

To my uncle, Metin Demirpolat

BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

"RUSSIA, TURKEY AND EURASIA:  
INTERSECTION OF TURKISH AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY SPHERES  
IN EURASIA"

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2001  
ANKARA

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## ABSTRACT

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The end of the Cold War, sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in early 1990s, and the drastic changes they cause in the international system, induced a substantial transformation in the global scale and in the ambiguously bordered space called Eurasia. Redefined international balances, posited the two regional powers who have struggled for dominance in the region for centuries, against each other. The short-lived Turkish-Soviet rapprochement during their respective revolutions at the beginning of the century, and the tensions of pre-World War II period ended with the joining of Turkey to the anti-Soviet Western alliance in 1952, and Cold War polarisation determined the character of bilateral relations throughout the following half of the century. As the USSR entered the process of collapse, Turkey began to formulate policies towards the ex-Soviet republics which, seemed to escape Russian attention, and tried to create a sphere of influence particularly over the Turkic states. Although these efforts were frustrated by the end of relative Russian isolation in 1992-1993 and turning its attention back in the former Soviet territory, Ankara succeeded in increasing its influence relatively in the Caucasus and Central Asia. In mid-1990s, two regional powers, despite the continuation of the struggle over Eurasia, managed to settle their bilateral relations over a strong basis.

This work aims to examine the clash of interests of Turkey and Russia over the former USSR territory besides their bilateral relations, and identify the major areas of conflict and possibilities for co-operation.

## ÖZET

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Soğuk Savaş'ın bitişi, Sovyetler Birliği'nin 1990'ların başında ansızın yıkılıvermesi ve bunların uluslararası sistemde yarattığı kökten değişiklikler, Küresel çapta olduğu kadar Avrasya olarak adlandırılan sınırları belirsiz bölgede de büyük bir dönüşüme yol açtı. Yeniden belirlenen uluslararası dengeler, yüzyıllarca birbirleriyle bölgesel egemenlik için kıyasıya çekişen iki büyük bölge gücü Türkiye ve Rusya'yı yeniden karşı karşıya bıraktı. İki ülkenin yüzyılın başında geçirdiği devrimler sırasında oluşan kısa süreli Türk-Sovyet yakınlaşması ve İkinci Dünya Savaşı öncesinde başlayan gerginleşme, Türkiye'nin 1952'de resmen Sovyet karşıtı batı bağlaşımına katılmasıyla yeni bir aşamaya girmiş, sonraki yarım yüzyıla yakın sürede ilişkilerin niteliğini Soğuk Savaş kutuplaşması belirlemiştir. SSCB'nin yıkılma sürecine girmesiyle Türkiye de Rusya gibi köklü bir dış politika dönüşümü yaşamaya başladı ve kuzey komşusunun ilgi alanından çıkmış gibi görünen eski Sovyet cumhuriyetlere yönelik politikalar üretmeye ve özellikle Türk devletleri üzerinde bir etki alanı yaratma çabasına girişti. Bu çabalar Rusya'nın 1992-1993 yıllarında dolaylı yalıtımından cayıp yeniden eski Sovyet topraklarına ilgisini yöneltmesiyle düş kırıklığı ile sona erdiyse de, Ankara Kafkaslar ve Orta Asya'da görece olarak etkisini arttırmayı başardı. İki bölgesel güç, 1990'ların ikinci yarısına doğru Avrasya üzerindeki itişmelerini sürdürmekle birlikte ikili ilişkileri sağlam bir temele oturtmayı bildiler.

İşbu çalışma, yukarıda belirtilen süreci izleyerek Türkiye ve Rusya arasındaki ikili ilişkilerin yanısıra iki devletin eski SSCB toprakları üzerindeki dolaylı çıkar çatışmalarını incelemeyi ve başlıca anlaşmazlık alanlarıyla, işbirliği olanaklarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Turkey and Russia had been natural adversaries through ages, because of their common geopolitical location, status and ambitions, therefore the expected friction caused 13 major wars and innumerable minor armed conflicts especially in the Black Sea, the Balkans and the Caucasus<sup>1</sup>. As an Christian-Orthodox/Muslim entity, Russia became an alternative to the Ottoman Empire in the region, which is itself an Christian-Orthodox/Muslim state. Russia, consequent to the reforms of Peter the Great, continuously expanded towards south at Ottoman expense, finally driving them out of the north of the Black Sea, the Caucasus and most of the Balkan peninsula. Since then Russia is perceived as the biggest threat to the very existence of Turkey. Tsar Nicholas I's appeal to the English representative for partitioning of the "Sick Man of Europe" in 1853 and active role of Moscow in the decline and partitioning of the Ottoman Empire are still vivid memories.

Turkish-Russian relations display a continuous history of conflict, with the exception of a few power balancing co-operation instances. The imperial rivalry ended with the death of both empires after World War I. Newly founded Soviet Union was the first European power to recognise the Ankara Government during the War of liberation in 1921. The unique Turkish-Russian political alliance lived short, because of the deaths of their leaders, and hostility renewed with Stalin's territorial claims to Eastern Turkey and joint control over the Straits after World War II. In response to increasing Soviet pressure, after a process began from 1939 onwards, Turkey eventually chose to join a formal alliance with the West in 1952, starting a period which the two countries remained within separate adversary ideological and military systems throughout the Cold War.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive account on Turkish-Russian relations and conflict throughout history see, Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya: XVII.Yüzyıl sonundan Kurtuluş Savaşına kadar Türk-Rus İlişkileri*, Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara, 1970.

This work, aims to update the struggle over Eurasia by shedding light over the post-Soviet space, Russia and Turkey as the main historical and contemporary rivals in the region, their foreign policy transformations, policies toward the region and each other, and present a framework that would help to have an insight on the possible and probable developments in the future of this part of the globe. Main concern is to assess the change in the balances between Turkey and Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. To this end, regional and global actors, processes and events will also be evaluated throughout the research.

In the first part of the thesis, the new Russian State's foreign policy construction and transformation will be analysed. The phases which Russian foreign policy evolved through and basic priorities and tasks of it will be identified. The second part will concentrate on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which became the main focus of the Russian Federation and its regional/global strategy, and analyse Moscow's policies towards the region through the decade. The final and main chapter will elaborate on the Turkish foreign policy transformation after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, its formulation and conduct over the post-USSR space, and Turkish relations with the Russian Federation, Caucasian and Central Asian states. Intersecting points of Turkish and Russian spheres of influence, major areas of contention and co-operation will be identified and evaluated, by implementing a historical/issue based methodology within the constraints of the theoretical framework of the discipline of international relations.

## Chapter I:

### THE BEAR'S AWAKE: FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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#### 2.1. Foreign Policy before the Independence

The foreign policy formulation and conduct of the USSR was a complex process of co-ordination between the party and state institutions which are complementary in nature. The main actor in policymaking and conduct was the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), while this power in the West is concentrated in the foreign ministries.<sup>1</sup> The Party had the final and determinant word on the foreign policy moves and diplomatic activities as the article 6 of the constitution of the USSR orders.<sup>2</sup>

The Party applied control over the foreign policy through the Politburo and the Secretariat<sup>3</sup>. However, since most of the members of these bodies were not qualified as foreign policy experts, the decisions were taken by a smaller group of members including the general secretary and the “power ministries”.<sup>4</sup> Certain agencies such as the Ministry of Defence, which had a narrow definition of national security on military terms, and Central Committee’s International Department, which is mostly concerned with the “zero sum game”, were as (or sometimes, more) influential as the foreign ministry on the orientation of policy.

The main aim of the foreign policy, its making and conduct was to safeguard the USSR, the “socialist island in the capitalist sea”, and to work for the triumph of Communism nationally and globally. The “internationalist” foreign policy aimed enhancing security and international influence of the Union. Until Mikhail Gorbachov, the “Brezhnev Doctrine”, by

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<sup>1</sup> N. N. Petro and A. Z. Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State*, Addison Wesley Longman, New York, 1997, pp. 92-93.

<sup>2</sup> *1977 Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1985, Article 6.

<sup>3</sup> The Politburo (Political Bureau) was a committee of supreme administrative power, with roughly 20 members, including the General Secretary of the CPSU, the premier, the first deputy premier, foreign, defence and KGB ministers, and various other government officials such as the heads of republic parties. The Secretariat, which headed the administrative branch of the CPSU, was a smaller size body with many members overlapping with the Politburo. The Politburo was nominally subordinate to the Central Committee, however, since Stalin, it has the real power.

which the USSR committed to “defend the common gains of socialism”, was the rule of conduct of foreign policy, which served as a pretext for interventions abroad such as the Warsaw Pact Organisation invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The main concern of the foreign policy of the USSR was the “World Revolution”.

Gorbachov and his “new thinking” (*novoe myshlenie*) separated from the traditional ways of the Soviet conduct on foreign affairs breaking the zero-sum game view of the world associated with the Marxist theory.<sup>5</sup> With the relative freedom of speech he brought with his reforms, most of the taboos and cults of the Soviet ideology opened to criticism as well as the internal and external policies of the administration. “Internationalist” interventions in the Eastern Europe recalled with resentment and contemporary interventions in Afghanistan and various other third world countries began to be the foci of incrementing criticism. Attempts to question the official ideology, to reinterpret Marxism-Leninism, and conceptualising the new notion of “humanitarian internationalism” to replace the communist internationalism shaped the period of Gorbachov<sup>6</sup>. The “new thinking”, posited the importance of common security in an international system with a number of nuclear powers and placed reduced emphasis on military power as a guarantor of security.<sup>7</sup> It had idealistically outlined an agenda for international affairs, in which wider global concerns are placed above the realistically defined “national interests” of the states.

Gorbachov’s efforts were concentrated on enhancing security rather than enhancing influence, and finally he sacrificed the latter for the sake of the former. Military, technical and economic support to the pro-Soviet third world countries around the globe were cut and withdrawal of Red Army troops from Afghanistan (1988) and Eastern Europe (1989) began. According to the new thinking, the use and maintenance of “military power, geopolitical

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<sup>4</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Amin Saikal and William Maley, “From Soviet to Russian Foreign Policy”, in Amin Saikal, ed. *Russia in Search of its Future*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, p.104.

<sup>6</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 96.

expansionism and empire building are outdated forms of international conduct”.<sup>8</sup> His new foreign minister Shevardnadze, parallel to Gorbachov’s reorganisation efforts of the party apparatus, started restructuring the foreign ministry, replacing all of the deputy ministers and three of four senior officials, creating new departments, changing the status of old ones and undercutting the power of the ministry bureaucracy.<sup>9</sup>

The struggle to tighten the grip of the foreign policy mechanism of the Gorbachov-Shevardnadze duo repeated in the process of RSFSR’s independence under Boris Yeltsin and Andrey Kozyrev. In the years of turmoil, Yeltsin, in search for more power in internal and external politics independent from the Union, sought to build the republic’s own institutions, among them the foreign ministry of Russia. Kozyrev, a former Union diplomat, became his accompany on the major task of shaping Russia’s foreign affairs.

## **2.2. After The Soviet Union: Yeltsin-Kozyrev Era**

During the years of transition from a Union republic to an independent member of the world community, Russia was a scene of restructuring old and creating new state institutions with a head-spinning pace, together with a painstaking effort to keep the state apparatus operational. This difficult task could only be accomplished by a highly qualified and aspiring team of technocrats. The new generation of administrators Yeltsin appointed for the transformation of the country in the period of 1990-1991 were called as the ‘Young Turks’ or ‘*mladoturki*’; a wide range of able bureaucrats in their thirties and forties.<sup>10</sup>

In December 1991, one of the most important milestones of the post-Soviet (almost) Russian history; the agreement between Russia, Ukraine and Belarus creating the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was signed in Belovezhskaya Pushcha near

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<sup>7</sup> Amin Saikal and William Maley, “From Soviet to Russian...”, p.104.

<sup>8</sup> Hannes Adomeit, “Russia as a ‘Great Power’ in World Affairs: Images and Reality”, *International Affairs (RIIA)*, vol. 71, no. 1, January 1995, p.42.

<sup>9</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, pp. 97-98.

Minsk. This agreement meant the *de jure* dissolution of the USSR, which was already a defunct entity. Having been initialised by only the three westernmost members of the Union, the initiative's consequences on internal and external policies were not really recognised at that time. The most important short-term target of Yeltsin and his counterparts in the other signatory states was to displace the political authority from the Union president Gorbachov.<sup>11</sup> The CIS expanded quickly to all of the former union republics (except the Baltics), broadening the scope and problems of the foreign policy makers, and initialising the euphoric debate between the "Atlanticists" and the "Eurasianists".<sup>12</sup>

### **2.2.1. In Search for a National Interest: Main Tasks of Foreign Policy**

The initial years of independence is a period of bitter search for a consistent and coherent foreign policy directed to a new 'national interest'. With the end of the half century long superpower confrontation, Russia, the largest and strongest heir to the USSR, is no longer a 'superpower' in the traditional meaning of the word, undressed of its global political influence and ambitions, lost most of the allies in Europe, and weakened militarily despite its large thermonuclear and conventional arsenal. Cold War grand strategy of confrontation until the triumph of World Revolution must be replaced with a new, more humble goal. The emphasis would no longer be on the "class interests" but on "national interests". Immediately before and after the demise of the union, RSFSR was, like most of the other republics, in the limbo with its crippled economy and ruined social system. The vacuum of political administration created by the disappearance of the Union institutions<sup>13</sup>, brought struggles

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<sup>10</sup> A more detailed account on the 'Young Turks' will be given below.

<sup>11</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> Many authors use different terms for these two camps; The 'Atlanticists' are frequently named as the 'Westerners' or 'Westernisers', while the 'Eurasianists' are called 'Eurasians' or 'Slavophiles'. Since the names Westerner, Westerniser or Slavophile can be easily confused with the sides of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophical debate among the Russian intelligentsia, the terms Atlanticist and Eurasianist will be used throughout this work.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that Russia, unlike the remaining 14 republics of former Soviet Union, did not have its own national state structure and institutions at the time of dissolution, therefore extra effort was needed to re-operate the policy making and implementation mechanisms.

between interest groups and camps of intelligentsia that shaped the first several years of the search for the new national interest.

Two main tasks of Russian foreign policy were, as stated by President Yeltsin; “to secure Russia's entry into the civilised [world] community, and to enlist maximum support for efforts toward Russia's transformation”<sup>14</sup>. Foreign Minister Kozyrev added a third task; to develop good relations with Russia's new neighbours, the former republics of the Soviet Empire.<sup>15</sup> To salvage its crippled economy, Russia needed a rapid and healthy transformation of its system, particularly the economic structures. To do so, Western economic know-how and material aid was needed, and securing that help was the immediate task of Russian foreign policy.

In the search for the new national interest for the Russian State, the president and his team had to accept the new geopolitical status the country left with, and formulate strategies according to this new ecosystem. The relation of Russia with the rest of the world (can be read as the ‘West’ of the world) started as a ‘romantic euphoria’<sup>16</sup>, which had faded by the gradual realisation of the geopolitical realities and settlement of balances in the region. The end of this early romantic period also signalled the commencement of a new debate over what should constitute the national interest of new Russia; between the “Atlanticists”, who argued that Russia should approach to the West further for salvation; and the “Eurasianists”, who were against closer relationship with and “dependence” to the West, emphasising the distinct “Russian character and mission” of state.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Russian TV*, 13 February, 1992, 10:00 am, as cited in Suzanne Crow, "Russian Federation Faces Foreign Policy Dilemmas", *RFE/RL Russian Report*, 6 March 1992, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Interfax*, 25 February 1992

<sup>16</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 99.

<sup>17</sup> This debate was basically concerned with the foreign affairs, but in fact a more integral and general question of the future character of the Russian state and nation was the core of the argument. In many ways it resembled the 19<sup>th</sup> century debate between the *Zapadniki* (Westerners) and *Slavyanofili* (Slavophiles) among the members of the highly active Russian intelligentsia on the “cultural identity” of the country, and the concept of *Yevraziystvo* (Eurasianness) re-emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, when Russian émigrés in Europe tried to find a compromise with the Stalinist version of Socialism. These inter-war Eurasianists published a collection of essays entitled “Exit to the East” (*Iskhod k vostoku*), through which they strongly opposed Western-style democracy,

### 2.2.2. The Atlanticists versus the Eurasianists<sup>18</sup>

In 1991, Yeltsin replaced the higher bureaucrats of the old Party *apparatus* with a group of relatively young politicians, who were called as the “Young Turks”. Besides the new deputy chairman of the RSFSR government, Gennadiy Burbulis, the group was including the well-known economist Yegor Gaydar, who was in charge of introducing market economy to Russia. Interesting part is that the most prominent representatives of the camps, which will later be labelled as Atlanticists and Eurasianists; foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev and state advisor, Sergey Stankevich were also among the names linked with the *mladoturki*.<sup>19</sup> Their common goal then was separating the paths of the drowning USSR and the newly born RSFSR, replacing the communist system with liberal market economy and a Western style democracy, but they also sought to inherit the superpower status of the USSR, arguing that a democratic superpower in Eurasia would strengthen security regionally and globally.<sup>20</sup>

In the international arena, their aim was to retain the status of the former Union as a world power and to keep the seat in the UN Security Council, arguing that the RSFSR is the main heir of the USSR. Keeping the international esteem (and self-esteem) became one of the most important issues of the Russian foreign policy from then on. As the Speaker of the Supreme Soviet, Ruslan Hasbulatov stated: "a major task of Russia's foreign policy and diplomacy is to contribute to the efforts to create ... [a] place *commanding respect in the*

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promoted an authoritarian form of rule that consult the *vox populi*. They believed that Russians are inherently incapable of participating in Western culture. These Eurasianists also considered the word “Russia” was a misnomer for the historical and cultural entity it designated. Instead, they argued, Russia should be termed “Eurasia” (Yevraziya) since it is a compound of Slavic, Turkish, Iranian, Christian, Muslim, etc components.

<sup>18</sup> It must be remembered that the political spectrum in Russia was and is too complicated to allow a simple division into two distinct clear-cut camps. Many analysts make more complicated lists of political affiliations, however, taking the basic attitudes towards world politics into account, the terms Atlanticist and Eurasianist can share almost all of the political spectrum in Russia. For different categorisations of the Russian schools of thought in foreign policy, see Alexei Arbatov, “Russian Foreign Policy Thinking in Transition,” in Baranovsky, Vladimir, ed., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1997, pp. 135-159; Alexander A. Sergounin, “Russian Post-Communist Foreign Policy Thinking in the Cross-roads: Changing Paradigms”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 2000.

<sup>19</sup> See Alexander Rahr, “Russia’s Young Turks’ in Power”, *Report on the USSR*, no 47, 1991, p.20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p.20.

*world community*".<sup>21</sup> The foreign minister confirmed this task and elaborated the new Russian notion of "great power" (*velikaya derzhava*<sup>22</sup>);

"No doubt Russia will not cease to be a great power. But it will be abnormal great power. Its national interests will be a priority. But these will be interests understandable to democratic countries, and Russia will be defending them through interaction with partners, not through confrontation ..... The new openness also presupposes a fundamental change in Russia's attitude towards the United States, the West and NATO. Russia does not wish to bear any unnatural military responsibility beyond its borders. The time of world policemen is over, as is the era of military confrontation."<sup>23</sup>

Another important aspect of the *mladoturetskiy* foreign policy ideas is that they were not in favour of altering the borders between the Union republics and not interested in defence of the Russians abroad; mainly in the Ukraine (the Crimea) and Kazakstan. This argument was based on the premise that the Russian-origin minorities in the former-Soviet republics are large enough to defend their own rights and existence, but the main motive was to eliminate the danger of disintegration of the RSFSR itself, by legitimising the federation's borders.<sup>24</sup>

What Yeltsin envisioned at the beginning of the transition period was a new Russia, based on democratic institutions and the rule of law, integrated to the future common political system of industrial countries in the northern hemisphere<sup>25</sup>. To this end, he enlisted bureaucrats and diplomats most of which fall into the definition of an Atlanticist, and implemented pro-Western, politically westernising policies immediately. These diplomats led by Kozyrev dominated the foreign policy making processes in the first couple of years of independence. The Atlanticists can be described as democratic-minded diplomats whose ideas were shaped under the influence of Gorbachov's "common European home" and the "new

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<sup>21</sup> *Interfax*, 26 February 1992

<sup>22</sup> The Russian word for "state" that means the whole of the institutions through which the political power is exercised is *gosudarstvo*. The word *derzhava* also has the meaning of "state", but denotes its nature as an actor in the international politics. When a Russian leader speaks about his state being a great power, he would most likely use the word *derzhava*.

<sup>23</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, "Russia: A Chance for Survival", *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1992, Vol. 71, No. 2, pp. 10,13

<sup>24</sup> see Alexander Rahr, "Russia's Young Turks'...", p.23

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Rahr, "Atlanticists versus Eurasians in Russian Foreign Policy", *RFE/RL Russian Report*, 29 May 1992, vol 1, no 22, p 17.

thinking"<sup>26</sup>. Most of these diplomats were positioned in influential posts in the ministry by Shevardnadze, during his restructuring operation parallel to Gorbachov's.

The official line of Atlanticist foreign policy envisioned a quick incorporation into the Western world. They sought to join in most of the Western organisations, economic or political, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), G-7, and even NATO<sup>27</sup>. For the ruling élite, international economic organisations and platforms were crucial for the salvation of the system in Russia, which is on the brink of a social eruption. They believed that, with the huge industrial complex, developed infrastructure, well-trained manpower and huge potential of raw materials, Russia deserved to be inside the club of developed/industrialised countries, the G-7<sup>28</sup>. Kozyrev called for a two-stage transformation of G-7 into a G-8, commencing with closer co-operation in political issues and finalising with the integration of Russia into the world economy.<sup>29</sup>

The Eurasianists were rather discontent with the fully western oriented Russian foreign policy under Kozyrev and Yeltsin. They believed that Russia should not abandon the South, because of its strong historical and cultural ties and a "specific role as a mediator" between civilisations.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p 17.

<sup>27</sup> For statements of high ranking Russian officials on membership to NATO, see *Diplomaticeskij Vestnik*, no. 1, 15 January 1992, p.13, Hannes Adomeit, "The Atlantic Alliance in Soviet and Russian Perspective", in Neil Malcolm, ed., *Russia and Europe: An End to Confrontation?*, RIIA, London, 1994, pp.31-54.

<sup>28</sup> Like Turkey putting membership to the European Union in the centre of its foreign policy and taking it as a principal measure of international success, and China seeking membership to WTO with a similar motive, Russia put great importance on the issue of accession to the G-7. Being the eight country in the club would mean international recognition of Russian claims to be a great power in the "new multipolar order". Although Yeltsin and, after him Putin have gradually been granted a status close to full membership, Russia's role has still had symbolic significance. The old seven continue to meet separately to discuss economic issues on which Russia lacks the standing for an equal role. Thus, Russia's participation in the G-8 remains largely decorative. For a more detailed account on Russia and the G-8, see Stephen Sestanovich, "Where does Russia Belong?", *The National Interest*, no.1, Winter 2000, pp. 6-7.

<sup>29</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, "The Lagging Partnership", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1994, vol. 73, no. 3, p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Rahr, "Atlanticists versus Eurasians...", p. 17.

“Russia’s role in the world is ... to initiate and maintain a multilateral dialogue between cultures, civilisations and states. It is Russia which reconciles, unites and coordinates... This land in which East and West, North and South are united, is unique, and is perhaps the only one capable of harmoniously uniting many different voices in a historical symphony.<sup>31</sup>

The Eurasianists argued that the new national interest must be defined according to the indigenous traditions and character of Russian State and Nation, not as simply adapting Western practices. They believed that Russia represented a distinctive third civilisation between the West and the East, Europe and Asia proper for ages, with its cosmopolite composition of peoples, vast territory stretching from Europe to the Pacific and its integrative perspective on world politics created by its history of frequent interaction with most distant corners of the planet. If this mediating role was abandoned, Russia would only be a secondary regional power doomed to left out of major international affairs.

