutual suspicions concerning each other's regional motives, might be given


\textsuperscript{67} See, Gerald M. Steinberg, "European Security and the Middle East Peace Process". \textit{Mediterranean Quarterly} (Durham), vol. 7, no. 1, Winter 1996.
an additional incentive by the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement of February 1996 to consolidate the anti-Turkish cooperation they had entered into before the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement. This cooperation did include, aside from the reported "secret" summit meeting between Assad and Saddam Hussain in Syria in 1996, the delegations from the two countries meeting in Damascus in February 1996. Here they discussed the joint measure to be adopted against Turkey concerning the water issue, as well as mutual attempts to use the Syrian oil pipeline (Mina Al Bakr) to carry Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean in what seemed to be an attempt to bypass Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline that passes through Turkey. 68

Likewise, Iran not only provided Syria with the financial help to enable her to purchase arms from Russia to modernize her armed forces, but also reportedly offered to the Syrians the conclusion of a "Syrian-Iranian Military Pact" that would join these two countries against the Turkish-Israeli agreement of 1996. 69 Again, the Turkish-Israeli agreement of 1996 seems to have motivated Syrian efforts to bring about a reconciliation between Iran and the Arab world which seemed to bear fruit, particularly when the Eighth Summit meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was held in Tehran in December 1997. In this sense, Turkish-Israeli military cooperation seems to have benefitted Iran in helping her out of her isolation in the Arab world.

Aside from bringing Syria, Iran and Iraq closer to one another, there were also signs of the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation serving the regional states of Iran, Iraq and Syria and the terrorist groups of the Hizbollah and the PKK to consolidate their cooperation for "an alliance for international terrorism" in the region. 70 Behind all these joint efforts for anti-Turkish cooperation there seemed to exist a sense of enhanced threat

emanating from Turkey when Turkey signed the military cooperation agreement with Israel, which apparently created a fear of isolation and encirclement on the part of these regional actors.\(^71\) For example, according to the Vice President of Syria, Abdul Halim Haddam\(^72\), after the military cooperation agreement between Turkey and Israel, Turkish secret designs on Mosul, which supposedly lay behind Turkish military operations in northern Iraq, began to be pursued in conjunction with the old Israeli plans, the origins of which are traceable to the First Zionist Congress of 1897, to drive the Palestinians into Iraq.

In contrast, these signs do not necessarily indicate that the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement has produced any credible opposition. Although states bordering Turkey that feel directly threatened-Syria, Iraq, and (non-Arab) Iran- have complained loudly about Turkish-Israeli ties, overall Arab reaction has been relatively muted (contrary to widespread belief), at least at the official level. Egypt was an early critic but has backed off.\(^73\) In the first place, there is no credible evidence to suggest uniform perception of Turkey, on the part of Arab countries, a country that has concluded a treaty of military cooperation with Israel as constituting a threat to the Arab world. At the Arab Summit meeting held in Cairo on June 21-23, 1996, for example, the Syrian proposal that the Turkish-Israeli agreement of military cooperation be condemned and that Turkey be severely criticised for her unyielding attitude on the water issue and her resorting to military threat in her relations with Syria was not uniformly accepted by the other Arab countries.

Even though the final communique issued at the end of this summit called upon Turkey to reconsider the February 1996 military cooperation agreement that she had

\(^{71}\) See for example, "Daily Denounces Turkish Incursion". June 29, 1998. IRNA. (Tehran), accessed over internet.

\(^{72}\) Milliyet, June 19, 1997, p. 16.

\(^{73}\) See the columns of Ergun Balci in Cumhuriyet, April 16,1996,p.11.Ibid., April 21, 1996, p.11 and Ibid., May 12, 1996, p.11.
concluded with Israel, no condemnation or criticism of Turkey in a manner responding to the Syrian request was incorporated into it. According to unidentified diplomatic sources, Jordan and the Persian Gulf states objected to Syrian requests not only because they did not want to confront Turkey, which had before the summit warned each participant Arab state - with the exception of Syria - against adopting any anti-Turkish resolutions that would result in serious damage to relations between Turkey and the Arab world, but also on the grounds that these states still felt threatened primarily by Iran (which happens to be on friendly terms with Syria) and not Turkey. 74