Sergey Stankevich, political advisor of the president, was one of the most well-known outspokenly-Eurasianist politicians. In early 1990s he was viewed as the most important figure of the so-called Eurasianist lobby, and a possible replacement for the foreign minister, in case the balances shift away from the Atlanticist side. He was a harsh critic of Kozyrev directly and Yeltsin indirectly, arguing that the post-Soviet policy was nothing but a simple strategy to join the Group of Seven<sup>32</sup>. According to Stankevich Russia must reorient its diplomatic efforts to re-establish relations with the Muslim world in general, and the ex-Soviet Turkic states in particular, without alienating the Western world. Since Russia did not have the material capability to compete with the industrialised West, closer economic co-operation and increase in trade relations with the developing countries should be sought in the first phase of a catch-up strategy<sup>33</sup>.

Despite of the pressure it created over the Atlanticists, the Eurasianist opposition also had uses in relations with the West for Kozyrev and his adherents. The existence of the

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<sup>31</sup> Sergei Stankevich, “Derzhava v poiskakh Sebya” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 March 1992, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Eurasianist camp, which can be easily linked with the neo-imperialist tendencies of the communists and the ultra-nationalists, helped Kozyrev and his team for extortion of foreign aid from the West, by repeating the dangers of letting down the reformers in Russia. They frequently emphasised that their alternative is a ultra-nationalistic hard-liner administration which would probably return to authoritarian rule and isolate Russia again from the World.

### **2.2.3. Towards a Consensus: Change in Russian Foreign Policy**

President Yeltsin's stance was much closer to the Atlanticists in the initial years. He strongly believed that the most important priorities of the new Russian state were the Western style democracy and free market economy. Yeltsin and his administration also felt the necessity to emphasise that Russia is no longer an imperialistic power. In practice, Russia decreased its diplomatic activity in the former USSR republics to the lowest level, and withdrew its troops from many hot areas (e.g. Mountainous Karabağ, the Baltics).

In August 1992, Kozyrev had stated that his critics with a "besieged-fortress mentality and the psychology of mistrust of the US, of other western countries, and of other democratic states" would turn Russia back into the imperial state it used to be, which would threaten the others, especially its neighbours.<sup>34</sup> A transformation towards this direction, according to Kozyrev, would lead to a dead-end, which is isolation in international affairs.<sup>35</sup> The fear of a neo-imperial take-over of power in Russia is voiced again in front of foreign diplomats in his speech in a session of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Meeting of the Council of Ministers in Stockholm in 14 December 1992.<sup>36</sup> However, under

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<sup>33</sup> Alexander Rahr, "Atlanticists versus Eurasians...", p 20.

<sup>34</sup> *Russian TV*, 2 August 1992, as cited in Suzanne Crow, "Why has Russian Foreign Policy Changed?", *RFE/RL Russian Report*, 6 May 1994, Vol. 3, No 18, p1

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Kozyrev started his speech threatening that Russia would use all available means including force to defend its interests in its former empire, and then explained to the petrified crowd that what he said was a joke intended to demonstrate what might happen if the "non-democrats" took power in Russia. See Martin Walker, "Return of the Soviet Empire", *World Press Review*, April 1994, Vol. 41, p. 8. Also see Dimitri Simes, "The Return of Russian History", *Foreign Affairs* (Moscow), January/February 1994, Vol. 73, No. 1, p.79.

strong opposition from different segments and strata of the society and political élite, Russian foreign policy became cruder and more aggressive within a couple of years. Yeltsin had to make concessions to the adversaries of his policies, and this process gradually moved the weight towards the Eurasianist doctrine. Kozyrev too, had to choose to obediently follow the line of evolution of the president instead of confronting it openly, since the president was his only pillar of support in all power structures.<sup>37</sup> The reached common ground for the two competing visions of foreign policy direction was symbolised with the legislation of the important document of 'Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation' in Spring 1993.<sup>38</sup> This document illustrated how much the Russian foreign policy turned inward, even isolationist, in its new definition of the fundamental national interests.<sup>39</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept was followed by another important document in Autumn 1993, the "Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation"<sup>40</sup> which defined the role of the Russian Military with respect to the foreign and security policies of the Federation.

The three main reasons for the change in the attitude of the foreign policy makers were; the challenge of Russian Nationalism, the rejection of the role of junior partner to the

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<sup>37</sup> Nodari Simonia, "Priorities in Russian Foreign Policy and the Way It Works", in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, p. 35. In the Spring of 1994 to explain his shift in his views, Kozyrev stated that as a democrat he felt constrained to take public opinion into account on foreign policy matters. See *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 20 January 1994.

<sup>38</sup> The initial document was heavily influenced by the liberal international vision of Kozyrev, who too the documents and charter of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and other international institutions as his "holy book". The initial document favoured the promotion of interests through participation in different international organisations in the first place. However, the International Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet led by its chairman Yevgeniy Ambartsumov, rejected the draft concept and sent it back to the minister for reworking. Ambartsumov advocated a Russian style Monroe Doctrine declaring the entire post-Soviet territory as the Russian sphere of influence and vital interests, and greater effort on protection of the ethnic Russians throughout this region. The reworked document which was finalised in the spring of 1993, included a mixed set of these arguments. Jeffrey Checkel, "Structure, Institutions and Process: Russia's Changing Foreign Policy", in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, pp. 53-54.

<sup>39</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 100.

<sup>40</sup> For detailed information about the military doctrine of 1993, see Vladislav Chernov, "Significance of the Russian Military Doctrine", *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 13, no. 2, April/June 1994, pp.161-166, Sergei Kortunov, "International and Domestic Political Factors in the Formulation of Military Doctrine and Military-Technical Policy in Russia", *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 13, no. 1, January/March 1994, pp. 43-47.

West; and the influence of the military.<sup>41</sup> Although this list brings the risk of oversimplification of the processes leading to the transformation of the foreign policy, it successfully singles out the main reason as the superpower complex of the pride-broken Russians. Besides these domestic causes, some events on the international arena facilitated the consensus in foreign policy, such as the Atlanticists' disappointment of the Western powerlessness in stopping the war in the Balkans, and the increasing ethnic and political tensions in the post-Soviet space; especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia. At the turn of 1992, most of the members of the Atlanticist camp were frustrated with the reality that Russia failed to quickly transform into a western-style great power with a salvaged economy.<sup>42</sup>

The role of the influential military establishment and arms industry in the change of foreign policy direction cannot be denied. Especially after the demise of the Union, Russia was left with its weak and low-tech industry, which was no match for western competition. The Russian market was easily and quickly invaded by western consumer products and the Russian goods were swept away. The only branch of industry which stand a chance against world brands was the arms industry, with the enormous legacy of the military-industrial complex of the USSR. Russia should sell weapons to cover the expenditures, and the primary role was assumed by newly established weapon import-export monopoly Rosvooruzhenie<sup>43</sup> on this task. Rosvooruzhenie had the advantage of being the monopoly on military vehicles and weapons in the armies of the members of the Warsaw Pact, most of which still depended on these systems. A more assertive foreign policy towards the ex-socialist states and former Union republics would supply Russian industry with greater number of clients and deal

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<sup>41</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Why has Russian Foreign Policy Changed?", p.1.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p 5.

<sup>43</sup> The public arms export-import company Rosvooruzhenie was established by the decree of the President dated 18 November 1993 in order to make investments within the military-industrial complex framework, "for the development and promotion of competitive types of armaments and military equipment into the world market". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was charged with the task of aiding the new corporation. *Moskovskiy Novosti*, 19 December 1993, cited in "Nodari Simonia, "Priorities in Russian Foreign Policy and the Way It Works", in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, pp. 32-33.

possibilities, with increasing need for security measures within the country and in the borders of the CIS countries. Therefore, the support of the military and the civilian élite is crucial for the fate of the leadership and its policies, especially concerning foreign affairs. The durability of the Russian foreign policy depended on the durability of the consensus between the diplomats, the politicians and the soldiers.<sup>44</sup> This kind of a consensus was created during 1993, with the formulation of the Foreign Policy Concept and the Military Doctrine, indicating the adequate level of harmonisation of these groups' interests.

Among the above listed possible causes of the direction change, Western treatment of Russia as inferior is quite important, at least because of its influence on the rhetoric of the leadership who was still uneasy of its shaky grip on power. In Early 1994, Yeltsin was talking about Western discrimination against Russia and attempts to force Russia into the role of junior partner in international affairs.<sup>45</sup> Russian foreign ministry's reaction to the Western military intervention in the Bosnian War was clearly reflected this sense of humiliation: "Moscow will not accept being informed on decisions to utilise force in ex-Yugoslavia as a *fait accompli*. Russia is not a banana republic but a permanent member of the UN Security Council."<sup>46</sup> During a visit to India, one of the most important Eastern would-be-allies and would-be trade-partners in the Eurasianists' shortlist, he also told that Russia is "moving away from Western emphasis" in diplomacy.<sup>47</sup>

With this bent in the direction of the foreign policy, Yeltsin and Kozyrev found themselves speaking with the tone of their hard-line opponents of a couple of years ago.<sup>48</sup> The share of relations with the former allies and Union republics grew in their speeches, the concern about the Russians and Russian-speaking minorities abroad started to be voiced louder and diplomatic activity in the CIS intensified. In the messages to the West, the pretext

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<sup>44</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Why has Russian Foreign Policy Changed?", p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 25 April 1994, and *Russian TV*, 12 April 1994, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Economist*, vol. 331, no. 7859, 16 April 1994, p.54.

<sup>47</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, 30 January 1993

was to prevent the neo-imperialist forces from exploiting the social discontent about the alleged bad treatment of Russians in the NIS and the Western indifference to the heavy economic conditions the country is in. “Russia and the Russian people sense that Russia needed a more independent and assertive foreign policy”, Kozyrev argued, if the “democrats” (read “Atlanticists/Westerners” or simply, “us”) fail to secure Western recognition of Russia’s status and significance as a world power, and treatment as an equal, they would “be swept away by a wave of aggressive nationalism” which is exploiting this need for national and state self-assertion.<sup>49</sup>

Today Russia faces a historic choice – either proceed with the difficult task of continuing reforms or face the danger of slipping into one or another form of extremism. And it is now that Russia needs to be sure that the world needs it as a strong member in the family of free, law-based, democratic states and not as a “sick man” of Europe and Asia. Supportive policies are the best investments for the West, but they cannot be motivated by paternalism or an assumed inequality. *Russia is predestined to be a great power*. It remained as such for centuries in spite of repeated internal upheavals. *What matters now is whether it is resurrected as a hostile nation under nationalist rule or as a peaceful and democratic one.*<sup>50</sup> (italics added)

The change in the foreign policy welcomed by many critics of Kozyrev and his line of policy. Increasing number of frustrated officials and politicians, most of whom are ex-Soviet officials, were joining the audience applauding for the change and looking for more concessions in order to see the “empire” up and running again. This change of tide against the Atlanticists meant the rise of the *derzhavniki* or *gosudarstvenniki* (proponents of state power), who were in favour of maximisation of the power of the state regardless of the arguments over cultural identity or foreign policy orientation.<sup>51</sup>

The growing support for the ultra-nationalist movements like Zhirinovskiy’s and communists under Zyuganov, who became much alike in their rhetoric<sup>52</sup>, and the increasing

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<sup>48</sup> Dimitri Simes, “The Return of Russian History”, pp. 79-80.

<sup>49</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, “The Lagging Partnership”, p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander A. Sergounin, “Russian Post-Communist Foreign Policy Thinking in the Cross-roads: Changing Paradigms”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 2000, pp. 222-223.

<sup>52</sup> Ultra nationalists and Communists frequently collaborated (“Red-Brown coalition”); for example, they voted to release those who had led both the 1991 coup against Gorbachov, and the 1993 insurrection in the parliament.

influence of the hard-liner rhetoric on the actual conduct of foreign policy alerted many Russians as well as foreigners. Increasing suspicion of the revival of the USSR in any form alerted the Western leaders and their counterparts in the periphery of the Russian Federation, who are haunted by the memories of the Soviet past and the Cold War.

Among several events which qualify as possible reasons of the policy transformation, the unexpectedly high popular support for the “patriotic” parties (particularly the Liberal Democrat Party of Russia (LDPR) of the ultra-nationalist Zhirinovskiy) in the elections of 12 December 1993 is outstanding.<sup>53</sup> In the West, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and his extreme nationalist rhetoric became the symbol of the danger of return of imperialism in Russia, and scenarios of revival of the Soviet Union brought into argument again.<sup>54</sup> He spoke about restoring Russia to the imperial frontiers of 1900, which included Poland and Finland, and a rapid expansion southward until the Russian soldiers “wash their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean.”<sup>55</sup> In fact, besides his temporarily high support and charismatic character fitting in the strong leader image of Russians, Zhirinovskiy was highly overestimated in the West as a political figure and a future leader, partly because of its extraordinary style and attention-grabbing performance. The new democracy in Russia proved to be strong and stable enough to keep extremists away from power so far. Zhirinovskiy and LDPR marginalised in the legislative bodies and reduced to a mere spoilsport.

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For further examples, see Jacob W. Kipp, “The Zhirinovskiy Threat”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1994, Vol. 73, No. 3, pp. 72-86. Zyuganov’s Eurasianist-style ideas parallel to ultra-nationalists can be observed in, *Sovremennaya Russkaya Ideya i Gosudarstvo*, Rau-Korporatsiya, Moscow, 1995, pp. 27-60. See also his *My Russia: The Political Autobiography of Gennady Zyuganov*, M.E.Sharpe, Armonk, 1997, pp. 91-137.

<sup>53</sup> Zhirinovskiy drew 6 million votes, almost 8 percent of the total election returns, to finish third in the Russian presidential election won by Ye’tsin in 1991. In the 1993 Duma elections his support increased to 25 percent.

<sup>54</sup> Two major mass demonstrations and frequent smaller ones strengthened the suspicion by 1994. On 9 May, about 15 thousand people gathered outside Lubyanka to hear the speeches of former vice-president of Russia, Aleksandr Rutskoy and numerous other nationalist politicians, calling for the restoration of the Soviet Union. The second major demonstration was held 3 days later by the Communist party, gathering a crowd of some 5000 people at the Ismailovskiy Park. It was reported that the demonstrators waving Soviet flags also burned the Russian flag ritually. See John W. R. Lepingwell, “The Soviet Legacy and the Russian Foreign Policy”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, No. 23, 10 June 1994, p 7.

<sup>55</sup> Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, *Poslednyi brodok na yug*, Izdatel’stvo LDP, Moscow, 1993, pp. 62-64.

Actually, Zhirinovskiy's perception in the West was a handy tool for the 'liberal' Russian politicians to preserve their 'dove' image and to display what would happen if Russia would be isolated from the world.<sup>56</sup> Yeltsin administration frequently used this card against unfavourable acts of the Western powers, such as the NATO enlargement proposal. In an interview with a American newspaper, Kozyrev stated that this enlargement will strengthen Zhirinovskiy.<sup>57</sup> The 'liberals and democrats' in power kept taking advantage of the misleadingly named<sup>58</sup> Liberal Democrat Party of Zhirinovskiy as a scarecrow or a scapegoat in masking the frequent hawkish conduct of Russian foreign policy in the region. He could also serve as a safety gauge for the ultra-nationalistic tendencies in the country, since the movement's leader "with its rash, outlandish statements to the press, [is] a self-destructive clown"<sup>59</sup> who keeps popular support to his party below the possible level.<sup>60</sup>

In the West, there was a strong tendency to view Russia as a defeated superpower that must go through a period of reflection and redemption as Germany and Japan did after the World War II.<sup>61</sup> Being aware of this and the fragile nature of the Russian restructuring process and ramshackle political system, the Westerners tried to act as careful as possible in matters related to Russia. The formulation of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative instead of a crude NATO enlargement is a vivid example for this cautious attitude. Another example was displayed during the insurgency in Moldova when the initially indecisive Russian government's interference in the crisis was encouraged by the western silence.<sup>62</sup> Scholar

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<sup>56</sup> Vitaliy Portnikov, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 20 January 1994

<sup>57</sup> *New York Times*, 29 December 1993

<sup>58</sup> Kipp argues that Zhirinovskiy's choice of the name "liberal democrat" was no accident, but a conscious effort to distinguish his movement from other nationalist movements that range from monarchist to communist. With the word "liberal", he aimed to invoke the idea that the party is close to the centre. See Jacob W. Kipp, "The Zhirinovskiy Threat", pp.75-76.

<sup>59</sup> Jacob W. Kipp, "The Zhirinovskiy Threat", p. 72.

<sup>60</sup> The overall popular support of the "patriots" including the LDPR decreased from 19 percent of 1995 presidential elections to 7 percent in the next elections in 1999. The Communists kept their vote in the level of one-third of the Russian electorate. The biggest increase was in the vote for the centrist parties, who were less in number compared to the previous elections. See Boris Nemtsov, "Reform for Russia: Forging a New Domestic Policy", *Harvard International Review*, Summer 2000, Vol. 22, No. 2, p.19.

<sup>61</sup> Dimitri Simes, "The Return of Russian History", p. 77.

<sup>62</sup> Andranik Migranyan, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 14 January 1994.

Dimitri Simes, foresaw the US attitude concerning the expected "stabilising role" of RF in the former USSR territory as turning a blind eye at worst, or tacit approval at best.<sup>63</sup> The passing years proved the accuracy of this prediction especially for the case of Central Asia and to a lesser extent for the Caucasus. This careful approach of the west, particularly the US evolved into a more hawkish one, as the assertiveness of Russian foreign policy increased through years. Tensions over nuclear issues, Russian relations with technology transfer to Iran and India, rivalry in the Caucasus over Caspian oil and arms sales to China increased the contempt between the two states. The relation between the US and the Russian Federation can be described as a love and hate relationship<sup>64</sup>, which started as a passionate love (1991-1992) and turned into hatred in 1993. Ambassador Lukin, to explain this tidal behaviour of US policy towards Russia, summarised the Americans' dual image of the Russian Federation as "the Cold War rival" and "America's democratic junior partner".<sup>65</sup>

### **2.3. Maturity in Foreign Policy**

The phase of institutionalisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was mostly completed under Kozyrev's administration.<sup>66</sup> Besides the transfer of the diplomatic authority from the late USSR to the new Russian State, the restructuring of the ministry was also accomplished with a dazzling speed. Older generation Soviet diplomats and ones with communist tendencies were removed and replaced by new minister's generation of younger diplomats who are already experienced in various important levels of the ministry. Institution's hierarchical and organisational structure was also altered, abolishing the old departmental system and introducing new departments, smaller in number but adequate in

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<sup>63</sup> Dimitri Simes, *The Boston Globe*, 14 January 1994, as cited in Suzanne Crow, "Why has Russian Foreign Policy Changed?", p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> Aleksey Pushkov, "Letter from Eurasia: Russia and America: The Honeymoon is Over", *Foreign Policy*, no 93, Winter 1993-1994, p. 77.

<sup>65</sup> *The Washington Post*, 4 April 1994

<sup>66</sup> For Kozyrev's starting team, see Suzanne Crow, "Personnel Changes in the Russian Foreign Ministry", *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 16, 17 April 1992, pp. 19-22.

covering the international issues efficiently.<sup>67</sup> This restructuring operation was crucial for the separation of “Russian” foreign policy mechanism from that of the Soviet Union, and it brought the needed fresh blood to the ministry itself, however, in the short-run, dramatically downsized its ability to formulate and conduct an effective foreign policy. The violent decentralisation of the foreign policy making mechanism with the dissolution of the USSR led to a short period of anarchy and loose co-ordination between agencies brought a reactionary act of recentralisation in 1993. In the long-term, this tidal movement helped the creation of a relatively stable and effective decentralised mechanism.

The change in the balances in Russian domestic policy forced president Yeltsin to sack Kozyrev who, according to the president, failed to ensure “dignity, predictability and reliability”<sup>68</sup> in foreign policy, to strengthen his position for the presidential election in June 1996 against his opponents who were highly critical of the administration’s pro-western policies. On 9 January 1996, the head of Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), Yevgeniy Primakov was appointed as the new foreign minister. He was an expert on the Middle Eastern affairs, who served as the director of the prestigious Soviet think tank; the Institute for International Economics and International Relations (IMEMO) which had an important role in formulating Gorbachov’s “new thinking” in foreign policy.<sup>69</sup>

Primakov immediately publicised the new official direction of the foreign ministry in his first press conference as minister. His top four priorities were; fostering external conditions that strengthen the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, encouraging peaceful integrative processes among the members of the CIS, stabilising regional conflicts in the CIS and former Yugoslavia, and finally, preventing the spread of weapons of mass

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<sup>67</sup> Seven new departments were introduced in the initial phase; Europe, North America, Central and South America, Africa, the Near East, Asia-Pacific Region, South-West Africa. Another one for the relations with the CIS states added in May 1992. For detailed information on the structure of the Russian Foreign Ministry, see Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, Routledge, London, 1993, pp. 286-321.

<sup>68</sup> Aleksey Pushkov, “Kozyrev Credibility, Support Base Examined”, *Moscow News*, 5-11 May 1995, p.2.

<sup>69</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 102.

destruction.<sup>70</sup> The new priorities declared by Primakov clearly illustrated the shift of Russian foreign policy away from the West and toward the “Near Abroad”. Immediately after the settlement of the changes in the ministry, he set off for a tour of CIS states, and launched a mission of shuttle diplomacy between Yerevan and Baku in search for a solution to the Karabağ conflict. Although seemed to be more assertive than his predecessor, in fact, Primakov was merely continuing the process of further integration of the CIS “around and under” Russia which had already started under Kozyrev.

Under Primakov, Russian foreign policy, leaving behind the “liberal internationalism” aimed at the country’s fastest possible integration into the Western community, “appeared to become rooted in more down-to-earth national self-interest aimed at regaining an important position in the world”.<sup>71</sup> This phase of foreign policy occasionally has led to disagreements and even friction with the West, especially with the US. Primakov followed a more anti-American – but not anti-Western – line, calling for multipolarity in international politics<sup>72</sup>. In a couple of years, with the observable change to better in the ministry’s performance and his “rejection of vulgar pro-Americanism”, Primakov garnered more support from intellectuals and politicians.<sup>73</sup> Although his tone resembled old Soviet imperial style occasionally, he refrained from a shift towards isolation or confrontation with the US. He preferred equidistance to all major foci of power on the globe and flexibility in overall foreign policy.

Primakov brought his style to the ministry. His credentials as a pragmatic, experienced and respected Soviet-style diplomat<sup>74</sup>, put him above immediate criticism of the nationalists and communists, and his pragmatic character made him “a more solid centre of gravity in the

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<sup>70</sup> Scott Parrish, “Primakov on Russian Foreign Policy”, *OMRI Daily Digest*, 31 January 1996.

<sup>71</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “Primakov’s Russia: Steady as She Goes”, *IC World View*, 12 March 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Anatoliy Repin, “The Role of Follower is not for Us: Yevgeniy Primakov on Basic Guidelines of Russia’s Foreign Policy”, *FBIS-SOV-96-124*, 25 June 1996.

<sup>73</sup> Dimitriy Yevstafyev, “Trip without a Compass: Moscow’s Foreign Policy Held Hostage by Economy”, *FBIS-SOV-97-357*, 23 December 1997.

<sup>74</sup> Although he was seen as a pragmatic diplomat, it should be remembered that he was the director of an intelligence agency, and his world view was shaped by the long history of bipolar superpower confrontation.

foreign policy élite.”<sup>75</sup> This wide range support gave him a larger area of manoeuvre than Kozyrev, who occasionally had to make verbal and actual concessions to the “patriotic” opposition to buy room for his westward policies. According to Russian analyst Trenin; “both inside and outside Russia, whereas Kozyrev may have been liked without being respected, Primakov is more often respected than liked. Where Kozyrev would talk softly but fail to deliver, Primakov will speak gruffly but reach agreements that stick.”<sup>76</sup>

His most important achievement concerning the foreign policy of Russia, is to take it out of the influence of domestic politics. He got “foreign help” in achieving this, in the form of international issues around the borders of the Federation, such as the eastward expansion of NATO, and wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, which led to a domestic consensus in the country. This consensus can be singled out as the most important cause of the extinguishing of the Atlanticist-Eurasianist debate in the political circles. Primakov’s pragmatic conduct symbolised the synthesis of the clashing views of the debaters. National, not international, security became the matter of primary concern again, and “realism” has returned as the main theoretical framework for Russian foreign policy making.<sup>77</sup> With stronger emphasis on multi-faceted co-operation with all countries, “a moderate version of Eurasianism was tacitly accepted by the Russian foreign policy élites.”<sup>78</sup>

The “National Security Concepts” of 1997 and 2000 and the “Military Doctrine” of 2000 also signify the latest Russian foreign policy orientations and change in the Russian perception of the international politics and views on security of the country. The 1997 document basically focused on the place of Russia in the world, defined Russia’s national interests, identified threats to its national security, and singled out the ways of ensuring

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See. Lena Jonson, “Comments on NATO Enlargement and the CIS,” in Oldberg, Ingmar, ed., *Priorities in Russian Foreign Policy*, FOA, Stockholm, 1996, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “Primakov’s Russia: Steady as She Goes”, *IC World View*, 12 March 1998.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Alexander A. Sergounin, pp. 223-228.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

security. The document had a relatively optimistic content, with the economic situation and the process of incorporation into the western world were proceeding with adequate speed, and security around the Federation seemed ensured. It did not identify any external “enemies” which could be a direct threat to the national security<sup>79</sup> and stated that the most important threats to Russian security lay not in the international system but in Russia’s internal conditions..<sup>80</sup> The 2000 document appeared to be a copy of the 1997 version with a set of important amendments reflecting the experiences and conclusions of the passed two years.<sup>81</sup> This version was rather pessimistic in comparison to the former because of the “deterioration of the inter-communal and international relations”. The internal and external changes that caused this change were mainly, the NATO enlargement which was interpreted by the Russian leadership as a geopolitical setback; the 1998 economic crisis revealing the weakness of the Russian economy; NATO intervention in Kosovo, which was not only interpreted as an unjustified assault on an historical ally, but also as a sign of a new world order in which the traditional idea of sovereignty could be suppressed in defence of human rights; and Russian armed intervention in Chechnya, which directly resulted in the restoration of confidence in the use of force as a means of solution of political problems<sup>82</sup>. Besides all above, one of the most important factor of the change was the change of leadership in the Russian Federation; the seemingly unchecked ascendance of a former KGB agent , Vladimir Putin, first to prime ministry and then to presidency.

Following the institutionalisation process of the Russian foreign policy leading to a clear consensus around its the priorities, implementation and order of national interests under Primakov and later Igor’ Ivanov in the period of 1994-1997, Yeltsin regime “had developed a

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<sup>79</sup> “Kontseptsiya natsionalnoy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii”, ukazom Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii of Dekabriya 1997 g., *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 26 December 1997.

<sup>80</sup> Celeste A. Wallander, “Wary of the West: Russian Security at the Millenium”, *Arms Control Today*, March 2000, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> Jakub M. Godzimirski, “Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis”, *European Security*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Winter 2000, p. 78

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

synthesis that still emphasised co-operation and integration with the West, but also incorporated a strong measure of Russian Eurasianism and great power thinking, rooting the policy in a more traditional cast.”<sup>83</sup> The government included strong names of Soviet tradition such as Chernomyrdin and Primakov, who could implement the policies that made this synthesis possible, but the 1998 economic crisis and the Kosovo intervention in 1999, brought instability in the Russian political stage again. Yeltsin changed the name plaque on the prime minister’s door five times in this period, finally handing the post over Putin, the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB) in August 1999. Putin, unlike his predecessors, successfully moved out of Yeltsin’s shadow, gaining the domestic credit for his assertive policies. Putin, heavily influenced by the agenda of former foreign and prime minister Primakov, who advocated creation of a multipolar world in which the USA’s status and power decline, used arms sales and energy exports to expand Russia’s spheres of influence.<sup>84</sup> He is perceived as a Soviet style leader, who has already identified his goal as restoration of a powerful Russian state instead of democratic reform<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Celeste A. Wallander, pp. 7-8.

<sup>84</sup> Ariel Cohen, “Putin’s Foreign Policy and US-Russian Relations”, *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, no. 1406, 18 January 2001, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Stephen Sestanovich, “Where does Russia Belong?”, *The National Interest*, no.1, Winter 2000, p. 13.

## Chapter II:

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK: RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE CIS

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#### 3.1. The Birth of a New Eurasia

When Gorbachov called into question the very need for the Party guidance, which justified the Union's policy decisions since Lenin, none of the republics had a clear idea of what should be the direction of the policies in the new era. It seemed that few of them agreed on the need for a single, overarching definition of the new national interest.<sup>1</sup> The first movements of separate foreign and domestic policy agenda came from the Baltic states well before the actual break up of the Union, which were followed by Armenian and Georgian secessionist movements because of the raising pressure of Moscow in the region<sup>2</sup>. Following the Baltics and the Southern Caucasus, Russia (RSFSR) itself was on the course of building and strengthening its national sovereignty, with calculated moves in domestic and foreign policy to duplicate the Union's and to legitimise the Russian national government as an international actor. Eventually, the USSR was dissolved legally by the end of 1991 and left 15 newly independent states (NIS) behind on the former Soviet territory.

The Commonwealth of Independent States was founded by the three Slavic countries of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus with an agreement signed in Belovezhskaya Pushcha in December 1991, and joined by the remaining former Soviet republics except the Baltics and Georgia in the same two weeks later by the Almaty Declaration. Its initial aim of facilitating economic and political transformation of the NIS evolved into a instrument of Moscow to rebuild its security and political influence, a process which was facilitated by the power

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<sup>1</sup> N. N. Petro and A. Z. Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State*, Addison Wesley Longman, New York, 1997, pp. 113-114.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Armenia, Russian attempt to resume and strengthen direct control over the Mountainous Karabağ and the ambivalent moves of Moscow concerning the Azeri-Armenian disagreement on the status of the enclave created resentment which enforced the tendency of secession. In the case of Georgia, the Interior Ministry troops killing demonstrators gathered in the main square of Tbilisi with Gorbachov's direct order, led the Georgians to call for independence.

imbalance between Russia and the other members, and the Soviet legacy of Moscow-centred economic inter-dependency.

### **3.1.1. CIS as the Focal Point of Russian Foreign Policy**

Russia did not lose much time in realising that the territory of the former Soviet empire is crucial for the security and economic well-being of the new national state. To be a great power, you should at least be regional power, and Russia must preserve its privileged position in the Eurasian geopolitical space through one way or another. After all, Russia, having a deliberately planned and constructed central position in the communist economy, with its developed infrastructure directly linking it to all of the former Union republics who have little or no means to interact among themselves, is the best option for leadership in collaboration for restructuring. Its unique geopolitical location and relatively high economic power presented it the chance to claim that role.

The CIS, from very beginning of the independence, though with changing tones, stood as the central priority of the Russian foreign policy. Having lived within the same political entity for centuries, Russians did not clearly distinguish between the post-Soviet states and nations initially. Peoples of the Soviet Union, though mainly concentrated in their national states, are largely scattered around the former republics, where Russians constituted substantial minorities, or even majorities. Obviously, because of that characteristic, President Yeltsin pronounced the central position of CIS in Russian foreign and economic policy agenda, stating that the nature of Russia's relations with the states of former Union was not simply neighbourhood, but "blood kinship".<sup>3</sup> The Soviet experience was another psychological bond between Russia and the NIS, which can be instrumental to pull the former Union states together for co-operation in many fields.

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<sup>3</sup> "Yeltsin's Speech at the UN General Assembly", *SWB-SU*, SU2/2112, 26 September 1994, p. B/4.

The issue of balance between the post-imperial co-operation among the NIS and preservation of their sovereignty was a major concern for the new leaderships of the region and also for the international community. The world was rather suspicious about the Russian intentions about and future role in the CIS. Kozyrev stated on 26 February 1992 that "Russia respected the sovereignty of CIS states and wished to build relations with them on an equal basis, ..... but at the same time, Russia will strictly defend its own interests."<sup>4</sup> He continued with listing three main priorities of the Russian foreign policy concerning the relations with the CIS members as: economic co-operation and preservation of a unified army; the defence of human rights; and protection of the Russian and the Russian-speaking population in other CIS states.<sup>5</sup> In the summer of 1992, he further elaborated the evolving Russian attitude towards the issue, re-emphasising that "Russia's main foreign policy priority is relations with [its] partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States."<sup>6</sup>:

"Russia entered the CIS on the principle of full equality with the other independent states. However, *Russia cannot afford to forget about the particular responsibility conferred on it by history*. This concerns both nuclear weapons and the obligations stemming from its status as a great power and permanent member of the UN Security Council. *This status of Russia has been recognized throughout the world* and is in no way in conflict with the creation of the CIS."<sup>7</sup> (Emphases added)

The Foreign Policy Concept of 1993 marked the most important turn of diplomatic prospects and activity of new Russia, mainly shaped by the domestic debate on foreign policy that was elaborated in the previous chapter. The document defined the territory of the former Soviet Union as the vital sphere of interest of the Federation. Russian experts stated that the new concept was modelled on the "Monroe Doctrine" in defining and describing the aims of and threats to the Russia in the geopolitical space named as the "Near Abroad"<sup>8</sup> (*Blizhnee Zarubezh'e*). It included the following principles; "[A]ll of the territory of the former Soviet

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<sup>4</sup> Novosti, 26 February 1992, as cited in Suzanne Crow, "Russian Federation Faces Foreign Policy Dilemmas", *RFE/RL Russian Report*, 6 March 1992, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p19

<sup>6</sup> Andrey Kozyrev, "Russia: A Chance for Survival", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1992, Vol. 71, No. 2, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Union constitutes a vital sphere within which Russia's interests cannot be denied or ignored; Because of the deep historic, political, cultural and other links with the neighbouring state, Russia does not have a moral right to remain deaf to their requests to secure peace; The post-Soviet space is a "unique, *sui generis* geopolitical space, in which no one but Russia could bring peace; Russia will "actively oppose attempts from outside the CIS to increase tension between the former Soviet republics; Russia will "oppose any plans to increase armed forces in states bordering on the territory of the former USSR; Russia will restrain the third states from "attempts to use in their interests the instability in the Near Abroad."<sup>9</sup>

In his new year's address to the Federation Council in 1994, Yeltsin remarked that it is "Russia's vocation to be first among equals" within the CIS.<sup>10</sup> Russia hoped and obviously still hopes to bind the former Union republics closely to itself with interpenetrating economic, military and political ties, and to form a commonwealth in which the leadership would be saved for Moscow. This leadership, which Kozyrev defined as being the "locomotive of reform"<sup>11</sup> would create a centre of attraction around which the "near abroad" voluntarily integrate. Moscow sought to institutionalise Russia's leadership role through a "carrot-and-stick" approach. The carrots were security under Russia's nuclear umbrella, territorial integrity guarantee by the CIS peacekeeping forces, domestic stability and economic largess. The sticks were the veiled threats of economic sanctions against the states reluctant to participate.<sup>12</sup>

The mechanisms for fostering the CIS integration were a series of interstate and inter-ministerial treaties being worked on within the framework of the Commonwealth. The key

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<sup>8</sup> Also mentioned as the "nearby foreign states".

<sup>9</sup> "The Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation", Text of Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs Concept Document, No 1615/IS, dated 25 January 1993, English translation in *FBIS-USR-93-037*, 25 March 1993, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 115.

<sup>11</sup> M. A. Smith, "Russian Hegemony in the Near Abroad", *Conflict Studies Research Centre Report*, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, England, July 1994, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Russia Adrift: Strategic Anchors for Russia's Foreign Policy", *Harvard International Review*, Winter/Spring 2000, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 16-17. Same phrase repeats in Petro and Rubinstein, p. 115.

documents constituting the commonwealth and its institutional basis are; the initial CIS Establishment Treaty of December 1991 signed by Russia, Ukraine and Belarus; The CIS Charter signed in January 1993 Minsk summit by the heads of state; the Collective Security Agreement concluded in May 1992 in Tashkent; and the Treaty of Economic Union signed in Moscow by nine of the members in September 1994. One of the most important aspects of these agreements is that, as a collective military security system modelled after NATO, it identified an attack to a member as an attack to all. The collective security treaty strongly supported by Russia, Belarus, Armenia, and Tajikistan, while the rest (especially in the case of Azerbaijan and Georgia who were literally blackmailed into the treaty through their weaknesses against the ethnic insurrections within their borders) gave conditional support. Ukraine, Moldova and Turkmenistan went further to reject the treaty altogether.

### **3.1.2. CIS as the Instrument of Rebuilding Russian Hegemony**

Throughout its history, Russia has gone through cycles of expansion and contraction.<sup>13</sup> It was definitely in a phase of contraction after the dissolution of the Soviets, but the historical pattern demonstrates the possibility of re-expansion, given the geopolitical advantages Russia possess. Getting out the initial shock of the loss of empire, Russian leaders began to look for a way to reassert Russian primacy in the region, either by recreating a looser version of the USSR or simply building a new system of hegemony over the NIS. The strategy of *gosudarstvenniki*, the centrist/conservative elements of the Russian political élite who sought “to strengthen the Russian state”, took the upper hand in the administration especially after 1992-1993. Academician and politician Aleksey Arbatov, summarised the “centrist/moderate-conservative” view of the Russian political élite concerning the “near abroad” and Russia’s special role;

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<sup>13</sup> Sherman Garnett, “Russian Power in the New Eurasia”, *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 31-32.

“...Russia is entitled to a special role due to its size historic preponderance, and other advantages over smaller states, as well as its out-of-area strategic and political interests. Preserving and if necessary, reinstating its dominant role across the territory of the former USSR is the principal goal of their vision of Russia foreign policy. This is to be achieved by manipulation of various factors: economic dependence of some republics, presence of ethnic Russian population and Russia armed forces on the territory of others, ethnic and political tensions and border conflicts among them.”<sup>14</sup>

With respect to the NIS, Russia had to make choice from two different models of behaviour. One, which might be called imperial or revanchist was aimed at making the post-Soviet space resemble the USSR as quickly as possible, using any means including stirring of nationalist and irredentist tendencies among the Russian diaspora in the NIS as the Serbs did in former Yugoslavian republics. As Russian analyst Pozdnyakov stated, “Every country’s vital interests include its self-preservation as a specific cultural and historical community”<sup>15</sup>, but the important question was which country Russians were interested to preserve; the Russian Federation or the Soviet Union? The other option, “post-colonial reintegration”, which envisioned economic salvation of the Russian Federation through close co-operation with the former Union republics sharing the problems of Russia.<sup>16</sup>

Russians, with a self-image of a traditional great power, perceived themselves as the *primus (or dominus?) inter pares* among the CIS states, with common fresh memory of their dominant status in the former Soviet Union. The reintegration process within the CIS would not be not among relative equals but between Moscow as the centre and the NIS as the periphery.<sup>17</sup> The distinction between traditional great power assertiveness and neo-imperialism has an operational meaning; the latter would be a clear threat to European

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<sup>14</sup> Alexei Arbatov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy Alternatives”, *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 2, Fall 1993, pp. 29-30.

<sup>15</sup> Elgiz Pozdnyakov, “The Geopolitical Collapse and Russia”, *International Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 9, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Leon Aron, “The New Russian Foreign Policy”, Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs United States Senate, *American Enterprise Institute Testimony*, 20 May 1998.

<sup>17</sup> Duygu Sezer, “Russia and the South: Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus”, *European Security*, vol. 5, no. 2, Summer 1996, p. 321.

stability.<sup>18</sup> In the face of suspicion of over-assertiveness in the near abroad, Russians emphasise the analogy between the European Union and the CIS, describing the reintegrating process of the NIS in the post-Soviet space as a primarily economic integration on a voluntary and equal basis led by Russia, the only country with sufficient level of economic and technological development.<sup>19</sup>

President Yeltsin called international organisations including the UN, to grant Russia special powers as a guarantor of peace and stability in the former regions of the USSR. Following this speech, Russian Foreign Ministry officially applied to the UN and the OSCE (then CSCE) for recognition of Russian peacekeeping activities within the CIS.<sup>20</sup> This new attitude of Russian foreign policy was named as the “Monrovskiy Doctrine”<sup>21</sup>, because of the parallels that could be drawn with the US Monroe doctrine towards the American “near abroad”. The idea of adapting the Monroe Doctrine was already being voiced in early 1991, by the “Eurasianist” Professor Igor Shafarevich, who argued that the Gulf War demonstrated the necessity for Russia to take a more assertive stance in its “near abroad”.<sup>22</sup> Presumably, the idea was not welcomed in the “near abroad”. Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, argued that the proposal was unacceptable because it contravened the UN Charter.<sup>23</sup>

The Western attitude toward the Russian claims of active role in Eurasian security and stability seems to be positive, since the West was reluctant to assume the burden of peacemaking and peacekeeping activities in a region too far, too complex and hardly familiar. This attitude was also partly because of the special importance the West give to the continuity

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<sup>18</sup> Dimitri Simes, “The Return of Russian History”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1994, vol. 73, no. 1, p. 82.

<sup>19</sup> Andrei Kozyrev, “The Lagging Partnership”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1994, vol. 73, no. 3, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> İdil Tuncer, “The Security Policies of the Russian Federation: The ‘Near Abroad’ an Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, vol.1, no. 2, Autumn 2000, p. 104.

<sup>21</sup> This strategy was also named as the “Karaganov Doctrine” after the policy paper “A Strategy for Russia” issued by his Council for Foreign and Defence Policy in 1992.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Shearman, “Defining the National Interest: Russian Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics,” in, Roger E. Kanet and A. V. Kozhemiakin, eds., *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, MacMillan Press, London, 1997, p.11.

<sup>23</sup> Suzanne Crow, “Russia Seeks Leadership in Regional Peacekeeping,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 15, 9 April 1993, p. 28.

of the transformation process of Russia, and its perceived necessity to refrain any action that would possibly undermine Yeltsin's domestic policy capabilities. During a visit to Russia in January 1994, US President Clinton noted that Russia "will be more likely to be involved in some of these areas near you, just like the United States has been involved in the last several years in Panama and Grenada and other places near our area."<sup>24</sup> As Paul Goble put it, "if carefully articulated, Russian interests will find a broad support [in the West] because few people have any great interests in generating more 'great games' between East and West or between North and South."<sup>25</sup>

The main instrument of re-establishing influence over the near abroad for Moscow was the Russians minorities left in the NIS. By the dissolution of the Union, over 25 million ethnic Russians and an unknown but presumably large number of native-Russian speakers left within the former Soviet republics' borders. According to Stankevich, and the Eurasianist minded members of the Russian political élite, protection of the interests of ethnic Russians should be the central task of Russian foreign policy.<sup>26</sup> The administration was not indifferent to the public opinion and the political élite. In January 1994, Kozyrev announced that it is "one of Moscow's main strategic interests" to meet the responsibility to protect the interests of ethnic Russians and Russian speaking people in the "near abroad".<sup>27</sup> In fact, the Article 61/2 of the 1993 Constitution reflected the urge of the Russian government to guarantee "its citizens' protection and patronage abroad."<sup>28</sup> However, the government also had to design its policy towards the NIS with Russian minorities, since unstable relations with the former Soviet states with substantial number of Russians would threaten the country's security. It

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<sup>24</sup> *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 19 January 1994, see also Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," pp. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> Paul A. Goble, "Russia as a Eurasian Power: Moscow and the Post-Soviet States," in Stephen Sestanovich, ed. *Rethinking Russia's National Interests*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, 1994, p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Sergei Stankevich, "Russia in Search of Itself", *The National Interest*, No. 28, Spring 1992, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> "Touchy Bears", *Economist*, 21 May 1994, Vol. 331, No. 7864, p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii, prinyata vsenarodnym golosovaniyem 12 Dekabrya 1993 goda.

was equally important to prevent an unmanageable mass exodus back to Russia which would endanger the efforts of economic recovery.

There were many extremists too. Throughout the 1990s, the ultra-nationalists and neo-Unionists were exploiting the information that that millions of Russians residing in the “near abroad” were suffering from discrimination or ethnic clashes. The Communists regarded the CIS and the “near abroad” as the first priority for Russian foreign policy. Since they believe that the USSR has been dissolved illegally, the republics should be reunited and the SU should be restored. Interestingly, Zyuganov and his adherents ruled out the use of force for this end, and stated that the restoration should be on a voluntary basis.<sup>29</sup> Zhirinovskiy and his fellow ultra-nationalists in LDPR had a more radical view on the restoration of the empire. Aleksey Mitrofanov, the LDPR representative in the Committee for International Affairs of the State Duma, listed “restoring Russia’s strategic boundaries and its historical geopolitical space,” “bringing Ukraine and Belarus back to Russia” and “regaining the ports in the Black and Baltic seas” among the national interests to the country. Like the Communists, they viewed the CIS as the top priority, on the other hand, they also declared that they did not want to see the former union republics as part of Russia in the near future.<sup>30</sup> Aleksandr Ruts koy, a former vice president, argued that the former Union republics which “call themselves sovereign and independent never had their own statehood, never in their history. They were all parts of Russia, a great power.”<sup>31</sup> According to the former speaker of the parliament Ruslan Hasbulatov, post-Soviet states are not “states in the real sense”, since they lacked the spirit of stateness which can be constructed through history.<sup>32</sup> Emil Pain, Yeltsin’s former chief advisor on nationality affairs, called for a “fragmented imperialism” and Konstantin

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<sup>29</sup> Gennadiy Zyuganov, *Za gorizontom* [Over the Horizon], Veshniye Vody, Oryol, 1994, cited in Alexander A. Sergounin, “Russian Post-Communist Foreign Policy Thinking in the Cross-roads: Changing Paradigms”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 2000, p. 233.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander A. Sergounin, p. 237.

<sup>31</sup> “Touchy Bears”, p. 58.

Zatulin, the former head of the Duma's committee on relations with the CIS, suggested that Russia should primarily protect ethnic Russians and wherever ethnic minorities are concentrated<sup>33</sup>, to help them win autonomy. The Russian should "guarantee special status for such autonomous regions in the other CIS republics."<sup>34</sup>

Factors that incite minority discontent were absent in the ethnic Russian communities in the near abroad; There was no fear and dislike of national majority, no state actions which strengthen these fears, nor support and/or manipulation of the ethnic homeland. In none of the former Union republics, existed a systematic oppression or direct attack against the ethnic Russians.<sup>35</sup> The frequent statements by the Russian administration that it would use force to protect Russians outside must have an important influence on the political élite of the "near abroad" who might have initiate ethnic attack on Russian minorities. Russians were given exclusive rights of citizenship in many NIS. The huge Russian percentage of the population of Kazakstan forced Nazarbayev to sign an agreement on reciprocal dual citizenship with Russia in January 1995, although he resisted this idea since the independence. Also, in Kyrgyzstan, the parliament adopted Russian as an official language. Still, in Central Asia and the Caucasus, ethnic Russians were already leaving by themselves. The initial motivations were fear of possible violence and of new language legislation in the republics which, it was feared could put monolingual Russians at a disadvantage.<sup>36</sup> The changing of the Kazak capital to Astana and full-speed Kazakisation of government posts, seemed to confirm this fear.

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<sup>32</sup> Ruslan Hasbulatov, "Rusya ve Kafkasya'da Geçmiş ve Gelecek," [Past and Future in Russia and the Caucasus], in *Kafkasya ve Orta Asya: Bağımsızlıktan Sonra Geçmiş ve Gelecek Konferansı*, TİKA-Bilkent, Ankara, 25-27 May 1995, pp. 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> The areas with high concentration of ethnic Russians and Russian native speakers were/are mainly the Crimea in the Ukraine, Northern Kazakstan, Trans-Dnyester Moldova, and islands in the southern Caucasus. Although Zatulin's call for securing autonomy was not positively responded by the policymakers, this policy of creating autonomous regions in CIS states was applied indirectly in places like Moldova, whose big share of territory is under control of the Russian 14. Army intervened the conflict with republic's army and breakaway Trans-Dnyester Republic, and in Abkhazia which won de facto independence from Georgia after a bitter civil-war.

<sup>34</sup> "Touchy Bears", p. 58.

<sup>35</sup> The exception for this rule is the limited physical pressure to make the ethnic Russians leave in the Ukrainian region of western Galicia, where Ukrainian nationalism is strongest.

<sup>36</sup> Gerard Holden,, *Russia after the Cold War: History and the Nation in the Post-Soviet Security Politics*, Campus/Westview, Frankfurt, 1994, p. 67.