Secondly, as suggested by the internal picture of the Cairo summit of June 1996, the divisions among the regional states that oppose Turkish-Israeli military cooperation are no less sharp than the above-observed divisions between Turkey, Israel and the United States. In fact, this reflected the common and distinguishing characteristics of the political structure of the Middle East in the post-Cold War era. A common characteristic that drew the Middle East of the two different eras together was the continuation of the existence of regional alliances. What pulled them apart, however, was the fact that the alliances in the new era were much less identified concerning the borders that supposedly divided them. This seemed to be owing to the fact that they tended to be formed and operated much less on the initiation of the super power United States that on the initiatives of the individual countries motivated primarily by their perceived national interests. In fact, it is this continuing clash of the perceived national interests that applied both to the members of the triangular alliance and the regional states that oppose it that make them equally unpredictable in the future. The Turks and the Israelis who had been unprecedentedly drawn together in August 1958 by a common sense of threat emanating from the Arab nationalism led by Nasser and the pro-Soviet

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elements active in the region and which led them to conclude a "Peripheral Pact", pulled apart in the 1960s because of Turkey's need to break her perceived isolation and get support for her Cyprus cause. At the beginning of the 1970s, Turkey's economic needs served to strengthen the Turkish-Arab rapprochement increasingly at the expense of Israel. In the post-Cold War era, after having persistently urged Israel to keep this process going should the region face another violent conflict pronouncing the death of the present peace process which is already being declared in a state of coma, then Turkey may be compelled to reconsider its ties with Israel. One must also be cognizant of the deterrence purposes that have been one of the Turkish motivations in seeking expanded military and overall ties with Israel. This means that if and when the regional states take this Turkish heading seriously, and Turkey becomes satisfied in that respect, the strategic cooperation with Israel will cease to function as a political card for Turkey in its relations with Israel. It might even prove a political viability for Turkey in the case where Israel is perceived to persist in an unrelentingly uncompromising attitude concerning the peace process. If, political and economic circumstances prevailing in the early 1960s onward were sufficient to render the terms of the 1958 "pact" null and void, then there would be no reason to assume that the regional developments developed in the above mentioned directions would not render the much more flexible terms of the 'Turkish-Israeli Agreement on Military Training and Cooperation' of February 1996, if not null and void, then at least temporarily suspended.

The case of the regional countries opposing the Turkey-US-Israel triangle presents similar pictures. For example, aside from the divided picture revealed by the Cairo summit of June 1996, Syria and Iran find themselves in confrontation on the issue

of Iran's claim of sovereignty over three islands located in the Gulf, an issue touching on pan-Arab sentiments.\textsuperscript{76}

Before adopting the "sworn enemies" thesis, one must also be mindful of the fact that none of the regional states that oppose Turkish-Israeli military cooperation has been inclined to cut off its diplomatic relations with Turkey or avoid becoming engaged in close contacts if not cooperation with her, in contrast to their attitudes toward Turkey in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{77} On the contrary, the remarkable peace offensive, encompassing the major regional states, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Egypt, initiated by the coalition government led by Mesut Yilmaz during early February 1998 when the region was experiencing yet another crisis between Iraq and the United Nations, not only met a sympathetic response on the part of these countries but also produced some tangible fruits. One of the specific purposes of this Turkish initiative was to dispel the suspicions created in the minds of many regional states by the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement of February 1996 and to foster the relations between Turkey and those countries being negatively influenced by it. The other purpose was to take advantage of the prevailing atmosphere of anxiety on the part of the regional states to witness yet another incoming show of force between Iraq and the United States, in order to enlist their support behind a specific programme of action to build an atmosphere of peace and stability based on the spirit of regional cooperation. Accordingly, in a goodwill visit made by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem, in consultation with the United Nations to Baghdad on February 4-5, 1998, Turkey presented the Saddam Hussain regime with a four-fold plan of action to be implemented after Iraq fully conformed with the United Nations' resolution by starting to cooperate with the UN weapons inspection team. The plan included the following provisions: (a) the determination of a regional

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\textit{Milliyet}, January 2, 1997, p.15

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cooperation scheme in which Iraq would take part. (b) ensuring the territorial integrity of Iraq by allowing the regime in Baghdad to exercise its full sovereignty over all Iraq. (c) gradual lifting of the UN economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, (d) freeing the region of the weapons of mass destruction and its delivery system, i.e. missiles. Reportedly, Iraq accepted this programme.