There has been no appearance of effective mass political movements or Serbian-style nationalist paramilitary forces in the Russian diaspora communities living in the near abroad. The only “successful” secessionist movement of Russians abroad so far was the case of Trans-Dnyestr Republic in Moldova. Inside Russia, there were no successful nationalist parties, and all of the influential nationalist leaders and members of the political élite remained highly pragmatic rather than acting according to their rhetoric. The movement that led to the revolt in Trans-Dnyester against the Republic of Moldova was created under Soviet rule, protected first by the Red Army and then the secessionist state was established by the help of the Russian 14. Army. The Moscow-backed anti-independence “*interfront*” (international front) in Moldova, like its equivalents in many Union republics, had the main motive of loyalty to the USSR, but not the Russian nationalism *per se*.<sup>37</sup> Many of its leaders were Moldavians, while ethnic Russians were in command of the adversary Moldavian state forces.<sup>38</sup>

Russian nationalism is quite different than the commonly accepted definition of the concept. Because of the centuries old imperial history, through which they absorbed so many ethnic groups and micro-nationalities, Russian nation became a kind of super ethnos. Like many nations with vivid memories of imperial past, such as Turks, French, Chinese and Americans, the meaning of the name “Russian” extended to a greater one<sup>39</sup>, which in turn weakened the real meaning of the word. Unlike the Turks, who filled the name with a sense of national consciousness after the Turkish Revolution, Russian national sense was sucked away by the Sovietisation process. Thus, Russians have rather an imperial consciousness instead of a national one.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Anatol Lieven, “The Weakness of Russian Nationalism”, *Survival*, Summer 1999, vol. 41, no. 2, p.55.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, Hurst Publishers, London, 1995, p. 975.

<sup>39</sup> This different levels of meaning is illustrated in the creation of the word *Rossiyskiy*, which means a subject of Russia, in addition to *Russkiy*, which means ethnic Russian. There is another term to denote the russified/Russian speakers, *russkoyazychnyi*.

<sup>40</sup> The elements of the non-ethnic nature of the Russian nationalism can be traced back to the early tsarist history, when the empire was built on the ideological foundations of Orthodox Christianity and the ideal of the “Third

### 3.2. The CIS

Within its region, Russia acted as the status quo power, seeking the preservation of the old balances and power relationships between the Union republics, doing everything possible to sabotage the efforts of the weaker states to break out of Russia's influence. Also, while a certain degree of interdependence gradually appeared between the NIS, at the centre lied Russia, with the best geopolitical position to offer leadership to the others.<sup>41</sup> There can be little doubt that within the geo-strategic domain, Russia is the best of option for that role. This overpowering presence of Russia in the region, is also fed by the perceptions and the calculations of the leadership of the non-Russian NIS, which were weaker and unprepared than Russia for the post-Soviet ecosystem. So, Russia sought to institutionalise this central role and primacy among the successors of the Union by promoting integration within the CIS, and Russian foreign policy makers began to look to the international events not with naked eye but through a translucent CIS membrane.

The newly independent states on the former Soviet Union territory can be grouped according to their heritages of historical and cultural interaction, and their geopolitical interests/strategies. If the Baltic trio which had already separated its destiny from the rest of the NIS was excluded, there remained three groups of states with geopolitical linkage; The Slavic group of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, plus the non-Slavic Moldova; the Southern Caucasians, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan; and the Central Asian republics of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

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Rome" (Tretiy Rim) which brought the Greek/Byzantine cultural influence, Westernisation under Peter I (The Great) which restructured the higher echelons of the society on the model of German civilisation and the imperial cosmopolitanism, absorbing ethnic groups and assimilating their élites, proceeded parallel to them. The leaders consciously defined their "nations" separate from ethnicity leaving the doors open from individuals and groups from different "sub-ethnicities". The formula of the Russian state coined by Count Uvarov for the iron-handed Tsar Nicholas I symbolises the uniqueness of Russian sense on nationalism; *Pravoslaviye* (Orthodoxy), *Samoderzhaviye* (Autocracy) and *Narodnost* ("Nationalism"). Although it is translated as nationalism, *narodnost* have a deeper meaning which can be extracted as "national coherence" or "national solidarity".

<sup>41</sup> Adeed Dawisha, "Foreign Policy Priorities and Institutions: Perspectives and Issues" in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, p. 4.

### 3.2.1. Gordian Knot: Southern Caucasus:

Russian stabilising policy is the main destabiliser in southern Caucasus. As Lepingwell puts it, Russian policy concerning the region can be summarised as “taking advantage of instability and conflict” in the region.<sup>42</sup> Moscow pursued the classic Russian strategy of creating problems and then coming in as a trouble-shooter.<sup>43</sup> “*Pax Russica*” and “*Bellum Russicum*” interacted in the sense of an imperial policy.<sup>44</sup> The most important armed conflicts that help Russian achievement of re-establishing influence in the region are the Azeri-Armenian conflict over Mountainous Karabağ, and the secessionist insurrections in Georgian autonomous regions of Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The Azeri-Armenian dispute goes back to 1988, when the ethnic Armenian majority in the Azerbaijani autonomous enclave of Mountainous Karabağ demanded greater autonomy.<sup>45</sup> They proclaimed independence as Baku rejected their autonomy demand, and the disagreement turned into a armed conflict which would lead to all-out war between Azerbaijan and Armenia soon after the dissolution of the USSR. The imbalance of population and perceived military power, led the Armenians to offer the northern “big brother” loyalty in international affairs and issues related to the post-Soviet integration, in return for Russian political, economic and military support. Besides the tactical assistance and arms supply, Russian 366<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment actively participated in the Armenian capture of Hocalı on 26 February 1992.<sup>46</sup> In exchange of this strategic backing against their arch enemies, and motivated with the fear of Turkish encirclement, Armenia became the strongest supporter of

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<sup>42</sup> John W. R. Lepingwell, “Russian Peacekeeping in the Near Abroad”, *Survival*, vol. 36, no. 3, Fall 1994, p. 50., see also Paul B. Henze, “Russia and the Caucasus,” *Perceptions*, vol. 1, no. 2, June/August 1996, pp. 53-71.

<sup>43</sup> Kevin O’Brien, “Russian Peacekeeping in the Near Abroad”, *Peacekeeping & the International Relations*, vol. 23, no. 4, July/August 1994, p.16.

<sup>44</sup> Uwe Halbach and Heinrich Tiller, “Russia and its Southern Flank,” *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 45, no. 2, 1994, p. 158.

<sup>45</sup> For the initial phase of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabağ starting in 1988, see Igor Nolyain, “Moscow’s Initiation of the Azeri-Armenian Conflict,” *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1994, pp. 541-563.

<sup>46</sup> Nazim Cafersoy, “Eyalet-Merkez Düzeyinden Eşit Statüye. Azerbaycan-Rusya İlişkileri,” *Ankara Çalışmaları*, no. 1, p. 14.

firm ties with Russia, being one of the quickest to ratify the CIS Charter, and also the quickest to permit Russian troops to be stationed within its borders<sup>47</sup>.

Russian influence penetration through the Azerbaijani border realised later than its western rival. In July 1993, nationalist government of pro-Turkish President of Azerbaijan, Ebulfez Elçibey was ousted by a military coup led by Colonel Suret Hüseynov. Hüseynov had “luckily” left with a couple of depots full of heavy arms by the withdrawing Soviet troops<sup>48</sup>, and after a short march from Gence to Baku, Elçibey was replaced with former politburo member Haydar Aliyev. Under the new leadership, Azerbaijani foreign policy observably shifted toward Russia, abandoning the pro-Turkish orientation of the overthrown nationalists. In a visit to Moscow soon after his seizing of power, Aliyev announced that Elçibey’s “serious error” of keeping Azerbaijan out of the CIS would be corrected immediately.<sup>49</sup> Baku’s CIS policy after the fall of Elçibey can be summarised as “preserving the independence and refraining from angering Moscow.”<sup>50</sup>

Threats for ethnic secession in other places of Azerbaijan also appeared, allegedly directly flared by Moscow, to force Baku to accept accession to the CIS and secure its commitment to it. Russians were reported to support the separatists in the northern border areas to Dagestan, where *Sadval* Movement worked towards uniting parts of Dagestan and Azerbaijan into one republic of the Lezgins.<sup>51</sup> Also the Talysh-Mugan Republic was

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<sup>47</sup> With the treaty signed on 16 March 1995, Armenians formally welcomed two Russian military bases within their borders, namely in Yerevan and Gyumri for a 25-years period.

<sup>48</sup> Russian troops under General Sherbak completed withdrawal from Azerbaijan, unusually before the given date. This over-punctual behaviour of Russian military had not raise any suspicion then, but many analysts later took it as an evidence of Russian involvement in the Hüseynov coup following the withdrawal. The coup was realised a week later, with the help of Russian military advisors and heavy artillery left by Sherbak.

<sup>49</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 117.

<sup>50</sup> Hasan Hüseynoğlu Kuniyev, “Rusya’nın Azerbaycan Stratejisi”, *Avrasya Dosyası*, vol. 3, no. 4, Winter 1996, p. 198.

<sup>51</sup> Roland Goetz, “Political Spheres of Interest in the Southern Caucasus and in Central Asia,” *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 48, no. 3, 1997, p. 260. Also see David Nissman, “Russia and the Caucasus: Maintaining the Imbalance of Power,” *Perceptions*, vol. 1, no. 2, June/August 1996, p. 80.

proclaimed by Elikram Hübətöv, but these movements “surprisingly” lost pace with accession to CIS.<sup>52</sup>

Accession to the CIS and its military structures gave the Azeris the chance to pressurise Russia to accommodate their concerns about the Karabağ conflict and in addition to that, the issue of disposition of the Caspian oil riches. Against the Russian proposals of treatment of the Caspian Sea as internal sea, whose resources should be exploited by the littoral states, but not external actors, the Azerbaijan pursued its own course, signing a deal with a western led consortium.

All three southern Caucasian states have vital importance for the Russian strategy in the region, but since their national interests and policy orientations differ radically, Russia faces a dilemma on implementing a equitable crude policy which would alienate at least one of them or a carefully calculated multi-faceted set of policies which would only accommodate immediate whims of the states, rather than solving the stalemate. Among the three Azerbaijan has a distinct importance as the largest state in the region, being a key link between the European and Turkish worlds, and a gateway to the south-western Asia. Thus, anchoring Azerbaijan in the CIS is one of the most important policy priorities of the Russian Federation. Russia also keeps in mind the near danger of loosing its dominating influence in the region to Turkey.

Russia succeeded in breaking the initial reluctance of Georgia to join the CIS getting use of its weakness against a series of ethnic separatist insurrections on Georgian territory. Following the failure of republican forces in their struggle with the secessionist

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<sup>52</sup> The Russian strategy of *divide et impera* in the Caucasus can be sensed from the writings of a Russian expert on foreign affairs; A stable security order in the Caucasus will necessitate an overall restructuring of the administrative structures of several states; “the federalization of Georgia, the creation of stable Lezgin and Talysh autonomous regions in Azerbaijan and the achievement of a compromise on the status of Nagorno-Karabağ.”, Maxim Shashenkov, “Russia in the Caucasus: Interests, Threats and Policy Options,” in Baranovsky, Vladimir, ed., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1997.

armed groups in Abkhazian<sup>53</sup> and Southern Ossetian<sup>54</sup> autonomous enclaves, and the civil strife that ensued after the ouster of the first president of the republic Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia had to give in gradually to Russian pressure. Although President Yeltsin and foreign ministry seemed to act as mediators and peacemakers in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, the Russian generals kept on lending assistance to the Abkhaz insurrection below the negotiation table, thwarting the politically achieved accords between the sides.<sup>55</sup> According to Satter, Russian defence and intelligence officials were behind the declaration of independence of Abkhazia.<sup>56</sup> Russia also supported a campaign led by the so-called Confederation of the Peoples of Northern Caucasus<sup>57</sup>, allegedly founded by Moscow, directed other Muslims of the region for supplying the Abkhaz with *mujahids*.<sup>58</sup> Russia gave another message to Georgian leadership when the Minister of Defence, Grachov visited Ajaria, another ethnic enclave in Georgia, without notifying Tbilisi.<sup>59</sup> The new Georgian leadership, headed by the former Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze, has come to regard the 20,000 Russian peacekeepers to be stationed in these regions as the price of Georgia must pay to preserve its independence

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<sup>53</sup> For detailed information on Abkhazia and Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, see Stanislav Lakoba, "Abkhazia is Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1995, pp. 97-105, Pauline Overeem, "Report of a UNPO Coordinated Human Rights Mission to Abkhazia and Georgia," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1995, pp. 127-154, John Colarusso, "Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1995, pp. 75-96.

<sup>54</sup> South Ossetia declared autonomy in September 1990, and independence in 28 November, appointing Znaur Gassyev both prime minister and president. Southern Ossetians committed themselves to uniting with the North, within the Russian Federation. Nationalist Georgian President Gamsakhurdia annulled the self-proclaimed Ossetian autonomy and called for a civilian armed attack to Ossetin capital Tskhinvali in November. Although Gamsakhurdia was overthrown in January 1992, fighting went on, despite numerous attempts of ceasefire. Russian troops sent into Southern Ossetia on 13 July 1992, and Russian air force bombarded the Georgian tanks approaching Tskhinvali almost a week later. The conflict was frozen after the Russian intervention and South Ossetia is de facto autonomous since. For more information on South Ossetian conflict, see Julian Birch, "Ossetia: a Caucasian Bosnia in Microcosm," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1995, pp. 43-74.

<sup>55</sup> Nodari A. Simonia, "Priorities of Russia's Foreign Policy and the Way It Works", " in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, p. 31, see also "Russia's Sphere of Influence", *The Economist Foreign Report*, no. 2271, 16 September 1993, p.3.

<sup>56</sup> David Satter, "The Danger of Russia's Great Power Illusions", *Prism*, vol. 4, no. 5, 6 March 1996.

<sup>57</sup> This organisation later changed its name to Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus, getting rid of the constraining "northern". For detailed information about the Confederation of the North Caucasian Peoples, see Cem Oğuz, "The Unity of the North Caucasian Peoples: The Case of the Confederation of the Peoples of the Caucasus," *Perceptions*, vol. 4, no. 2, June/August 1999, pp. 126-148.

<sup>58</sup> During the period of 1991-1992, Russians deliberately encouraged a false image of the Abkhaz being a Turkic and wholly Muslim people, in order to attract Turkic/Muslim support for the secessionist movement. Shamil Basayev, the well-known Chechen warlord was also among the Russian exported mujahids fought on the Abkhazian side, who had his initial fighting experience as a Russian-hired mercenary there.

and territorial integrity.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the bilateral agreements concluded by Georgia and Russia on 3 February 1994 gave the Russians the right to establish permanent military bases<sup>61</sup> in Georgian territory and station CIS (Russian) troops on the Turkish border. In Brzezinski's words, Georgia learned that "Russia as umpire [was] not very different from Russia as empire."<sup>62</sup> Shevardnadze, considering the material and logistical weaknesses of his country against further ethnic conflict and lack of domestic energy sources, believed that accommodating Russian drive for fulfilling the "peacekeeping role" in the region is a strategic necessity. He even openly supported the Russian military campaign against Chechen ethnic secessionism in 1994,<sup>63</sup> bearing in mind the hope of being allowed to regain authority in his autonomous enclaves which are *de facto* independent from Georgia.

### 3.2.2. The Nearer Abroad: Central Asia

Russian policies in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia were very different in practice. While incinerating and taking advantage of instability and conflict in the Caucasus, Russia implemented policies to strengthen stability in the Central Asian republics. The main instrument for this pro-stability policy is direct support for the leaders of these countries. Another difference in policy is the Russian preference of multilateralism in Central Asia, while proceeding with bilateral relations and excluding multilateral institutions and political fora in the southern Caucasus.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> John Colarusso, "Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1995, p. 85.

<sup>60</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 118.

<sup>61</sup> There are three main CIS bases in Georgia, near the cities of Batumi, Akhalkhalaki and Vaziani. There is also a base in Abkhazia, in the vicinity of Gudauta. Although these bases are officially manned with Russian soldiers, especially in Batumi and Gudauta, native warriors loyal to the local overlords are in service under Russian uniforms.

<sup>62</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, March/April 1994, p. 74.

<sup>63</sup> Victor Yasmann, "Shevardnadze Supports Russian Action in Chechnya", RFE/RL Daily Report, 15 December 1994.

<sup>64</sup> Pavel K. Baev, "Russia's Policies in the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian Area," *European Security*, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer 2001, p. 100.

The five Central Asian republics of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan have been the most eager group of Union heirs to join the Russian led CIS, with their hurried signing of all of the basic CIS treaties. The Central Asian leaders agreed to co-operate with Russia voluntarily, without apparent pressure, but not because of internal or external coercion, since they perceive it as a power capable of safeguarding regional stability and also their authoritarian-type regimes. Except for Turkmenistan, which prefers bilateral relations with Russia, all the republics in the region have welcomed multilateral co-operation with the Russian Federation within the CIS.<sup>65</sup> In the words of Uzbek President Islam Kerimov, Russia is the guarantor of “stability and peace in [the] region and preserving the integrity of [NIS] borders.”<sup>66</sup>

The political élite of these republics were highly secularised and Russified through roughly seventy years of Communist rule, and they are rigidly determined not to let the power go from their grip. Most of the Central Asian republics (with the exception of Tajikistan) are ruled by authoritarian leftover Soviet *apparatchiks*. During the process of dissolution of the Union, and in the following transitory period, their leadership helped keeping the countries' institutions and policies intact, and facilitated a smooth passage to independence, however, their prolonged authoritarian administration seems to lag the democratisation process, in which the other republics in the west are far ahead.

The authoritarian leaders of the Central Asian NIS were aware of the fact that their survival and economic recovery are highly interdependent, for none of them can succeed without support from the others or Russian Federation<sup>67</sup>. Thus, the necessity of establishing an efficient network of bilateral and multilateral relations, intensifying the trade among themselves, close co-operation in investments, particularly on the areas of energy,

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<sup>65</sup> Bess Brown, “Central Asia’s Military Establishments,” *RFE/RL Research Institute Draft Research Paper*, 29 May 1993, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> M. A. Smith, “Russian Hegemony in the Near Abroad”, Conflict Studies Research Centre Report, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, England, July 1994, p. 10.

transportation and communications, were well recognised by the leaders. They could also see that Russia, with its unmatched power and potential, cannot be pushed out of the region easily, and it can be a useful partner in the process of recovery if its whims like the protection of the rights of (ethnic Russian) minorities, could be accommodated. In general, Central Asian leaders prefer a flexible pragmatic foreign policy comprised of short-term moves which is mainly motivated by the leaderships' self-survival, rather than a coherent one following predetermined set of principles. Not having the luxury to alienate possible partners in their search for economic well-being, they keep close relations with every power around; Russia, Turkey, Iran, China, India, the USA, and key European states, most of which are attracted to the region because of the vast energy sources it promises. They had to pursue balanced policies towards all the actors around, and diversify international contacts in political, economic and military fields.

The relations between Russia and the Central Asians were not a perfect fairy tale either. Wary of dependence to Russia, especially in the fields of economy and security, most of them began to separate their policies from mainstream CIS and Russian policies. Uzbekistan, along with Georgia and Azerbaijan have refused to prolong the CIS Collective Security Agreement in April 1999. A strong tendency to decrease the number of Russian military presence in the near abroad appeared. Aliyev stated that the Russian bases in Armenia were direct threats to the peace and stability in the Caucasus region.<sup>68</sup> Georgian leadership also wanted to remove the three Russian military bases within its borders. In the OSCE Istanbul Summit of November 1999, Russia agreed to close its base in Vaziani by 1 July 2001. Another source of discontent between Russia and some of the CIS members is the competition in gas and oil exploitation and transportation. Turkmen-Russian competition in deciding pipeline routes that will transport Turkmen gas to world markets is one of the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>68</sup> "Azeri Leader Says Russian Bases in Armenia Threaten Peace", *BBC Worldwide*, 2 April 1999.

manifestations of the competition. The signing of “Blue Stream” gas deal between Ankara and Moscow also caused a tension between Turkmenistan and the two parties of the agreement in 1997.

### 3.2.3. The Soviet West: Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

After the demise of the USSR, the three westernmost republics of the former Union constituted a new buffer zone between Europe and the Russian Federation. The post-Soviet order distanced Russia further than ever from “Europe proper”, for several centuries. Russia is now separated from Europe by a chain of states and was more distant from it than ever.<sup>69</sup> In order to reduce this distance, Russia had to re-establish its presence in the three new states of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

The smaller republic of Moldova was under Romanian control until World War II, when it was annexed by the USSR and established as a Union republic by Stalin in order to punish Romania for allying with the Third Reich. As Stalin made some territorial arrangements to disrupt the integrity of the Moldovan (Romanian) population of the republic, merging the band in the southern coast with Ukraine and adding a small pocket of Ukrainian land to Moldova in the north. This arrangements left Moldova with large Russian and Ukrainian minorities, who are considerably apprehensive about the possible unification of the republic with its kin Romania. This fear initiated the civil war in the north-eastern part of the republic, even before the dissolution of the USSR, where the ethnic Russians proclaimed their own republic across the Dnyester River<sup>70</sup>. The Dnyester Republic had the backing of, first the Soviet<sup>71</sup>, then Russian Fourteenth Army. The Russian Federation directly intervened in the

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<sup>69</sup> Sergei Stankevich, “A Transformed Russia in a New World,” *International Affairs*, vol. 38., no. 4-5, p. 100.

<sup>70</sup> The Russian SSR was founded on 3 September 1990 on the eastern side of Dnyester, but included the important town of Bender (Tighina) across the river. During the August putsch in 1991, Trans-Dnyesterian president, an apparatchik who emigrated from Siberia only 6 years earlier, backed the putschists. See. Anneli Ute Gabanyi, “Moldova between Russia, Romania and the Ukraine,” *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 44, no. 1, 1993, pp. 98-107.

<sup>71</sup> Soviet Army under Colonel-General Bronislav Omelichev.

conflict in Moldova in the Summer of 1992, when the in famous Fourteenth Army under the command of Major-General Aleksandr Lebed sent for assistance to, and protection of, the breakaway “Republic of Dnyester”. The official motive was to “protect the Russian minority”, but Lebed accused Moldova being a fascist state, and announced that his army recognised the Dnyester Republic as legal and sovereign.<sup>72</sup> According to Andranik Migranyan, then Yeltsin’s councillor on foreign affairs, when it was clear to the Russian leadership that the West would not strongly object, Russian foreign policy makers moved to unconditional defence of the Dnyester Republic.<sup>73</sup> The Moldovan leadership, facing the danger of fragmentation of the country, had to come to terms with Russia through the CIS. They succeeded in convincing Yeltsin to withdraw the Fourteenth Army with the treaty of October 1994, in return for greater autonomy to the Trans-Dnyester Republic. Moldova rejoined the CIS in April 1994, following the electoral success of the pro-Russian parties, and in August, General Lebed was removed from command of the Fourteenth Army, which was also being withdrawn gradually.<sup>74</sup>

Belarus presents an interesting example with the overwhelming majority of its population eager to join the Russian Federation, and/or restore the USSR. It has no sense of nationalism in the traditional sense, or a sort of Russophobia to relate.<sup>75</sup> This social tendency brought the enthusiastically pro-Russian and authoritarian Aleksandr Lukashenka to power in Belarus, and he persistently realised a gradual plan of reintegration with Russia since then. The two countries signed a customs union treaty on 12 April 1994, eliminated customs controls in July 1995, and in December 1999, Yeltsin and Lukashenka signed a treaty, which

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<sup>72</sup> Vladimir Socor, “Russia’s Fourteenth Army and the Insurgency in Eastern Moldova”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 36, 11 September 1992, p. 46.

<sup>73</sup> Andranik Migranyan, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 14 January 1994. This lack of Western objection to Russian intervention in the near abroad, increased the self-confidence of Moscow in adopting a policy of active involvement and use of force in the region, thus became one of the major factors of the major change in Russian foreign policy in 1992-1993.

<sup>74</sup> Petro and Rubinstein, p. 122.

<sup>75</sup> Andrei Kortunov, “Strategic Relations Between the Former Soviet Republics,” *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, no. 892, 17 April 1992, p. 6.

created a “Union State” comprised of Russia and Belarus. Belarus have already ceased to remove the nuclear missiles, which were agreed to be returned to Russia, since the two countries will soon reunite. Throughout the decade Belarus seemed more eager for unification than Russia did, that in many occasions its officials criticised Moscow of loosing time in the process of integration, with “childish competition” with other republics around.<sup>76</sup>

It was clear that the most strategically and psychologically important country for Russia in the region is Ukraine, with its large size and population, potentially rich agricultural base, well-developed industrial infrastructure, and world’s third largest nuclear arsenal. It also represented the lost strategic depth, natural ports cut for naval bases, numerous military installations and sites of strategic importance for Moscow. Besides the psychological value of Ukraine, which had been an indivisible part of the Russian Empire since the 1654 Pereyaslavl Treaty signed by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, the importance of the country is substantial for the fate of the Russian Federation as Zbigniew Brzezinski stated; “without Ukraine Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire.”<sup>77</sup> Most of the members of the political élite in Russia agreed that Ukrainian independence was an abnormality as well as a threat for Russia’s standing as a global power.<sup>78</sup> Initially, Ukrainian independence was perceived in Moscow as a “transitory phenomenon”.<sup>79</sup> However in time, Russia has formally committed itself to respect Ukraine’s independence, but only on the condition that independence does not threaten Russian security.<sup>80</sup>

The two foremost issues that continuously hampered close relations between Russia and Ukraine were the disposition of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet (BSF), and the political status

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<sup>76</sup> Valery Tsepka, “The Remaking of Eurasia”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 2, p. 109.

<sup>77</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The Premature Partnership,” pp.79-80.

<sup>78</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The Premature Partnership,” p. 74.

<sup>79</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Russia-Crimea-Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict,” in Max Beloff, ed., *Beyond the Soviet Union: The Fragmentation of Power*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1997, p. 161.

<sup>80</sup> Duygu Sezer, “From Hegemony to Pluralism...”, p. 5.

of the autonomous republic of Crimea. Deciding the future of the Black Sea Fleet, which was comprised of 833 ships, had been the most tiresome of processes, with long fruitless negotiations and several tentative agreements. In September 1993, former Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk agreed to restore the entire fleet to Russia in exchange for wiping out of its debt, but the *Verkhovna Rada*, the Parliament of Ukraine, rejected this deal. A subsequent agreement in April 1994 giving less than a quarter of the fleet to Ukraine was also proved to be fruitless. Even after the relatively pro-Russian Leonid Kuchma's ascension to presidency, Ukraine did not give in to the Russian pressure over the BSF. In time, not only the fleet itself, but the status of the Crimean port/city of Sevastopol, the fleet's base became the most important issue between the two countries. Through the process, the BSF issue turned into a test of sovereignty over the city and the naval base. In search for a counterbalance to the Russian pressure over the BSF, Ukraine also supported the Georgian claims to a portion of the fleet. In October 1997, an agreement was signed between Russia and Georgia to transfer to Georgia four warships. The other major obstacle between the two countries was the issue of political status of the Crimea. Administrative jurisdiction over the Crimea was transferred to Ukraine from RSFSR on 26 April 1954 by the then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the union of Russia and Ukraine<sup>81</sup>. Since nothing changed for the residents of the peninsula then, as they were still subjects of the USSR, and the issue of status Crimean enclave had never been effectively discussed since early 1991 when the predominantly Russian regional soviet claimed autonomy. In 5 December 1992, the Crimean parliament even declared independence from Ukraine, a move which led to its dissolution by Kyiv and placing of Crimea under direct Ukrainian government control. Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin and Kozyrev distanced themselves from the dispute, while some other Russian politicians such as State Duma speaker Ivan Rybkin and president's advisor Sergei

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<sup>81</sup> The day that the Zaporozhian Cossacks recognised the sovereignty of the Russian Tsar is celebrated as the date of union of Russia and Ukraine. It is of symbolic importance, rather than the real date of "union", since the

Filatov were overtly supported the independence efforts of Russians of Crimea.<sup>82</sup> During a visit to the peninsula in 1992, former vice-president Rutskoy declared the 1954 hand over as illegal.<sup>83</sup> Russian government and foreign policy did not officially and directly supported the secessionist movement from the Ukraine.<sup>84</sup> Under strong pressure of the Duma, Kozyrev stated that the 1954 decision to turn the Crimea over to the Ukraine was "a political decision of the old politburo"<sup>85</sup>, but added that the issue of autonomy or independence of the peninsula was Ukraine's "internal affair". In January 1994, Yuriy Meshkov of the Republican Movement of Crimea elected the president of Crimea, and when he visited Moscow in 1994 to seek help in securing greater autonomy from the Ukraine, he was not officially received and Russian leaders paid considerable attention on not to increase tensions with their southern neighbour. This lack of overt support for the Crimean Russian government could be explained by the pragmatism of the Russian leaders dominating the administration. On 31 May 1997, Yeltsin and Kuchma in Kyiv signed "Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Partnership" between Russia and Ukraine. As a result, Russia endorsed the territorial borders of Ukraine, gave up the claims over the Crimean Peninsula, where ethnic Russians were the majority, and the old Russian city and naval base of Sevastopol to Ukraine.<sup>86</sup> However, this treaty also gave Moscow the right to use Sevastopol as its main naval base for the next two decades. It took two more years for the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada* to ratify the treaty with a slight majority.

Ukraine's interest in the CIS partly depended on the belief that it would be a supranational entity which will play a stabilising role in the initial years of transition, which

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Cossacks were frequently switching sides between the Russians, Ottomans or Poles, before and after this date.

<sup>82</sup> John Lepingwell, "Russian Politicians on Crimean Crisis", *RFE/RL News Briefs*, Vol. 3, No. 22, 24-27 May 1994, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Russia-Crimea-Ukraine: Triangle of Conflict," in Max Beloff, ed., *Beyond the Soviet Union: The Fragmentation of Power*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1997, p. 171.

<sup>84</sup> Anatol Lieven, "The Weakness of Russian Nationalism", p.59.

<sup>85</sup> Reuters, 24 January 1992, see also Roman Solchanyk, "Ukrainian-Russian Confrontation over the Crimea", RFE/RL Report, no 8, 21 February 1992.

<sup>86</sup> Leon Aron, "The New Russian Foreign Policy", Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs United States Senate, *American Enterprise Institute Testimony*, 20 May 1998.

would also protect Ukraine from Caucasian-Moldovan style ethnic conflicts endangering country's independence or territorial integrity; and partly it originated from the fact that the post-Soviet countries were highly dependent on one other in economic affairs, given the Moscow-engineered web of interdependence on industry, transportation and communications. Both factors proved to be well perceived by Kyiv, since Ukraine resourcefully used the Soviet web in economic recovery and, more importantly, was shielded against the wave of ultra-nationalist, ethnic insurrections rocking the neighbouring capitals. Actually Ukraine was not a *de jure* member of the CIS, since the parliament never ratified the CIS Charter, and the Collective Security Treaty was not even signed. Furthermore, the strong presence of Ukraine in the CIS, ensured that the CIS remain a loose discussion club rather than evolve into a new geopolitical entity with supranational structures.<sup>87</sup>

#### **3.2.4. Polarisation in the Commonwealth: The GUUAM Group**

In May 1995, seven out of twelve CIS members signed the treaty on joint protection of the external CIS borders at the Minsk Summit, while Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan refused to join. These five states were not pleased with the military-weighted orientation of the CIS integration process, while the initial priorities of economic recovery and political stability were being pushed behind. The concept of "external borders of the CIS" was also irritating some of the members, as Ukrainian President Kuchma's statement displayed; "there is no CIS external borders of the CIS but each state has its external and internal borders."<sup>88</sup> The security dimension of the CIS weakened more in the spring of 1999, when Uzbekistan refused to renew the CIS mutual defence treaty, and Georgia, Turkmenistan and Kazakstan followed suit. Articulations of Azerbaijani and Georgian intentions to welcome NATO or Turkish bases within their territories were also

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<sup>87</sup> Taras Kuzio and Jennifer D. Moroney, "Ukraine and the West: Moving from Stability to Strategic Engagement," *European Security*, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer 2001, p. 118.

angering the Russian military planners. Commending on the Western intervention in the Kosovo conflict in Yugoslavia, the Chief of the Russian General Staff, General A. Kvashnin warned on 15 November 1999 that Moscow sees the possibility that NATO may be willing to use force on the territory of the former Soviet Union, among other places.<sup>89</sup>

By the end of the decade, Russian Federation failed to institutionalise the CIS as a operational security system under its leadership. Most of the CIS states did not recognise the authority of CIS as peacekeeper, and the Collective Security Treaty of 1992 remained with only six signatories, namely Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Of the more than 700 agreements signed within the CIS framework, none seems to work properly.<sup>90</sup> Frustrated with the inefficiency of the organisation, former minister of CIS affairs Anatoliy Adamishin called the Commonwealth a “building without a foundation”.<sup>91</sup> At a press conference on 9 September 1995, Yeltsin said that Russia was ready to create a new military-political bloc with the CIS members, patterned after the Warsaw Pact,<sup>92</sup> an mis-tailored declaration which constituted a major reason of the reluctance of the NIS leaders to be herded into the collective security institution of the CIS is the fear that commitment to such a Warsaw Pact-style organisation would guarantee Russian hegemony.<sup>93</sup>

On 10 October 1997 in Strasbourg, the most Western-prone (or anti-Russian?) members of the CIS; Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova created a sub-regional co-operative body, with a joint communiqué on the planned Transport Corridor Europe-

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<sup>88</sup> “Ukrainian President will not Sign Treaty on Protection of CIS Borders”, SWB SU-2314, 27 May 1995, p.1.

<sup>89</sup> Kvashnin said: “Not only the growing military-political activity in the former Soviet Union but also the evident attempts to declare these regions as a sphere of NATO security interests are alarming. Kosovo and Iraq were the first examples of NATO’s growing readiness to use armed force, and one may therefore expect that other territories, including former Soviet territories, will be no exception.” RFE/RL Newline, 16 November 1999. For the original text, see Anatoliy Kvashnin, “Alternativy vozobnovleniyu sotrudnichestva s NATO nyet”, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, no. 45, 19-25 November 1999.

<sup>90</sup> Valery Tsepikalo, “The Remaking of Eurasia”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 2, p. 110.

<sup>91</sup> Alexei Malashenko, “Putin in the Post-Soviet Space,” *Moskovskogo Tsentr Karnegi Brifing*, vol. 2, no. 7, July 2000, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, “The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy,” in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M.E.Sharpe, New York, 1997, p. 53.

<sup>93</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, “Sovereignty and the ‘Near Abroad’,” *Orbis*, vol. 39, no. 3, Summer 1995, p. 359.

Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA). The group was joined by Uzbekistan on 24 April 1999 during the NATO summit in Washington DC. The group was named GUUAM after the members' initials. The group, comprised of the members of the Commonwealth minus the signatories of the 1992 CIS Collective Security Treaty<sup>94</sup>, was primarily intended to counterbalance the influence of Moscow and its loyal satellites. The group generally aligned with the Western positions in international fora, and supported the non-Russian alternatives for Caspian fuel transportation in order to reduce the dependence on Moscow. One of the GUUAM's priorities is the development of Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), which would contribute to the revival of the "Silk Road". Russian administration naturally viewed this group and its integrative designs in the security field as an anti-Russian military bloc in formation. For the time being academician and politician Arbatov's premonition seems to be realising. In 1992, he wrote, if the maximum task of economic and political integration of the CIS would turn out to be unattainable, "the minimum task [would be] to prevent the appearance of a hostile coalition of other republics, which will inevitably try to gain support from outside."<sup>95</sup>

GUUAM denied that it would assume any military dimension, but its members' participation in the NATO summit in April 1999, their enthusiasm in co-operation with NATO exacerbated Moscow's suspicion. Moreover, Azeri Defense Minister Sefer Abiyev stated that military co-operation among the GUUAM members has a strategic character as it ensures their independence, and Georgian Deputy Defence Minister Grigol Katamadze added that the military co-operation stems from the coincidence of strategic interests of the member states and is not directed against any other parties.<sup>96</sup> Another hard evidence of transformation of the GUUAM group to a sort of security partnership is the joint Azeri-Georgian-Ukrainian military exercise in April 1999, with the objective of protecting the Baku-Supsa pipeline

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<sup>94</sup> In this picture, only Turkmenistan remains neutral.

<sup>95</sup> Aleksei A. Arbatov, "An Empire or a Great Power?" *New Times*, no. 50, December 1992, p. 20.

network. Russian perceptions of the group displayed variation. While Yegor Stroeve, the chairman of the Federation Council of the Russian Parliament expressed his belief that this grouping would not constitute a threat to Russian interests, Russian Foreign minister Ivanov warned in September 1999, that Moscow will “draw the appropriate conclusions” if it becomes military-based in nature.<sup>97</sup> Asking suspiciously why the GUUAM was formed in Strasbourg and Washington, he defined the alliance as a political organisation with plans to transform itself into a military one.<sup>98</sup>

Whether it will turn out to be a military co-operation platform or not, it is clear that the GUUAM became a reactionary axis against the Russian political and military domination within the CIS. Kuzio makes a distinction between the Russophiles/Slavophiles comprised of Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; and the Pragmatic Westernisers, which are Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Moldova.<sup>99</sup> According to Kuzio, traditionally pro-Russian Belarus, de facto Russian protectorates of Armenia and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan under Chinese threat, and Kazakstan with a huge native-Russian-speaking population, were natural allies of the Russian Federation, while the pragmatic westernisers had adequate reasons to fear Russia and balance its power with an alliance. Turkmenistan, although remained neutral, was close to the GUUAM and its projects of bypassing Russia with alternative pipeline projects.<sup>100</sup> Russia’s military presence in Tajikistan and Armenia ran counter to the geopolitical interests of the neighbouring countries. In Tajikistan, Russian political and military support kept Rahmanov in power, and this blocked the way of Kerimov’s ambitions to promote a pro-Uzbek administration in Dushanbe. Strong Russian foothold in Armenia is already giving chills to Azerbaijan and Georgia, who are

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<sup>96</sup> *Interfax*, 11 May 1999.

<sup>97</sup> Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, “GUUAM and the Future of CIS Military Cooperation,” *European Security*, vol. 9, no. 4, Winter 2000, p. 103.

<sup>98</sup> Oleksandr Pavliuk, “GUUAM: The Spillover of Politics into Economics,” *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, no. 28, 1998, p.19.

<sup>99</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM,” *European Security*, vol. 9, no. 2, Summer 2000, pp. 82-83.

interested in getting rid of the remains of Russian hegemony as soon as possible. Georgian parliamentary speaker Zurab Zhvania directly defined Russia and Iran as the enemies of the GUUAM alliance, and praised the group's energy route project as a chance to connect the members to each other and to the world, and to keep them free from political pressure and influence.<sup>101</sup> The main objectives of the GUUAM were, to oppose the dominant role of Russia, to remove the CIS as a regional organisation, to deprive the right of the CIS to represent them in international fora, and to integrate into the transatlantic and European structures in the long term.<sup>102</sup>

Although the GUUAM presents a useful leverage against the Russian hegemony in the target regions of Turkish foreign policy, Turkish government had been careful not to express any sentiments about the group since its inception. Despite the formal Turkish negligence of the group, Armenians perceive the GUUAM as a result of purposeful geo-strategic initiatives of Turkey.<sup>103</sup> Whatever the Turkish stance is, the clock ticks in favour of the geopolitical pluralism thesis of Brzezinski; as long as the polarised situation persists within the commonwealth, the CIS, thus the Russian hegemony fades.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

<sup>101</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS...", p. 88.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>103</sup> *Golos Armenii*, 28 January 1999, cited in Oleksandr Pavliuk, "GUUAM: The Spillover of Politics into Economics," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, no. 28, 1998, p. 21.

### Chapter III:

#### DAVID IN GOLIATH'S BACKYARD: TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN EURASIA

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#### 4.1. Turkish Foreign Policy at the End of the Cold War

##### 4.1.1. Cold War Claustrophobia of Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkey, since the foundation of the Republic, pursued a foreign policy of non-alignment and non-interference even in its immediate surroundings. Non-alignment policy came to an end in 1952 with its membership to NATO, but the pacifistic character of foreign policy persisted. As Makovsky accurately pointed out; “throughout the Cold War, Turkish Foreign Policy was typically insular and passive, encapsulated by Turkish diplomats with the saying attributed to Kemal Atatürk 'Peace at home, peace abroad'”<sup>1</sup>. The official line of foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey has referred to a strong anti-imperialism and a narrow sense of nationalism, which promotes linguistic and territorial Turkishness, giving up the Ottoman imperial ambitions over non-Turkish nations around its borders.

The initial caution of the Republic and its foreign ministry cadres can be explained by the typical young state behaviour of seeking peace until the phase of nation building was complete. The Republic, trying to re-erect the country over the ruins of the Ottoman Empire had to pursue a policy free from risk-taking, adventurist policies. Leadership was acutely aware of the fact that peace was an imperative for the survival, independence, and territorial integrity of a country still in stagnation, and cautious, pragmatic non-alignment was the best option for the initial phase. After the World War II, under the Soviet threat over the Straits and the Eastern Anatolia, non-alignment became obsolete as a guarantee of survival, and the country officially allied with the West by joining NATO in 1952., strengthening its commitment to integration into the Western civilisation. Even under NATO umbrella, Turkey never felt secure enough to pursue policies that would anger the northern Soviet giant.

Consistent policy of protecting its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity required a strict isolation and indifference toward even the immediate environment of the country, which Turkey preferred to stay away from the political developments, conflicts and wars. The only exception for the cautious, isolationist and non-interventionist policy of Turkey is the "Cyprus Peace Operation", in which Turkish armed forces occupied the north of the island, and helped establish an independent Turkish Cypriot state there in 1983.

#### **4.1.2. Post-Cold War Metamorphosis**

Turkish perception of the international system, its foreign policy and self-image of the country's role in the region and the world, changed drastically since the late 1980s, with the huge tectonic changes in its immediate vicinity, reshaping the scenarios and actors in the game of world politics. Within the general scope of Turkish foreign policy, the share and importance of Eurasian space in the North and East grew tremendously, as a new "chessboard" presenting Turkey with new opportunities and challenges. As the most feared northern bear left his cave to a humbler one and numerous smaller neighbours, Turkey's security and foreign policy priorities were needed to be reassessed.

The Gorbachov era and his "new thinking" in international relations forced Turkey to fine-tune its relations with the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s. Accelerated with a rapid economic intensification of economic activity, from 1987 onwards, Turkey pursued a strategy of economic interdependence in order to enhance bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. Turkish foreign policy of this period was still negligent of the Turkic elements in the USSR, and the main concern was enhancing bilateral trade relations with Moscow. Mainly because of the long-term negligence, Turkish leadership knew little about the Central Asian and Caucasian Turkic republics within the USSR, even about the ones, which Turkey had very

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Makovsky, 'The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy', *SAIS Review*, Winter-Spring 1999, vol. 19 No.1, p. 93

strong, ties a short time ago. Premier Turgut Özal, on a visit to the US before the dissolution of the USSR, declared that Turkey had little affinity for the predominantly Shiite Azerbaijan.<sup>2</sup>

The “new thinking”, “Common European Home”, the fall of Berlin Wall and the consequent easing of the tensions of superpower confrontation, ended the claustrophobia Turkey had been suffering for half a century, but also gave a strong blow on the strategic importance of Turkey for the West. The European Community’s rejection of Turkey’s application for membership in 1989 confirmed the Turkish fear that Europe no longer needed Turkey as an ally in the post-Soviet world order.<sup>3</sup> The end of Cold War seemed to evaporate Turkey’s role overnight as the easternmost bulwark of the West against the “evil empire”.

However, international events once more incubated a change in politics and perceptions in the vicinity of Turkey, when Saddam’s Iraq invaded its small oil-rich neighbour Kuwait in August 1990. Turgut Özal, now as the president, was presented with a golden opportunity to pursue a more activist foreign policy in the region and demonstrate the Western mistake in its recent re-evaluation of strategic prominence of Turkey. The support he put to the US-led anti-Iraqi coalition’s military intervention in January 1991, despite its middle-term damage on the country’s economy and trade, attracted appreciation of this strategic significance as the easternmost Westerner.

This significance was deepened further, as the seismic change in the north shocked the whole world, and the three-quarters century old Soviet Empire disappeared by the end of 1991. The post-Soviet milieu presented Turkey a new world to discover, and an opportunity for Ankara to break Turkey’s double faceted isolation between Europe and the Arab world, being excluded from the former and refused itself to approach the latter.<sup>4</sup> However, the

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<sup>2</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Role of Turkey and Iran in Incorporating the Former Soviet Republics into the World System,” in Dawisha, Karen, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M.E.Sharpe, Armonk, 1997, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey: The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis,” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 46, no. 1, Winter 1992, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Heinz Kramer, “Will Central Asia Become Turkey’s Sphere of Influence?” ,” *Perceptions*, vol. 1, no. 1, March/May 1996, p. 113.

change in the foreign policy of Turkey, since it was dictated by the dynamics of regional and global scale politics as a *fait accompli*, was unnatural, euphoric and uncoordinated. The main reason of the lack of co-ordination and coherence of initial policy towards the post-Soviet order was the absence of institutional and ideational preparedness for such a change. The long negligence of the individual republics of the Soviet Union and shortage of experts and experience prevented the formulation of a coherent policy towards the NIS.

The absence of an institutional base and resistance of foreign policy bureaucracy to leave its traditional cautious policy caused tension between the ministry and the leadership, weakening the co-ordination among the policy makers and shifting the importance toward individuals rather than organisations. While the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs symbolised the cautious, pragmatic and pro-Western element of the foreign policy making mechanism, Özal symbolised the ambitious one. Özal's approach to the foreign policy was overriding the established procedures and institutions. He often by-passed the foreign ministry and other actors of foreign policy mechanism, and this attitude became more apparent during the Gulf Crisis of 1990-1991<sup>5</sup>. He, intentionally or not, reshaped the way of conduct of foreign policy as a system only he could operate, probably to assure his indispensability within Turkish political stage.<sup>6</sup>

Following his death, the ministry again reasserted its role as the main actor in foreign policy, under the leadership of Minister Hikmet Çetin. In this phase, Turkey emerged as a weighty force for stability and continuity, adapting the traditional cautious policy since Atatürk to the requirements of the newly formed geopolitical environment. The drastic change

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<sup>5</sup> The Parliament and the public opinion that showed little support for US policy, and opposition from the chief of staff of the armed forces (General Necip Torumtay), the defence and foreign ministers, Özal closed the Kerkük-Yumurtalık oil pipeline, let combat aircraft from the US led coalition to use İncirlik NATO airbase for strikes into Iraq, stationed about 100,000 troops on the southern border, and pushed legislation through Parliament permitting Turkish forces to operate abroad and foreign forces to be stationed in Turkey. His policies made Turkey the anvil of the coalition offensive on Iraq.

<sup>6</sup> See the relevant chapters in Ramazan Gözen, *Amerikan Kışkacında Dış Politika: Körfez Savaşı, Turgut Özal ve Sonrası*, Liberte Yayınları, Ankara, 2000, pp. 111-216. Also see Simon V. Mayall, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition*, McNair Paper 56, INSS, January 1997, pp. 53-67.

in the geopolitical environment forced the ministry to reorganise and acquire more expertise in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Although Çetin's prime minister Demirel had a strong political personality in domestic politics, stood besides the ministry and supported the organisational policy making processes. Demirel's main contribution to the foreign policy of Turkey, as prime minister and president, is determining the principle of acting jointly with other countries, under international auspices.<sup>7</sup> This principle has been unchangeably followed by the foreign policy mechanism ever since.

Tansu Çiller, Demirel's successor as prime minister and later the minister of foreign affairs, is known to take Özal as her idol in politics. Although she initially garnered considerable international sympathy as a the first women in the leadership of Turkey, her lack of experience and ability in foreign policy formulation and conduct depleted the loaned respect, especially when she decided to coalesce with the Islamist Prosperity (Refah) Party in August 1996. Çiller's incoherent foreign policy mainly directed to cram Turkey into the European Union Customs Union and creating a Muslim economic-political commonwealth of Developing Eight (D-8) ended in June 1997, when İsmail Cem was appointed foreign minister in the new Yılmaz coalition government. From then on, ministry reasserted its primacy in the diplomatic schemes under Cem, however, was criticised for being extensively Euro-centric, and increasingly negligible of the Eurasia.