This plan of action was also approved in a joint declaration made by Turkey and Jordan during a visit made by foreign minister Cem in late February. In the same declaration, the two states pledge their determination to do their best to promote a "Neighbourhood Forum" in the region to help the Middle East Peace Process, currently in a state of suspension, to resume its originally intended course. This joint declaration with Jordan underscored once again the role played by this Arab country in Turkey's post-Cold War Middle East policy. In the first place, she was a regional partner for Turkey in Turkey's efforts to contribute to building a comprehensive regional security framework in collaboration with Israel and the United States. Secondly, in her capacity as a moderate Arab state, Jordan was to play an instrumental role in Turkey's efforts to balance her relations with the Arabs in the wake of the military cooperation agreement Turkey had signed with Israel in February 1996.

The same February 1998 also witnessed undersecretary of Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry, Korkma Haktanir, paying an official visit to Tehran, and the Director of the Middle East Department of Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry, Aykut Cetirge visiting Damascus. Haktanir's visit constituted a genuine turning point in the relations between Turkey and Iran which had been widely strained in 1997, as mentioned before. The two countries agreed on the month of March as the date on which their ambassadors would resume their duties in their respective capitals. They also agreed on the restoration
of the joint cooperation on border security. The visit made by Ambassador Cetirge to Damascus carried in itself a historic importance, representing a Turkish step in the direction of starting a dialogue which had been cut off for three years dominated by an extreme tension between the two countries over the water and the PKK issues.

As for the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem, to Egypt that took place in March 1998, this too was a turning point in the relations between the two countries. It provided a momentum to their preparations for military cooperation involving strategic dialogue and cooperation on the defence industry, which they had already agreed upon during a visit made by the Turkish chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General, Ismail Hakki Karadayi, to Egypt in December 1997.

These developments in the relations between Turkey and these regional states in 1998 bear out, firstly, the assumption behind Turkey's post-Cold War Middle East policy that Turkey's relations with Israel are not necessarily an impediment for Turkey not only to maintain but also to improve her ties with the regional countries that oppose - Jordan excepted - or hold ambivalent attitude toward it, i.e. Egypt. From the perspective of both the West and the regional states, Turkey is too important a country to take the risk of alienating, not only because of her geopolitical location and historical background but also because she has by now built, as a matter of a conscious policy, ties with both Israel and the United States and the regional countries of all ideologies that are too strong to dispense with any of them. Obviously, Turkey will have to walk a fine line in the future to maintain balanced ties, despite her obvious difficulties when it comes to application of principle to specific cases, with both groups. But she has the political will, the expertise of about four decades, and proven diplomatic skills to accomplish the job.

\[82\] Cumhuriyet, May 16, 1998, p. 3.
In the second place, the factors and the forces that move or halt Middle East Peace Process are too complex to be "directed" or channelled into some desired directions at will, by any state alone - even the only remaining super power, the United States.\(^{83}\) Turkey can only hope to contribute to the process when asked to do so by both parties as they had in the past.\(^{84}\) Certainly when it comes to inducing Israel to make some constructive steps for the Peace Process, Turkey is much more advantageously located in regional politics than is her biggest rival, Egypt, who herself acknowledges that being an Arab state she cannot be expected to play a neutral role in this issue.\(^{85}\)

Thirdly, when it comes to the question of the PKK and water issues (for detail see chapter 3) are no less intricate than the future of the Middle East Peace Process. There seems no doubt that these have constituted the very essence of the limitations of Turkey, not only in her making a contribution to the progress of the peace process, but also in her being able to maintain her friendly ties with both Israel and the US and the regional states, including Jordan and Egypt, the two closes one. On the PKK issue, it is hard to evaluate the real significance of the recent Turkish-Syrian crisis of October 1998 for the future of Turkey's relations with her neighbours, aside from the fact that it ended with an apparent Turkish victory.

The water issue, which was analysed above in its connection with the PKK issue, is even more intricate in lending itself to make speculations concerning its implications for Turkey's relations with both her Western ally, US, and Israel and the regional states located at the opposing camp in the future. The Turks are already irritated at the possibility of a joint group of states involving both Israel and the US pressuring Turkey

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\(^{84}\) For example, Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu asked Turkey to take part in the international peace force that would replace the Israeli army when the latter withdraw from parts of the West Bank. *Milliyet*, January 7, 1997, p. 17.

\(^{85}\) See the statement made by the Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on the subject. Quoted in *Aflamdlitan, Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership*, p. 73.
to consent to conclude an agreement with the Syrian side to her liking, i.e. involving a provision to "partition" the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris. 86

As has been the case up until the present, the biggest threat to Turkey's long term functionalist regional policy in the future should come from the fact of reverse spill over that will continue to occur from the existing regional political conflicts into the realm of political regional economic cooperation which Turkey is eager to start in collaboration with all regional states and the United States.