One major change in the foreign policy of Turkey is the perception of its role its immediate vicinity and the globe. "[C]urrent Turkish policy is formulated on the concept that the country's strategic significance, derived from its territorial location, is not static, but dynamic"<sup>8</sup>. Released from the Cold War clichés, Turkey no longer perceives itself as a

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<sup>7</sup> See Gareth M. Winrow, "Turkey's Relations with the Transcaucasus and the Central Asian Republics," *Perceptions*, vol. 1, no. 1, March/May 1996, pp. 128-145. For a similar interpretation, see Kemal Kirişçi, "New Patterns of Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour," in Çiğdem Balın et al, eds., *Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Challenges in the 1990s*, E.J.Brill, Leiden and New York, 1995, pp. 1-21.

<sup>8</sup> Nur Bilge Criss and Serdar Güner, 'Geopolitical Configurations: The Russia-Turkey-Iran Triangle', *Security Dialogue*, 1999, Vol. 30 No.3: p. 367

“bridge, barrier or a bulwark”, but an independent, self-conscious regional power after its own interests. Still, the Western-orientation persists. “Western orientation is one aspect of Turkish foreign Policy which has remained unchanged through the history of the Republic.”<sup>9</sup> Sander states that, developing relations with the NIS in the Caucasus and Central Asia, would not distract Turkey from its Western orientation, but would act complementary to it.<sup>10</sup> The establishment and strengthening of Turkish ties with the region would project Western influence to the area and facilitate incorporation of the NIS into the world community. Understandably, this character of Turkish foreign policy, negatively effects the non-Western and anti-Western regional actors’ perception of Turkey, adding the country in the shortlist of threats.

## **4.2. Turkey and Eurasia**

### **4.2.1. Grand Opening in Eurasia: Euphoria and Frustration**

When the dissolution of the next “Sick Man of Europe” was imminent, Turkey became the first country to recognise the NIS. The recognition of the independence of the Soviet republics came before the *de jure* dissolution of the Union, an event that does not comfortably fit to the traditional pattern of the cautious Turkish foreign policy behaviour. President Özal, bedazzled with the opportunities the systemic change in the international structure can bring, adopted Demirel’s definition of the Turkish world: “From the Adriatic to the Great Wall”. “The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the Turkish century” became the motto of the leadership, and an over-ambitious, but non-institutional offensive of businessmen and statesmen was launched to the “Turkish fatherland” (*Atayurt*). For the first time in the history of the Republic, Turkey sought to establish a sphere of influence, giving up the tradition of shyness in foreign policy.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Oral Sander, “Turkish Foreign Policy: Forces of Continuity and Change”, *Turkish Review*, Winter 1993, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Sander, Oral, *Türkiye’nin Dış Politikası*, İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, Ankara, 1998, p. 256.

<sup>11</sup> Graham E. Fuller, “Turkey’s New Eastern Orientation”, in Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, eds., *Turkey’s New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1993, p. 68.

A Turkic unity, or at least a commonwealth based on economic relations seemed possible to even the most sceptical analysts in this euphoric period.

Without a serious general strategy or a designed blueprint of Turkey-NIS relations, Turkey initiated *ad hoc* policy measures and several unprecedented bodies to facilitate penetration into the region, such as the Turkish International co-operation Agency (*Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı – TICA/TİKA*), Joint Administration of Turkish Cultures and Arts (*Türk Kültür ve Sanatları Ortak Yönetimi – TÜRKSÖY*), joint business councils, and Turkic Summit, TICA was founded within the structure of the foreign ministry in January 1992, to co-ordinate economic, cultural and technical assistance to and projects in the southern NIS of former Soviet Union. In the words of its first director, Umut Arık, three main aims of Turkey to realise through TICA were; the establishment of free and efficient international telecommunications and transportation connections; the creation of international banking links; and the generation of the finance to ensure economic livelihood.<sup>12</sup> Another new actor in relations between Turkey and the Turkic states of the former Soviet Union is the Joint Administration of Turkish Culture and Arts (TÜRKSÖY) which is an institution sponsored mainly by the Turkish Ministry of Culture.

In 1991 and 1992, official visits exchanged between the Turkic states frequently, and bilateral treaties in many field were concluded. Prime Minister Demirel, toured all the Turkic states in April and May 1992, and declared in Baku that Turkey has accepted the “responsibility to represent the Turkic world”. Turkish business centres were established, joint councils on economic affairs, trade and culture were set up, huge delegations of official and civilian level were exchanged and loans expanded to the needy Turkic “brothers” by Turkish Eximbank. With the intensification of relations in innumerable fields, the enthusiasm for the possibility of a sort of unity among the Turkic states was increasing, absence of the

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<sup>12</sup> Umut Arık, “The New Independent States and Turkish Foreign Policy,” in Kemal H. Karpat., ed., *Turkish Foreign Policy: Recent Developments*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1996, p. 34.

strong Russian opposition was contributing to the optimism. Election of Ebülfez Elçibey, the staunchly pro-Turkish nationalist leader of the Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF), as the new President of the Azerbaijani Republic in 1992 was another source of optimism for Turkish-NIS relations. In this atmosphere, TICA's first director went so far as to proclaim the Turkic states of the former Soviet Union as Turkey's "near abroad".<sup>13</sup>

In Özal's agenda, the most important instrument of closing together the Turkic states was the ambitious initiative of the Turkic Summit<sup>14</sup>. Turkey, convened the six Turkish/Turkic<sup>15</sup> States around a table in Ankara on 30-31 October 1992, with the hope of a concrete result of commitment to a certain level of unity between the countries. However, the meeting was a big disappointment for Turkey, since, especially the Central Asian leaders were reluctant to rule out the opportunities that the rest of the power foci present. It was the first sign of the evaporation of the euphoria of Turkic unity. Although Özal's hope for a Turkic commonwealth was not realised, these periodical meetings became important fora of co-operation for the six parties. After the 1992 Ankara summit, five more summits followed, in Istanbul, Bishkek, Tashkent, Astana and Baku.

Following the diplomatic failure of the Ankara summit came the most damaging blow to the project of Turkish influence penetration to the NIS, when Elçibey was ousted by a military coup. There were more than enough evidence to believe that Moscow was behind the act, directly or indirectly, and Russian influence was beginning to take the upper hand in the region's affairs. Increasing Russian assertiveness within the CIS gradually faded the enthusiasm for the desired level of co-operation among the Turkic states and the Turkic unity approach was abandoned after 1993.

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<sup>13</sup> Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: Atatürk and After*, John Murray, London, 1997, p.288..

<sup>14</sup> Officially called as the Turkish-Speaking States Summits.

<sup>15</sup> Prior to 1990s, there was no term in (Turkey's) Turkish language for the English word "Turkic" (or the Russian word "tyurkskiy") to denote the Turks which had never been a part of the Ottoman/Western Turkish world, or the "Turks" in general. By 1991, the word Türki was created by adding the Arabic suffix designating origin and relation, to represent the "non-Turkish Turks". Today, these terms are still causing confusion, partly

#### 4.2.2. New Turkish Policy towards the Russia: Who Fears the Big Bad Bear?

The long history of continuous conflict between Turkey and Russia is full of negative images that amalgamated into a pile of suspicion, resentment and fear on each side, a legacy which would certainly haunt the minds of their respective political élite for a while. For the Turkish side, the image of imperialist Russian putting the Ottomans on a continuous retreat southwards is strengthened by the oppressive Soviet policies over the Turkish nations of the USSR. The contribution of the Cold War Western propaganda is also important in aggravating the negative image of the Russian in the Turkish eyes. On the other side of the sea, the memory of the so-called “Tatar Yoke”, the image of the Sultan as the oppressor of the Orthodox peoples and the late Ottoman aspirations of pan-Turkism directed against Russian territorial integrity, are important factors in the Russian view of the Turks. Russians feel a deep-rooted dislike to the descendants of their former rulers who pillaged and destroyed Russia.

The effect of the co-operation during the period of Russian Communist and Turkish Nationalist revolutions had a positive effect on the other’s image, but it was short-lived and limited in effect. Both nations continued to see each other as enemies in adversary ideological camps and military alliances. Mutual perceptions began to change in the positive direction only in the 1980s when Gorbachov’s policies increased transparency of the outer membrane of the USSR, and peaked with the intensification of trade and tourism especially in the second half of the 1990s.

For centuries, Russia had been perceived as *the* threat to Turkish security, territorial integrity, independence and its very existence. However, especially after the Second World War, Turkish political élite deliberately publicly downplayed the Russian threat, and chose

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because the traditional super-meaning of “Turk” in a Turk’s mind, and partly from the illogical artificiality of the newly created term

smaller, and easier-to-swallow enemies such as Greece and Syria for itself. Despite the fact that Turkey was in a military alliance, which was established directly to counter the Soviet ambition over Europe, Turkish state rhetoric constantly directed the public opinion against Greece, a military ally within NATO, rather than the actual adversary, the USSR. Although it was the only NATO member bordering the Soviet Union, Turkey did not intend to formulate an independent active foreign policy concerning relations with Moscow, the Soviet Caucasus or Central Asia until the demise of the Soviets.

Turkey viewed the shrinkage of Russian power and the initial “power vacuum” in the southern post-Soviet territory as an opportunity to assert its ambitions and implement new policies in the region. In search for efficient adaptation to the new geopolitical structure around Ankara had to alter its traditions in foreign policy making and conduct, define new strategies and goals concerning the region, and get prepared for the inevitable rivalry with the still-dominant power, Russia. Thus, Ankara did not lose time to stress its ethnic, historical, and cultural ties with the NIS of the former Soviet south, and strengthened its claim for greater influence in the region with its Western-style democratic regime, secular state system, long-established market economy and the support garnered from the West. With the above-stated characteristics, Turkey stood out as a more advantageous option as a post-Communist model for the NIS.

Turkish foreign policy makers are still quite cautious though, as the country was not prepared for such a radical change in the power balance. That is probably why Graham Fuller believes that “Turkish foreign policy still is not a ‘full’ policy, as it is limited to its horizons”<sup>16</sup>. For Russia, another contender for the throne of the former Union territory was unacceptable, and Turkey’s steps towards such a role has strongly resented by the policy makers in the Kremlin. Sergey Karaganov, councillor of the President of RF, stated in 1996:

“These places are Russia’s backyard. Nobody can play in these fields without Russia’s consent”.<sup>17</sup> Russians implemented a through strategy to keep Turkey out of the borders of the CIS, partly promoting the integration processes within the CIS, and partly showing the “stick” to the still-cautious Turkey. With its greater mass and gravitational attraction, it became quite easy for Moscow to keep its satellites in their orbits, though with some distortions in the trajectories. To push Turkey out of the region, Russia also implemented power balancing techniques, putting extra weight against Ankara’s scale, using other actors with historical animosities to Turkey: Armenia, Iran and Greece.

For Russia Turkey was not simply another state that challenges its hegemony in the region, but it is the prolonged arm of NATO in the region. Moreover, Turkey is the only member of NATO that is directly linked to the Soviet south with historical, cultural, religious and linguistic ties, and has an deep-rooted experience over the ethno-cultural and political structures of most of the region as its former ruler. The complexities originated from these characteristics makes the scope of the Turkish-Russian relations broader than the term “bilateral” would routinely suggest.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4.2.3. The Basic Character of the Turkish-Russian Relations in the 1990s**

The policies of the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation represented opposites in regions where both claim to have important interests, such as the Caucasus, the Balkan Peninsula and the South-west Asia, therefore each supported the possible counterweights of the other’s policies. However, post-Soviet Turkish-Russian relations displayed a pattern which both countries, despite their mutual perception of each other as

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<sup>16</sup> Graham Fuller, ‘The EU and Turkey’s New Eurasian Foreign Policy’, *Parameters in Partnership: The US-Turkey-Europe*, eds. Hüseyin Bağcı, Jackson Janes, Ludger Kühnhardt, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999, p. 162

<sup>17</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, “From Hegemony to Pluralism: The Changing Politics of the Black Sea”, *SAIS Review*, vol. 17, no. 1, Winter/Spring 1997, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, “Turkish-Russian Relations: The Challenges of Reconciling Geopolitical Competition with Economical Partnership”, *Turkish Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, Spring 2000, p.60.

formidable rivals in the region, formulate relatively benign policies and refrain from using rhetoric reminding of the Cold War years. Although policies of the two countries openly clashed in numerous issues, such as Karabağ, Caspian pipelines, CFE flank limits on the Caucasus, persistent Russian military presence on Turkish borders, Chechnya, etc, Moscow and Ankara were extremely cautious to prevent a spill-over of a tension in a single issue to the whole of bilateral relations. This tendency to isolate issues from each other kept the process of normalisation of relations between two historical rivals on track, though occasional aggravations observed. This character of ties was well displayed when Turkey and Russia sided with opposing parties and coalitions during the Balkan Wars in Bosnia (1991-1995) and Kosovo (1999), on the region which two countries fiercely competed for dominance for centuries. However, this adversity on Balkan conflicts did not cause serious negative repercussions on the rest of the bilateral issues between Turkey and Russia.

Sezer, within a similar approach, described the Turkish-Russian relations in the 1990s by the term “virtual rapprochement”, which refers to “a state of bilateral relations in which public manifestations of state-level adversity and hostility have nearly completely disappeared; the importance of co-operation in a range of fields for furthering respective national interests is mutually perceived and publicly articulated; governments desist from using inflammatory rhetoric so as not to arouse public hostility; and officials keep the lines of communication in order to safeguard relations against the impact of sudden crisis”<sup>19</sup>. In Sezer’s model too, the historical mutual mistrust, fear and suspicion remains prompt besides the urge of developing co-operation, in the decision makers’ minds, keeping the parties from proceeding a higher level of rapprochement, which would be characterised by intensive co-operation in the areas of security and economy.

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<sup>19</sup> For an expanded account on the virtual rapprochement, see Duygu Sezer, “Turkish-Russian Relations in the 1990s: From Adversity to Virtual Rapprochement”, in Alan Makovsky and Sabri Sayarı (eds.), *Changing Dynamics of Turkish Foreign Policy*, Washington Institute of Near East Policy Press, Washington, DC, 2000., also see Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, “Turkish-Russian Relations: The Challenges...,” p. 62.

#### **4.2.4. Boys with Toys: Clashing Interests in the Military-Security Level.**

During the 1990s, and early 2000s, issues that brought competition and conflict between Turkey and Russia, increased with a dazzling speed, keeping the sides in still trenches despite the fact that more than a decade was left behind after the normalisation of relations. The major manifestations of the competition between the two countries originated from their conflicting interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and also in the Black Sea region, the Balkans and South-western Asia are listed below.

One important source of tension was the issue of Russian arms sells to the Greek Cypriots, when Russian arms export company Rosvooruzhenie made a deal with Nicosia on purchase of S-300<sup>20</sup> surface-to-air defence systems in 1997. Turkish Foreign Minister Çiller bluntly stated that Turkey would hit the missiles if they were installed in the Southern Cyprus. The crisis was cooled with Ankara's success, as the Greek Cypriots decided not to proceed with deployment in December 1998<sup>21</sup>. During the crisis, Ankara skilfully directed the public anger towards Greece and Greek Cypriot Government, keeping the Russian complicity at a low profile, therefore preventing a possible escalation of tensions with Russia.

The Russian assistance to the Iranian nuclear programme, officially through the construction of a nuclear plant in Bushehr, and transfer of medium-range missile technology is quite disturbing for Turkey as well as Israel and the US. The ministry of foreign affairs and military officials in Turkey, as well as their US counterparts frequently voiced Turkish uneasiness about the Russia-Iran co-operation in various fields. Russia was also discontent with the intensification of Turkish-Israeli co-operation particularly in the military-strategic field since 1996. Appointment of the Middle-East expert Yevgeniy Primakov as the new minister of foreign affairs and renewed Russian interest in the region under him was an

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<sup>20</sup> The technical name for these missiles is SA-10/S-300PMU-1.

<sup>21</sup> Instead, Greece declared that the S-300 missile systems would be deployed on the Greek island of Crete.

important factor for Moscow's concern about the possibility of disturbance of the regional balances in the disadvantage of Russia's Arab and Iranian allies. Russia, for the first time in several centuries, was marginalised as an actor in South-western Asian politics as it has been deprived of contiguity with Turkey and Iran in the Caucasus and Afghanistan in Central Asia<sup>22</sup>, but it was willing to reinstate its influence over the region. One possible way to do that was obviously to counterpoise the Turkish and US support for Israel, by backing the Arab states and Iran.

It is important that despite the international issues straining ties between the two countries occasionally, economic relations remain unaffected; as in the growing trade relations and energy deals (A characteristic which fits in the pattern of Turkish-Russian relations elaborated in the previous section). Despite the shadow of Russian-Greek Cypriot S-300 deal, frequent news about Duma members' contacts with PKK and Russian appeal to the Turkish Government for withdrawal of troops from northern Iraq, the Turkish-Russian natural gas deal called the "Blue Stream" was closed during Chernomyrdin's visit to Turkey in December 1997, together with positive declarations of both sides on a possible strategic partnership.<sup>23</sup>

Russian apprehension over the relative Turkish naval superiority in the Black Sea because of the weakening of the Soviet BSF was also an important issue. For Russia, the Black Sea has been a foreign policy and security priority, since its coast constituted the "soft belly" of the defence system of the country, and naval dominance in the region was a prerequisite for projecting power to the Mediterranean. Russia could claim to be a

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<sup>22</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy," in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M.E.Sharpe, New York, 1997, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that Chernomyrdin's visit coincided with the week following the EU Luxembourg Summit where the Union refused Turkey's candidacy, so the mention about "strategic partnership" partly signified the Turkish frustration and search for alternative alignments.

Mediterranean power, only it was a Black Sea power.<sup>24</sup> The importance of the Black Sea was also directly linked to the status of the Turkish Straits. 1936 Montreux Convention which limited the movement of battleships of non-Black Sea littoral states into the Black Sea left the Soviet Union as the main naval power in the region until 1991. However, after the dissolution of the USSR and the consequent partitioning/diminishing of power of the BSF, Russian naval power was reduced to an ordinary one, in the face of the strengthening Turkish, Romanian, and Ukrainian presence.

#### **4.2.5. Economic Relations and the Energy Connection**

As Ivanov said, the economy and tourism are the real engines of Turkish-Russian relations.<sup>25</sup> The volume of trade between the two countries in 2000 reached the level of 4 billion USD. Adding this the shuttle trade (*bavul ticareti*), the sum makes a sufficiently high level of trade.<sup>26</sup> Turkey sells mainly consumer goods to Russia, while it buys gas in return. By 1997, Russia became the second largest trade partner of Turkey after Germany. Russian arms manufacturers are also interested in the Turkish market, since Turkey, often frustrated by the Western governments' finicky attitude in weapon deals, seeks to diversify its sources. This attitude was obvious after the cooling of the Turkey-EU relations following the EU Luxembourg Summit of 12 December 1997, Turkey saw Russia as a possible partner in an alternative alignment in Europe, and strategic co-operation.

One major instrument of developing economic relations was the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC) initiative launched by Turkey in 1991, which formally targeted greater co-operation mostly in the economic realm, trade, transportation, communications, plus the preservation of the environment. It was initially designed as a unstructured gathering of the

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<sup>24</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "The Changing Strategic Situation in the Black Sea Region", *Jahrbuch für Internationale Sicherheitspolitik 2000*, Sonderdruck aus: Erich Reiter, Hrsg., Mittler, Vienna, 2000, p. 498.

<sup>25</sup> Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov at meeting with representatives of Turkey's business circles, Istanbul, 8 June 2001.

countries around the region, for flexibility and functionality, but gained an organisational form with the declaration of BSEC Charter in the summer of 1998. Although its use failed to fulfil the initial expectations of rapid development of co-operation, it provided the embryonic framework for intensification of economic, political and security relations. Besides this utility, it also served as a medium that facilitates trade, which naturally became the main function of the organisation. Turkey, with its experience in democracy and free market economy, was fit to assume the role of the locomotive of economic recovery and development in the region through the BSEC, especially in certain fields such as transportation, communications, construction, and tourism.

Among all the elements of Turkish-Russian economic relations, the gas issue was outstanding. While access to oil supply was not a pressing concern for Turkey, access to natural gas certainly was.<sup>27</sup> Gas transport requires pipelines, since shipping by tankers was not a safe and feasible option. Turkey was the fastest growing gas market in Europe, with a relative growth of difficulty of acquiring adequate gas.<sup>28</sup> Its economic growth was being artificially constrained because of the inadequacy of gas supply. Gas supply of the country was mostly dependent on Russia, since mid-1980s, through the pipeline traversing Romania and Bulgaria, plus import of liquid gas from Algeria and Nigeria. The gas deals with the Soviet Union in 1986 and the Russian Federation in 1998 brought approximately 75% of the current consumption to Turkey, and the ambitious “Blue Stream” project will double the amount of gas from Russia. However, this project remained controversial, since majority of the analysts suspect that it would be a strategic mistake to increase the dependency of Turkish gas market on Russia. Turkey instead should diversify its options by turning to the other gas producers in the region such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran. Blue Stream trans-Black

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid..

<sup>27</sup> Laurent Ruseckas, “Turkey and Eurasia: Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby,” *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 1, Fall 2000, p. 229.

Sea gas pipeline, for twenty-five years, 365 billion cubic metres of natural gas. Analysts claim that, since Russia has no preparation to transport gas from its own gas sources to the Blue-Stream terminal in the Black Sea, it would re-export Turkmen gas to Turkey (with almost tripling the price)<sup>29</sup>. Because of the preference of Russian connection over Turkmen option, the deal causes tension between Turkey and Turkmenistan too. However, given the great need of Turkish economy for gas, Turkish decision-makers could not afford to politicise the energy issue.

Table 1: Existing and signed gas purchase agreements

Agreements	Maximum Gas (bcm)	Signature date	Period	Status
Russia (West)	6	1986	25	In operation
Russia (West)	8	1998	23	In operation
Russia (Blue Stream)	16	1997	25	Construction started
Iran	10	1996	22	Construction started
Turkmenistan	16	1999	30	Completed
Algeria (LNG)	4	1998	20	In operation
Nigeria (LNG)	1.2	1995	20	In operation
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.2</b>			

Source: Botaş, 1999.<sup>30</sup> (bcm: billion cubic metres, LNG: Liquid natural gas)

#### 4.3. In the Backyard

After Moscow's hegemonic control over the Caucasus and Central Asia seemed to fade, Turkey had seen itself as the rightful inheritor of Russian influence in the Turkic states. The new international order left Turkey with several "fraternal states" in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and a group of smaller others which can also be a part of Ankara's future designs. Initially, as then Russian Ambassador to Ankara Albert Chernyshev stated, Russia "acknowledged Turkey's legitimate interest in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia in view of

<sup>28</sup> For more on Turkey's energy supply and demand concerns, see A. Necdet Pamir, "Is there a Future for the Eurasian Corridor?" *Insight Turkey*, vol. 2, no. 3, July/September 2000, pp. 31-44.

<sup>29</sup> Şükrü Elekdağ, "Jeopolitik Körlük," *Milliyet*, 25 October 1999.

<sup>30</sup> A. Necdet Pamir, p. 36.

its political, economic and cultural ties with both regions.”<sup>31</sup> Russia saw Turkey as a positive example for the Muslims of the southern NIS and also the Russian Federation, as a modern secular Western society, which rules out religious political assertiveness. Even after the toughening of Russian attitude against Turkish ambitions towards the region in 1993, Moscow’s perception of the Turkish model as a success story against the rise of political Islam and related terrorist activity, remained unchanged. In the text of the Concept of Foreign Policy of 1993, this aspect of relations was voiced again:

“Relations with the Islamic countries of South and West Asia cannot be formed without taking into account their policies in regard to the CIS states and regions of Russia proper which are populated by Muslims, as well as the rivalry among them for influence in nearby foreign countries. In this context, the search for ways of differentiated interaction and cooperation with the countries of the region takes on particular importance for Russia for purposes of preventing the spread of fundamentalist Islamic tendencies to us and affirming the ideas of secularism in our Muslim nearby foreign countries.

Of priority importance for Russia in this respect is Turkey, which being also a member of NATO, is more receptive to Western values. Friendly relations with Turkey are important to us, both for having good prospects for mutual benefit from trade and economic relations, and for exerting a possible positive influence on Russia’s southern Commonwealth neighbours in the matter of formulating a civil society here.”<sup>32</sup>

Initially Turkey’s role was positively perceived by all the post-Soviet states. Turkey became the first country to recognise the independence of the NIS, establish diplomatic ties and open embassies in their capitals. Especially for the Caucasian and Central Asians with common ethnic, cultural, religious, historical and linguistic ties, Turkey became the initial role model. Cultural, and economic interaction rocketed in 1991 and 1992, and a special channel of the Turkish state television, TRT Avrasya (Eurasia) began to be received in the region in the summer of 1992. Turkey acted as spokesman for the Central Asian and Caucasian Turkic states in the international fora, and canalised its efforts for their economic recovery. As President Demirel stated, Turkish policy concerning the NIS [was and is] to help

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<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Fuller, “Turkish-Russian Relations, 1992-1994,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 3, no. 18, 6 May 1994, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> “The Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation”, Text of Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs Concept Document, No 1615/IS, dated 25 January 1993, English translation in FBIS-USR-93-037, p.15.

these states to “seal their independence and become integrated into the international community.”<sup>33</sup>

Presumably, because of the proximity and common immediate needs of the two powers, Turkish and Russian spheres of influence intersected after a short while. The policy turn in Russia from relative Western orientation to renewal of vital interests in the former Soviet space in the period of 1992-1993 brought the regional rivalry, which would persist throughout the decade.

While both Turkey and Russia are open to limitless co-operation in their bilateral relations, each country’s grand strategies concerning the Caucasus and Central Asia reciprocally exclusionary in nature, that is, neither was eager to share the benefits. Both countries aim to push each other’s pieces out of the chessboard. Especially for Russia, with its persistent claims for special rights in the former Soviet south, this attitude is more obvious and has been demonstrated by frequent muscle flexing. Excluding external powers from the “near abroad” is one of the most important factors Moscow believes to facilitate the re-integration of the post-Soviet space. By leaving little room to manoeuvre for rivals, Russia would be unrivalled for the leadership role of the CIS community, in every field, since its military, economic and strategic capabilities overpower each and every member state.

Turkey also adopted a policy against Russia with a genuine exclusionary nature, since Ankara presumed that the longer and more effectively the Russian drive of Moscow-centred integration could be countered, the bigger chance for the NIS to consolidate their independence and integrate into the world community. The natural outcome of this policy would be the strengthening of Turkey’s relations with its “brothers” in the post-Soviet south.

#### **4.3.1. Barricading the Iron Gate: Turkish Policy towards the Southern Caucasus**

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<sup>33</sup> “President Demirel Holds News Conference”, *Turkish Daily News*, 30 December 1995.

The Caucasus had been one of the most worn away stages of world history, having been the battle ground for clashing civilisations and breeding field of unrest and hostility rooted in its nature of impermeably cosmopolite ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. It is an active fault line between the major plates of Iranian, Slavic, Turkish civilisations, their centuries old imperial formations, and supra-civilisations of Christianity and Islam, keeping them detached from each other. The political situation, which is always close to the level of boiling point in the region and the roots of the hostilities keeping everyone around on toes, goes centuries back in history. The artificial sub-national fragmentation of peoples by Stalin adds to the current tensions.<sup>34</sup> Today, unlike the recent past of tribal anarchy, the balances of the region are less volatile, with several countries more or less established their state structures; the Russian Federation in the north, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia in the south. Still under a variety of conflicting internal and external pressures, the unresolved ethnic and territorial disputes continued to frequently surface, and this contributed to the Russian efforts to bind the southern trio to itself in a short time of several years.

The epicentre of the Turkish-Russian competition is the Caucasus, or the southern Caucasus to be more precise. Both Turkey and Russia became highly suspicious of each other's ambitions and actions in the region, especially after 1992-1993. In the southern tier of the former Soviet Union, Southern Caucasus was of greater priority for Russia than Central Asia, with the exception of Kazakstan.<sup>35</sup> The withdrawal of Russian military and political power from the region following the Union's dissolution, gave rise to the "power vacuum" question in the minds of the Russian political élite, who immediately look for a design for re-establishing presence there in order to prevent external global and regional powers, namely

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<sup>34</sup> For more information on the sub-national fragmentation of the Caucasus, see, Uwe Halbach, "The Caucasus as a Region of Conflict," *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1997, pp.358-367.

<sup>35</sup> Vitaly Naumkin, "Russia and Transcaucasia," *Caucasian Regional Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1998, p.1.

the US, Turkey or Iran, take over the influential position.<sup>36</sup> Russia perceived Turkey as a power trying to organise a “strong opposition against Russia in the Caucasus, the Caspian region and Central Asia in order to realise the ideal of pan-Turkism.”<sup>37</sup> It viewed the civil strife in Georgia, Karabağ conflict and historical Armenian apprehension of Turkey as opportunities to be manipulated in order to squeeze out Turkish influence from the region, by excluding it from the peacemaking and peacekeeping processes. Turkish policymaking élite is acutely aware of the fact that although Turkey is powerful enough for a rivalry with Russia over the NIS, especially in the Caucasus, it is not capable of an all-out confrontation<sup>38</sup>. Thus, Ankara is unwilling to confront Russia, but is an effective spoiler to Russia’s ambitions in the South Caucasus.

The Caucasus is not an ordinary region in the surroundings. Turkey has social and cultural ties with the Caucasian states as a result of centuries of interaction. Aware of the possible economic and strategic benefits the region promises, Turkey’s aim was to establish peace, stability and co-operation in the region for the good of all. Turkish foreign ministry lists its main objectives as; establishing comprehensive co-operation in the region with the contribution of all three states, namely Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia; assuring the consolidation of their independence; achieving peaceful solutions for ethnic conflicts; and establishing and maintaining the political stability and economic well-being of these states.

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<sup>36</sup> For an account on “power/security vacuum syndrome of the Russian political élite, see Dimitri Trenin, “Russia’s Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region”, in Bruno Coppieters, ed., *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, VUB University Press, Brussels, 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Vladislav Shorokhov, “Politika Turtsii v Zakavkaz’e i Natsional’nye interesy Rossii,” [Turkish Policy in the Transcaucasus and the National Interests of Russia] in I. Kobrinskiy, ed., *Rossiia i Turtsiya na poroge XXI veka: Na puti v Yevropu ili v Yevraziyu?* Moskovskiy Tsentri Karnegi – CEIP, Moscow, 1997, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> This attitude was clearly demonstrated on 4 April 1993 when Elçibey requested Turkish helicopters for evacuation of Azerbaijani civilians before the imminent Armenian capture of the town of Kelbecer and opening of another corridor joining Karabağ to Armenia proper. Prime Minister Demirel declined the request, fearing such an action would definitely pull Turkey into the conflict and into a Turkish-Russian confrontation, which Ankara had done everything to avoid since the dissolution of the USSR.

For this purpose, the Republic of Turkey “immediately recognised the independence of the Caucasian countries without any discrimination”<sup>39</sup>.

Turkish foreign policy could be investigated best through accounts on bilateral relations with each state, by paying special attention to the main issues determining the relations between the Caucasian states and their relations with Turkey, and of course, with Russia.

#### **4.3.1.1. Azerbaijan as the Centre of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Southern Caucasus**

Azerbaijan can be named as the main focus of the Turkish foreign policy, despite the official equidistance to all Caucasian states, since Turkey and Azerbaijan have common language, culture and history. Azerbaijan, together with the Crimea and the Volga-Ural region, was one of the most important cradles of Turkish national movement in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The sense of brotherhood was more real and deep rooted here compared to the Central Asian states. The closeness of the spoken languages in both countries was also an important factor to contribute the strengthening of ties between two peoples. The importance both countries attribute to each other is substantial. Azerbaijan sees Turkey as a perfect model for development and transformation, and a counterbalance to the Russian pressure, while Ankara considers Azerbaijan “the most strategically located Turkic state: a gateway to Central Asia, a potential economic partner with huge petroleum resources, and a natural ally in containing Russian influence” in the Southern Caucasus”<sup>40</sup>.

Azerbaijan declared its independence on August 30, 1991, and this declaration was adopted by the Azerbaijani Parliament on October 18, 1991. Turkey, still being under the shock of the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and continuing tradition of caution in

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<sup>39</sup> Bilateral Relations: Turkey’s Relations with Caucasian Republics, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey web page*, posted at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/groupa/ae/caucasian.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Süha Bölükbaşı, ‘Ankara’s Baku-Centered Transcaucasia Policy: Has it Failed?’, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51 No. 1, Winter 1997, p. 81

foreign policy, did not react quickly enough to recognise Azerbaijani independence. Still, Turkey was first to recognise the Republic of Azerbaijan on 9 November 1991, 2.5 months after the declaration of independence, but almost a month before all other NIS. Two countries established diplomatic relations on 14 January 1992.

Early political developments favoured Turkey, as the staunchly pro-Turkish leader of the Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF), Ebulfez Elçibey was elected president of the republic with a %60 support in 1992 elections. Elçibey, who declared himself as a “soldier of Atatürk”, stated several times that he is willing and ready to accept a federation with Turkey<sup>41</sup>. Russian influence was rapidly diminishing as the parliament unanimously voted against membership to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on October 1992.. For the time being, Turkey seemed to have the upper hand.

Despite his positive image as a Azerbaijani and “Turkish” nationalist, both in Azerbaijan and Turkey, Elçibey was perceived as a naive and inexperienced politician even in his own country.<sup>42</sup> His pro-Turkishness without limits was disturbing even for Turkey as it could lead to frictions with Iran and Russia.<sup>43</sup> Self-declared partiality for the Turkish model, anti-Russian views and long-term goal of uniting the Iran Azerbaijani’s under Greater Azerbaijan facilitated a political alliance between Russia, Armenia and Iran, to counterpoise Turkish-Azerbaijani axis, and invited the decisive intervention against his leadership.

The blow to the Turkish influence in Azerbaijan came with the coup of Suret Hüseynov in June 1993. Equipped with the heavy weapons left by the Soviet troops of General Shcherbak and aided by his military advisors, Hüseynov easily seized the power. Former KGB and Politburo member Haydar Aliyev became the president, and Hüseynov appointed as the Prime Minister. New President Aliyev acted quite pro-Russian and reversed

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<sup>41</sup> Svante E. Cornell, ‘Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh: A Delicate Balance’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 1, January 1998, p. 60

<sup>42</sup> Elkhan Nuriyev, “Geopolitical Breakthrough and Emerging Challenges. The Case of the South Caucasus,” *Perceptions*, vol. 6, no. 2, June/August 2001, p. 142.

many Turkish achievements in favour of the Russians after his seizure of power. He agreed to join the CIS, cancelled the oil deal with Turkey, and then renegotiated the agreement to include Russia (LUKoil) in the Azerbaijan International Operating Company's Caspian oil exploitation project, transferring %10 of Baku's own shares to Russia in March 1994.<sup>44</sup> Baku ordered Turkish citizens to seek visas to enter Azerbaijan and about 1600 military experts serving in the training of the Azerbaijani army were dismissed. During this process, Turkey could only watch what was happening, and could not intervene or manipulate the situation, partly because of the continuation of its traditional cautious policy towards Russia and partly its lack of experience in such matters. By the ousting of Elçibey, Turkey lost a very important opportunity of consolidating influence in Azerbaijan.

Thanks to the tacit Russian support given to Armenians in the Karabağ conflict, Azerbaijan did not directly fall in the orbit of Russia. As Aliyev matured in his seat, Azerbaijani policy became more and more realistic and balanced, according to which he refrained from granting a special place to any of the big rivals in pursuit of greater influence, Turkey and Russia.. On 28-29 December 1993, on the visit of Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Hasan Hasanov, Turkey's right to intervene as a guarantor state to Nahçevan originated from the Treaty of Kars of 1921, was brought up, presumably to intimidate Russia. Again, on 8-11 February 1994, Aliyev visited Turkey with a crowded delegation, and he jointly stated with Turkish President Süleyman Demirel that Turkey and Azerbaijan were "one nation, two states"<sup>45</sup>. Two leaders came together again on 5 May 1994, after the signing of the Partnership for Peace Agreement by NATO and CIS countries, to discuss future political and military strategies.

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<sup>43</sup> Svante E. Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh..." p. 60.

<sup>44</sup> Although the agreement was reshaped in Russia's favour, Russian Foreign Ministry denounced the deal as illegal, since Russia officially recognises the status of the Caspian sea as a lake, and suggests joint exploitation of its resources by the littoral states.. The Soviet-Iran treaties of 1921 and 1940 confirm this status. For more information on discussions over the status of the Caspian Sea, see Yolbars A. Kepbanov, "The New Legal Status of the Caspian Sea is Basis of Regional Co-operation and Stability," *Perceptions*, vol. 2, no. 4, December 1997/January 1998, pp. 8-16.

Re-strengthening Turkish-Azerbaijani relations barely survived a scandal in 1995. In 17 March 1995, a coup d'état attempted by Ruşen Cevadov against Aliyev's leadership in Azerbaijan. After a short while, Turkish involvement in the attempt through the National Intelligence Organisation (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı* - MİT), and several cabinet ministers was reported in the Turkish media, but the link was officially denied by the Çiller government. However, this incident shadowed Çiller's visit to Baku, which took place about a month later. Interestingly, the scandal did not have medium or long-term effect on the general bilateral relations, possibly because of the mutual understanding that tension would be fatal for the common interests of the two countries in the region. Aliyev, proving that he is a very pragmatic and able statesman in balance politics, kept good relations with Turkey.

Turkey's officially declared objectives concerning the Republic of Azerbaijan were three-fold; Firstly, Turkey aimed to assure the consolidation of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Although the conflicts in the region allowed Russia to increase its influence at first, the independence of the Caucasian republics seemed to be consolidated<sup>46</sup>. Secondly, Turkey gave ultimate importance to the protection of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. It was the main champion of the promotion of Azerbaijani views on the Karabağ issue in all international fora. Thirdly, Turkey pursues a policy of diplomatic and technical assistance for realisation of Azerbaijan's economic potential by exploitation of rich natural resources of the Caspian region. To achieve these aims, two countries signed more than 100 bilateral agreements between 1991-1999. Another undeclared but obvious objective of Turkey is to keep the Azerbaijani administration friendly (but not necessarily pan-Turkish) to Ankara.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Milliyet*, 23 February 1994

<sup>46</sup> Duygu Sezer, 'The Black Sea Politics and Turkey', in Mustafa Aydın, ed., *Turkey at the Treshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Global Encounters and/vs Regional Alternatives*, International Relations Foundation, Ankara, 1998, p.73.

#### 4.3.1.1.1. Mountainous Karabağ Conflict

The conflict over the Mountainous Karabağ initiated in 1988, as the Armenian majority living in the autonomous region voted for seceding from Azerbaijan. Karabağ Armenians and para-military forces from Armenia occupied approximately 20% of the Azerbaijani territory after a bloody war. It was really hard to stay neutral for Turkey in a dispute concerning their kin, the Azerbaijanis, and the historical enemies, the Armenians. Public opinion immediately turned in favour of the Azerbaijani side, and the international dispute became an internal issue of Turkey.

Neither the public support for pro-Azerbaijani policies, nor the political will of the government proved adequate for an effective action in the international arena and Turkish support for Azerbaijan remained verbal. Four factors prevented Turkey to exert enough pressure on the Armenians: Firstly, the domestic political situation was chaotic, and Turkey had its own internal problems (i.e. the Kurdish insurrection) to deal with. Secondly, there was no significant support from the West thanks to the lobbying activities of the Armenian Diaspora mainly in the US and France. Thirdly, NATO was reluctant to get involved in an unstable and volatile region. Finally, and probably the most important of all, Russia was still powerful in the region. After a short period of internal chaos Russia adopted the doctrine of “Near Abroad” implying re-establishing Russian influence in the CIS.<sup>48</sup> Russian ambassador in Ankara, Albert Chernyshev quite clearly illustrated this fact when Turkey succeeded in securing a UNSC resolution urging Armenian troops to withdraw, saying: “some people think that Turkey should fill a vacuum... There is no vacuum. Russia has considerable historical, economic and political interests in this region”<sup>49</sup>. Russia also paid substantial importance to its relations to Iran, despite its negative rhetoric on Islamic terror, because of its potential as a counterbalance to growing Turkish influence in the former Soviet south. While strictly

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<sup>47</sup> Süha Bölükbaşı, p. 80.

<sup>48</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, ‘Sovereignty and the Near Abroad’, *Orbis*, Vol. 39 No. 3, Summer 1995, pp. 353-356

opposing most of the Turkish policies and stances concerning the region, Moscow has been supportive to Iran's prospects, welcoming it for mediation in the Karabağ conflict and resolutely carrying out the nuclear assistance to Tehran.

During the period of 1992-1993, Turkish attitude towards Armenia was quite warlike, mostly because the conflict was spilled over into internal politics. As the news of massacres and ethnic cleansing kept coming, the Turkish public became more and more eager to support a military intervention. Turkey also had a legal responsibility over Azerbaijan, since it is one of the guarantor states for the autonomous republic of Nahçevan, according to the Kars Treaty signed between Turkey and the Soviet Union on 16 March 1921. President Özal publicly threatened Armenia. On 2 March 1992, Turkey began to oblige cargo planes directed to Armenia to land in Turkish airfields, for a thorough check for arms.<sup>50</sup> Turkey's attitude got harsher as the Chief of General Staff, General Doğan Güreş declared that he is ready to supply the Azerbaijani Army with Turkish troops in June 1994<sup>51</sup>. But no action followed the rhetoric, as Russian Defence Minister Grachov reacted quickly saying that Russia would not permit interference by Turkish troops, adding that "Russia has its own interests in Azerbaijan"<sup>52</sup> while the Commander-in-chief of Joint CIS armed forces, Marshall Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov talked about the possibility of third world war and reminded Turkey the "risks" involved<sup>53</sup>.

Turkish attitude towards Armenia and particularly the Mountainous Karabağ dispute softened after Demirel replaced Özal as president. Turkish officials concentrated on the diplomatic efforts to promote Azerbaijan's views in the international fora, and refrained to use

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<sup>49</sup> *Milliyet*, 14 April 1993

<sup>50</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 11 March 1992.

<sup>51</sup> *Moscow News*, 15 July 1994

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Russian military doctrine of 1993 stating that it will deploy nuclear weapons when threatened by a non-nuclear state allied with a nuclear one, obviously targeted Turkey. This novel military stance could be foreseen when Russia resorted to nuclear deterrence as early as the spring of 1992, when Marshall Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov stated that the "Third World War" would be started if Turkey intervened in the Karabağ conflict on the side of

too nationalistic rhetoric against Armenia. Furthermore, Turkey provided humanitarian aid to Armenia for a brief period in expense of the Azerbaijani trust. Turkish Foreign Ministry launched a diplomatic offensive on the side of Azerbaijan in order to prevent Iran to act as a mediator in the Karabağ process. Ankara took the issue to the United Nations Security Council on 17 August 1993, and secured four resolutions urging immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian Forces from the occupied territories<sup>54</sup>. Turkey also used the summit of Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO)<sup>55</sup> to condemn Armenia, in its Istanbul summit in July 1993. The efforts of the Turkish diplomats, especially Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin's shuttle diplomacy to the region and European capitals became instrumental in bringing the issue to the agenda of CSCE.<sup>56</sup> This time, in order to balance Russian mediation efforts, on 28 February 1992, Turkey urged CSCE in Prague meeting to confirm that Karabağ is an indivisible part of Azerbaijan<sup>57</sup>. It also played an important role of organising the Minsk Group under OSCE in June 1992 with the major aim of mediating between the parties of the Caucasian conflicts and search ways for peaceful settlement. Finally, in April 1994, a cease fire agreement is signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia as a temporary solution.

In the 1994 CSCE Summit in Budapest, Russia yielded to the international pressure to station a Finnish-led multinational peacekeeping force of 3000 strength under the aegis of the UN, in Karabağ to facilitate the peace process. However, this idea seems to be shelved since, as no concrete effort to realise this decision was made. According to the analysts Halbach and Tiller, initial Russian acceptance of this force in its backyard can be explained by Moscow's ephemeral prediction that the collapse of the Azerbaijani forces against the Armenian

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Baku. See Dimitri Trenin, "Russia's Security Interests and Policies in the Caucasus Region", in Bruno Coppieters (ed.), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, V.U.B. University Press, Brussels, 1996, p. 91.

<sup>54</sup> UNSC resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884

<sup>55</sup> Members of ECO are; Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan

<sup>56</sup> Svante E. Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh..." p. 60.

<sup>57</sup> Süha Bölükbaşı, p. 84

occupation forces after 1992, could not be in Russia's interests, since it eliminated the balance of power in the southern Caucasus and invited the risk of a Turkish military intervention in Azerbaijan's favour.<sup>58</sup> Russian assertive position quickly restored after this short break as Russia strictly opposed the stationing of peacekeeping forces of other (non-ex-Soviet) countries in its "near abroad" the next year. Foreign Minister Kozyrev stated in 1995 that no country could take upon itself the special role, which belonged to Russia in ensuring stability in this enormous region, or create a sphere of influence there by excluding Russia.<sup>59</sup>

The only country that constantly expressed its support for Azerbaijan was Turkey. In all international fora, Ankara promoted Baku's view of the Karabağ conflict, and became the main obstacle before the possible domination of pro-Armenian perspective. Turkey also set a joint embargo with Azerbaijan against Armenia. Turkish military assistance, technical support and arms supplies was not a secret for careful eyes during the war. Currently, stalemate persists. Approximately 20% of the Azerbaijani territory is still under Armenian occupation. Thanks to Turkish efforts, all members of the OSCE -except Armenia- respect the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and UN has the similar position. Turkey still supports the bilateral talks between the two parties in search for a pacific solution, and maintains the precondition of the withdrawal of Armenian forces for establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia.

#### **4.3.1.1.2. Pipelining the Competition**

The substantial oil and natural gas wealth of Azerbaijan and Kazakstan were already attracting interest in the region before the break up of the SU. The struggle to get the lion's share from the Caspian reserves got harsher after the independence of the above stated states. Turkey's ambition to secure a share in the anticipated revenue from the Caspian fossil fuel reservoirs and the benefits can be gathered from their transportation to the world markets

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<sup>58</sup> Uwe Halbach and Heinrich Tiller, "Russia and its Southern Flank," *Aussenpolitik*, vol. 45, no. 2, 1994, p. 161.

became one of the major foci of rivalry with Russia. Especially after 1993-1994, the main emphasis of the Turkish-Azerbaijani relations too, shifted towards the oil issues after the signing of the cease fire agreement in 1994.

When he came to power, Elçibey signed the first pipeline agreement with Turkey in March 1993, agreeing the transportation of the Caspian oil by a pipeline traversing Georgia and Turkey. Russian Federation rejected the deal on the pipeline project that would neglect its interests. Azerbaijan was the “historical” petroleum source of Russia and Soviet Union, and should not be let go. President’s councillor Sergey Karaganov stated in 1997: “You can have Azerbaijan, but the oil is ours!”<sup>60</sup>

As the June 1993 coup changed the leadership and political orientation in Azerbaijan, new President Aliyev changed the plans for transport in favour of Russia. Aliyev gave concessions to the Russians to ensure their “neutrality” in the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict, and so he did. Russian Petroleum Company LUKoil promised 10% of the production of three main reservoirs. Turkish response was to “stop the Russians” on the Bosphorus; Turkish Ministry of Transport and Turkish Pipeline Company BOTAŞ, jointly prepared a “Straits Report” in April 1994, after the tanker accident near Istanbul on 14 March 1994. Turkey declared that new regulations for the Turkish Straits, modifying the Montreux Convention on the Straits would be on force starting from 1 July 1994. International Maritime Organisation (IMO) approved the new regulations on 25 May 1994. Presumably, Russia perceived the promulgation of the new Turkish regulations regarding the naval traffic through the Straits and the Sea of Marmara as a deliberate attempt to undermine the Russian pipeline alternative of Baku-Novorossiysk and accused Turkey of unilaterally violating the Montreux Convention of 1936. After a period of teeth gnashing on the both sides, on 6 November 1998, Turkey revised the regulations of 1994, softening some provisions about the vessel sizes, which were

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<sup>59</sup> Margot Light, “Foreign Policy Thinking”, in Neil Malcolm and Alex Pravda, eds., *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p. 77.

said to be designed initially for a trade-off. Russia grudgingly accepted the revised regulations and diplomatic skirmish remained minor, but retaliated with another project. In order to bypass the Turkish Straits and nullify the affect of 1994 regulations imposed by Turkey, Moscow engineered the idea of a Trans-Balkan pipeline project, from the Bulgarian port of Burgas to the Greek port of Alexandropolis.

Particularly after the frustration of the attempt of enticing the Turkic states into close co-operation around itself, the pipeline issue became the core of Turkish policy. The rivalry for the pipelines became the main determinant of Turkish influence in the region, and a chance to save its weakened prestige from total failure. Turkish ambitions over the energy routes were also fed by its domestic market's immediate needs and the pressure from its Western allies, especially the US. US support was the only major support behind Turkey in its efforts to link Caspian hydrocarbon states to the port of Ceyhan. The reasoning behind this support was the fact that the "Turkish route would reduce Europe's vulnerability to cut-offs"<sup>61</sup>.

The delay in the realisation of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project lessened its chances against the rivalling projects. In October 1995, Azerbaijan and AIOC decided that the early oil from the Çırağ oil reservoir, would be transported through the present Baku-Novorossiysk line and it has been flowing through the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline since the Autumn of 1997. Furthermore, Georgia and Azerbaijan agreed on another line between Baku and the Georgian port of Supsa. Although the Turkish government supported the construction of Baku-Supsa line, on the grounds that its first section would eventually form a part of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, Hayrettin Uzun, the head of BOTAŞ, stated that the support for the Baku-Supsa line was an error, and Turkey should concentrate only on the Baku-Ceyhan

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<sup>60</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "From Hegemony to Pluralism..." p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> James Nathan, 'Turkey Hedges Its Bets', *Perceptions*, Ankara, March-May 1997, Vol. 2 No. 1, p.36

route.<sup>62</sup> Another competitor in the energy corridor was the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) project of a pipeline that would transport Kazak Tengiz oil to the Russian Black Sea coast. By this line Russia plans to play Kazak oil against the Azerbaijani alternative and diminish the chances for the construction of Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.<sup>63</sup> The CPC plans to build a line between Makhachkale and Novorossiysk, which will avoid the insecure Chechen territory. As the pendulum swings freely to and fro, the pipeline routes still are not determined by the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC). But, realising that the chances of winning are very low, Turkey has come to agree with the principle of multiple pipelines that oil can be delivered through Russia as well as Turkey<sup>64</sup>. Moreover, Russian policy is displaying “a new vigour and coherence in the wake of its brutal and unfinished victory in Chechnya” and the election of Putin as president. Therefore, Turkey no longer has the initiative in the Caucasian politics, and its policy was reduced to reacting against the actions of Russia, the US or the three states of the region, especially on the pipeline issue.<sup>65</sup>

Similar to Russia<sup>66</sup>, Turkey is also hardly a single actor in the energy field. A number of key actors has a say so in Turkish foreign policy mechanism, including the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Energy and Natural Sources, The Prime Ministry, Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO)<sup>67</sup>, Pipeline Corporation (BOTAŞ), and several colossal construction companies which are very likely to be involved in the construction of the pipelines and

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<sup>62</sup> Gareth Winrow, “Turkey and the Newly Independent States of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus,” in Rubin, Barry and Kemal Kirişçi, eds., *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder and London, 2001, pp. 185..

<sup>63</sup> Pavel K. Baev, “Russia’s Policies in the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian Area,” *European Security*, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer 2001, p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> Duygu Sezer, “The Black Sea Politics and Turkey”, p. 76.

<sup>65</sup> Laurent Ruseckas, “Turkey and Eurasia: Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby,” *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 1, Fall 2000, p. 226.

<sup>66</sup> In Russia, in addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President’s Administration, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Energy, the Security Council and the energy lobby are the main actors of foreign policy. According to Elizabeth Fuller, an expert on the Caucasus, there is at present a general consensus of opinion among these actors, with the exception of the Caspian Sea oil and gas basin. See Elizabeth Fuller, “Russia and the Caucasus,” in Oldberg, Ingmar, ed., *Priorities in Russian Foreign Policy*, FOA, Stockholm, 1996, p. 76, also see Timothy L. Thomas and John Shull, “Russian National Interests and the Caspian Sea,” *Perceptions*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 75-96.

auxiliary facilities. Since the number of actors is quite high, friction among them is inevitable. The most important disagreement in policy conduct, occurred in March 1998, when the foreign ministry invited the representatives of the states concerned with the Caspian pipelines in Istanbul, except the Russian Federation. The Ministry of Energy protested the foreign ministry's exclusion of Russia, on the grounds that this action gave damaged the Turkish-Russian energy officials' negotiations over the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline issue.<sup>68</sup>

It is also claimed that a strong "Russian lobby" is formed close to the administration by the large construction companies and other businessmen with important trade relations with Russia. The commentators claim that these companies have important volume of investments in Russia, and would play a role of promoting Russian interests in Ankara to ensure the safety of their enterprises.<sup>69</sup> It has been suggested that the Blue Stream project, which had been intensely criticised by analysts in Turkey, was realised under the pressure of this Russian lobby.

#### **4.2.1.2. Georgia**

The importance of Georgia for Turkey is its geopolitical location, its being the main land link between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Central Asia. It is the key for Turkey's objectives about the land transport, oil and natural gas pipelines bypassing Armenia. It is also a buffer zone between the Russian Federation and Turkey. Being aware of its significance, Turkey, starting from recognition of the independence of the Republic of Georgia in November 1991, aimed the preservation and maintenance of the existing friendly relations with its new neighbour and provided economic and political support. By 1999, Turkey replaced Russia as the main trading partner of Georgia.

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<sup>67</sup> TPAO has a 6.75% share of the total production of AIOC, from the Azeri, Çırağ and Güneşli reservoirs, 5% stake of Kürdaşı, 10% share of the Abih, and 9% share of the Şah Deniz oil and gas fields.

<sup>68</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and the Newly Independent States...", p. 183.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-185.

Georgia was also particularly important for stronger Russian presence in the Black Sea. As Grachov stated in 1993, Russia should take every measure to ensure its troops would remain in Georgia, otherwise, it would lose the Black Sea.<sup>70</sup> Mainly because of this strategic significance, Georgia is another source of ethnic conflicts. First the rebellion in Southern Ossetia started in 1989, and then the Abkhazian autonomous region revolted against Tbilisi. The Abkhazians, equipped and manned by the Russians, drove out all the Georgians out of the Abkhazian territory, after a fierce and bloody fighting. Today, Georgia is a dismembered state, with the practically independent regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the north, and highly autonomous republic of Ajaria to the south (which is under the control of a wealthy overlord, Aslan Abashidze). Another threat lies in the ethnic Armenian region of Javakhetia, along the border of Armenia and Turkey.

During the conflict in Abkhazia, Turkey had preferred to remain neutral<sup>71</sup>, although the public opinion in Turkey was in favour of the Abkhazians, thanks to the formidable Abkhazian diaspora in Turkey. Turkey sent relief shipments to the Abkhazians, but only through the Russian and Georgian territory to ensure maximum control over the cargo.<sup>72</sup> When the Abkhaz President Vladislav Ardzinba visited Turkey several times in 1992-1993, no officials openly received him, but public support for him was asserted. According to the evaluation of Henze, Turkish policy towards Georgia was successful during the period of civil war; it was silent but supportive<sup>73</sup>.

The main objective of Turkey in this struggle is the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and the resolution of the conflict by peaceful means. It sent humanitarian aid for both Georgians and Abkhazians, contributed to the United Nations

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<sup>70</sup> Duygu Sezer, "Russia and the South: Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus," *European Security*, vol. 5, no. 2, Summer 1996, p. 314.

<sup>71</sup> Seyfi Taşhan, "The Caucasus and Central Asia: Strategic Implications," *Foreign Policy*, vol. 17, no. 3-4, 1993, p. 51.

<sup>72</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and the Newly Independent States..." p. 177.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Henze, 'Gürcistan ve Ermenistan: Huzursuz Bağımsızlık', *Kafkasya ve Orta Asya: Bağımsızlıktan Sonra Geçmiş ve Gelecek Konferansı*, TİKA, Ankara, 1995, p. 22

Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with five military observers starting from 21 October 1994, and supported dialogue between the adversaries. For realising this purpose, it held a conference in Istanbul on 7-9 June 1999 to bring the parties together.

Georgia currently hosts four Russian military bases, two of which are to be evacuated soon. Russia agreed to withdraw its troops from Gudauta (50<sup>th</sup>) base in Abkhazia and Vaziani (137<sup>th</sup>) military airfield near Tbilisi by the end of August 2001. Negotiations for renewal of lease of the two remaining bases, one in Akhalkalaki (62<sup>nd</sup>) , in Javakhetia, and the other in Batumi (12<sup>th</sup>), Ajaria. It is a well-known secret that for both of these bases, troops are recruited largely from the local population, giving these minorities an important advantage against the capital. Against the Georgian will to get rid of these remaining bases within three years, Moscow claims that it is impossible to vacate them for the next fifteen years, because of economic shortcomings.

Ankara saw Georgia as a possible ally since the two countries shared the desire to resist Russian influence in the region. High-level officers' visits exchanged, and the frequent Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia summits intensified the understanding and co-operation among the three countries, and brought them closer. Both Georgia and Azerbaijan refused to renew the CIS Collective Security Treaty in May 1999. Like Azerbaijan, Georgia too has pro-NATO leanings because of the frustration of Russian involvement of the secessionist movements within its territory. Shevardnadze's frequent pledges that Georgia will seek NATO membership in 2005, has become a major issue of contention between Moscow and Tbilisi, and a factor contributing to the Russian fear of a Turkish-Georgian-Azerbaijani military bloc against Russia and its allies. Georgia has stated that, within the framework of the PFP, it is ready to permit NATO to use its airfields, training areas and ports.<sup>74</sup> Georgia sees Turkey, a powerful regional actor and a NATO member, as the most important factor to reduce its dependence to Moscow.

#### 4.2.1.3. Armenia

It was the Armenian community (*millet*) which was called as the "loyal people" (*Millet-i Sadıka*) by the Ottomans almost a century ago. What changed the relationship between these two peoples was the infamous deportation of the Armenians by the Ottoman administration during the First World War. Ever since that tragic point of history, Turko-Armenian relations never became as friendly as it was in the previous century again. In fact, despite the rhetoric about the so-called genocide, and the killings of tens of Turkish diplomats by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) between 1974-1985, Turkey never approached Armenia with a significant negative prejudice in the international arena. Turkish policy was -and still is- cautious and balanced towards Armenia.<sup>75</sup>

Turkey recognised the independence of the Republic of Armenia on 16 December 1991 together with all the NIS countries (except Azerbaijan, which was recognised almost a month before), as it was stated, "without discrimination". It sought to assist Armenia too, to consolidate its independence and to be integrated in the global economy. Even before the final demise of the USSR in August, Turkish ambassador to Moscow visited Armenia and prepared the draft of a friendship agreement together with some bilateral conventions regulating border trade in April 1991. Turkey also extracted humanitarian aid, and facilitated the transit of other states' aid to Armenia despite the fact that it was applying an embargo to it together with Azerbaijan. It was also Turkey who invited Armenia to be a founding state in the BSEC.

Ankara has not established full diplomatic relations with Yerevan partly because of its ongoing occupation of more than 20% of Azerbaijani soil, but also because the Armenian government refused to recognise the 1921 Kars agreement signed between Turkey and Soviet Union, thus not recognising the borders with Turkey. For normalisation of the relations, Turkey's precondition presented to Armenia was to withdraw from Azerbaijan and to apply

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<sup>74</sup> Stanislav Chernyavskiy, "Zakavkaz'ye v planakh NATO," *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, no. 7, 1999, p. 57.

pressure on the ethnic Armenian militia in Karabağ to obey Baku<sup>76</sup>. Turkey perceives Mountainous Karabağ as “an integral part of Azerbaijan and urges for the withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied Azerbaijani territory. Turkey considers the OSCE Minsk Group process, to which it is a party, to be an important mechanism for finding a peaceful solution to the conflict”<sup>77</sup> Once the precondition is satisfied, relations between all the Caucasian states will be normalised together with the Turkish-Armenian relations as Turkey has political will to develop relations and co-operation.

Initially, Turkey tried not to ignore Armenia altogether as a trade partner, despite the tension caused by the Karabağ conflict. In September 1992, Turkey decided to sell 100,000 tons of grain to Armenia thus effectively broke the Azerbaijani blockade.<sup>78</sup> In November 1992, Ankara and Yerevan signed an energy protocol, according to which Turkey agreed to sell 300 million kilowatts of electricity per year to Armenia. The deal made the Azerbaijanis furious and the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Tevfik Kasımov denounced the accord as a “stab in the back of Azerbaijan.”<sup>79</sup> Alerted by the risk of tension with Baku, Ankara cancelled the energy protocol before it took effect, and Erdal İnönü, the deputy prime minister of Turkey, made a hastily arranged visit to Baku to assure the Azerbaijani administration that Azerbaijan has the priority position in Turkish foreign policy, and that implementation of the energy accord would be contingent to Armenian withdrawal from occupied territory.<sup>80</sup> Officially there is no trade between Turkey and Armenia today, however, up to 150 million USD worth

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<sup>75</sup> Paul Henze, ‘Turkey and Armenia: Old Problems, New Expectations’, *Eurasian Studies*, Vol. 1 Spring 1996, p. 50.

<sup>76</sup> Nikolai Hovanissian, presentation in the *Seminar on Russia and the NIS*, Session III, SAM, Antalya, 1996, p. 96.

<sup>77</sup> Bilateral Relations: Turkey’s Relations with Caucasian Republics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey web page, posted at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/groupa/ae/caucasian.htm>

<sup>78</sup> Süha Bölükbaşı, p. 84.

<sup>79</sup> Elizabeth Fuller, “The Thorny Path to an Armenian-Turkish Rapprochement,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 12, 19 March 1993, p. 49.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

of Turkish consumer goods enter Armenia through the Russian Federation and Georgia, bypassing the Turkish-Azerbaijani embargo.<sup>81</sup>

Armenia, being landlocked, mountainous, short of mineral resources and mostly devastated by the earthquake of 1988, cannot live without foreign assistance. The economic situation is even more worsened with the joint Turkish-Azerbaijani embargo, which exacerbated the energy and trade deficit of the country. Without a peace satisfactory for all the parties of the Karabağ conflict, Armenian position would not be better off in the near future. Armenia needs Azerbaijan for energy and Turkey for trade. Almost half of the energy need of Armenian SSR was supplied by Azerbaijan in the Soviet period. Normalisation of the economic relations with Turkey is also vital for the Armenians since Anatolia and Armenia are economically complementary<sup>82</sup>. Armenian leadership is also aware of this necessity, and they tried to convince Turkey to separate diplomatic and economic relations between the two countries for a couple of times. The former Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan's chief advisor Jirair Libaridyan asked for that sort of separation of Mountainous Karabağ issue from relations in other fields, during his visit to Ankara in September 1996. Turkey refused the offer immediately and persisted on the embargo. Even the current president, the nationalist Kocharyan refrained from using traditional antagonistic Armenian rhetoric against Turkey.

For Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan were the most important threats to the county's security. The need for balancing the Turkish threat, forced Yerevan into an inner orbit of Russia, giving Moscow greater chance of manipulation of the Caucasian issues through Armenia. It frequently protested Turkey for giving technical and tactical assistance to the Azerbaijani Army, directly or indirectly, during the war in Karabağ and surroundings. Since Armenia could not survive without Russian military and economic assistance, it pursued a

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<sup>81</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and the Newly Independent States of Central Asia...", p. 176.

<sup>82</sup> Halil Akinci, 'Turkey's Relations with the Central Asian and Caucasian Republics', in Mustafa Aydın, ed., *Turkey at the Threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Global Encounters and/vs Regional Alternatives*, International Relations Foundation, Ankara, 1998, p. 98.

balancing policy against the Turkish-Azerbaijani axis, finally reducing itself to a puppet of Kremlin leadership's strategy in the region. In 1994, Yerevan accepted the establishment of two permanent Russian military bases within its territory, in Yerevan and Gyumri, and stationing of two Russian divisions to guard the Turkish-Armenian border<sup>83</sup>. In early January 1999 Russia announced that it would deploy S-300 missiles in its bases in Armenia. Yerevan also purchased 8 Chinese Typhoon multiple missile launchers in September 1999, to deploy on the Azerbaijani and Turkish borders.

#### **4.3.1.4. The disagreement on the CFE Treaty**

Russia refuses to comply with the limits ordered by CFE treaty for the North Caucasus flank zone, and this non-compliance constitutes a major problematic between Ankara and Moscow, since Russia proposed that the CFE's NATO members and East European signatories abolish or re-arrange the ceiling constraints in October 1993.<sup>84</sup> The Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachov was reported to have said that if NATO expands too rapidly to the East, Russia will tear up the CFE Treaty. Vladimir Lukin agreed with Grachov, saying that it would be very difficult to explain to people in Russia that the country should continue to disarm under CFE and START II (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) under these conditions.<sup>85</sup> Russia reorganised its North Caucasian Military District (NCMD) in 1995, to deal better with the war in Chechnya and declared in April 1995 that it would ignore the ceiling in the Caucasus region of the CFE Treaty.

In the First Review Conference held on 15-31 May 1996, other signatories granted Russia a three-year period to comply with the limits in the North Caucasus. Additionally, the conference redefined the Northern Caucasus flank zone, providing Russia with the

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<sup>83</sup> Vitaly Naumkin, 'Russia and Transcaucasia', *Caucasian Regional Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, posted at <http://pubs.carnegie.ru/CRS/publi/crs/eng/0301-02.htm>

<sup>84</sup> See, Douglas, L. Clarke, "The Russian Military and the CFE Treaty", *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 42, 22 October 1993, pp. 38-43.

opportunity to maintain same amount of military force in a smaller area.<sup>86</sup> Russia did not comply with the limits until the end of the term and insisted on its complains about the treaty. During the OSCE Istanbul Summit, when the revised treaty was signed on 19 November 1999, Russia admitted its breaches of CFE ceilings and assured the leaders of the signatory states that weapons in the North Caucasus will be restricted at the end of the operation in Chechnya.<sup>87</sup>

The NIS in the Southern Caucasus are not capable of posing a military threat to Russia, given their shattered economic situations and weakness of self-occupied premature armies. The spread of Islamic irredentism in the Northern Caucasus is also proved to be impossible since the Chechen incursion is contained in the highlands. As the above possibilities are eliminated, Russian military strategists has been left with Turkey as the only major threat to the security of the country. Thus, the main elements of Russian southern Caucasus policy are determined as reinforcing southern CIS border adjoining Turkey, and keeping Turkey out of the area by every means possible.<sup>88</sup> To guarantee a dominant role in the “near abroad”, Russia needed to establish a network of military bases<sup>89</sup> throughout the former Soviet Union. On 6 April 1994, Yeltsin issued a decree setting out plans for 30 bases in the CIS<sup>90</sup>. It succeeded substantially in this task especially in Georgia and Armenia, where Russia

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<sup>85</sup> Jack Mendelsohn, “Stiff-arming Russia,” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 51, July/August 1995, p.4.

<sup>86</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, “From Hegemony to Pluralism...,” p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> İdil Tuncer, “The Security Policies of the Russian Federation: The ‘Near Abroad’ and Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, vol.1, no. 2, Autumn 2000, p. 106.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>89</sup> Besides the military bases Moscow acquired in Georgia, Armenia, and Tajikistan, it also leased many other Soviet bases and stations around the former Union territory. Major strategic centres and military installations in Kazakstan were, the Baykonur Cosmodrome, nuclear testing ranges in Semey (Semipalatinsk) and Azgır, strategic missile development-testing ground of Sarı-Şagan, and anti-aircraft systems test range in Emba. Of these installations, Semey range was given to Kazak nuclear centre in 1991, and Emba’s ownership was transferred to Kazakstan in 1999. Azgır testing range was closed down in 1996. Other Soviet strategic sites in the “near abroad” include the Nurek Space Observation Station in Tajikistan and Gebele early warning base in Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan, it has been agreed that the early warning military facility in Gebele (*Gabalinskaya radiolokatsionnaya stantsiya*), leased by the Russian Federation did not qualify as a military base. Azeri Defence Minister, Sefer Abiyev declared that “Gebele will never achieve the status of a Russian Military base on Azerbaijan’s territory.”

<sup>90</sup> *Economist*, vol. 331, no. 7859, 16 April 1994, p. 55.

was granted with several military bases<sup>91</sup> and the right to station border troops on the Turkish frontier. It also established military installations and stationed troops exceeding the limits, which were stipulated by the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), for the North Caucasus flank zone.<sup>92</sup>

#### **4.3.1.5. Living in Glass Houses: Chechnya and the PKK**

Since Russia ethnically is a Russian-Turkic and Orthodox-Muslim country, Moscow has been very touchy about the possibility of national or religious secessionist movements, especially while its federative structure was rather unstable in the initial stage of its independence.<sup>93</sup> Turkish attempts to inject influence in the Turkish/Muslim parts of the Federation and CIS, brought back the historical fear of Pan-Turkism, and increased the Russian resentment and suspicion for the Turkish initiatives concerning the region. Many members of the Russian political élite became sure that the ultimate Turkish goal is to ease the break up of the Federation and gather the Turkish and Muslim pieces under the “Turan”, the mythological pan-Turkish empire. Most of them believed that this grand strategy was initiated when the secessionist rebellion in Chechnya began.

Turkey was equally irritated by the covert political and material support for the Kurdish armed separatist movement in its south-east. The relations of the Duma members with the representatives of the PKK, and the unusual interest of the Russian media in the supporters of the terrorist organisation exacerbated the Turkish suspicion of an organic link between Moscow and PKK. On 25 January 1995, a “Kurdish House” was opened in Moscow,

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<sup>91</sup> Russia transformed the Transcaucasian Military District into the Group of Russian Troops in Transcaucasia (GRVZ) in 1992 and deployed them in Georgian and Armenian bases. In Georgia, Russian Federation has more than 9000 troops stationed on the Turkish border and in four military bases in Batumi, Akhalkhalaki, Vaziani (near Tbilisi) and Gudauta (in Abkhazia). In Armenia, there are two main military bases in Yerevan And Gyumri with more than 4000 border guards and a MIG-23 squadron. For the latest statistics on Russian military presence in the Southern Caucasus, see Hasan Kanbolat, “Rusya Federasyonu’nun Güney Kafkasya’daki Askeri Varlığı ve Gürcistan Boyutu,” *Stratejik Analiz*, vol. 1, no. 3, July 2000, pp. 42-47.

<sup>92</sup> İdil Tuncer, p. 105.

and some Duma members met PKK officials there.<sup>94</sup> The State Duma Committee of Geopolitics, under the domination of LDPR deputies became a PKK propaganda bureau in the parliament. Chairman of the committee Viktor Ivanovich Ustinov, agreed to host the “Third International Conference of the Kurdish Parliament on Exile” on 30 October-1 November 1995, stating that “if Turkey, for the sake of Chechnya, is meddling in Russia’s affairs, we know how to prevent it.” Although the Russian Foreign Ministry denied official recognition of these conferences, Turks believed that without the ministry’s tacit approval, they would hardly be realised. Turkish Foreign Ministry labelled the affair as a “deep wound that only Russia could bandage.”<sup>95</sup> Unsatisfied with the simple Russian response of “non recognition of the conference, Turkey, a couple of day after the conference, on 4 November 1995, announced that it will concentrate troops in its border with Armenia and Georgia in order to pressure Russia to abide by the CFE limits in the Caucasus.

The relations over Chechnya got tense again with the hijacking of the Turkish ferryboat “Avrasya”, during its trip from Trabzon to Sochi, by a group of terrorists, who were Turkish citizens of Caucasian origin on 16 January 1996. The group surrendered without any resistance after a couple of days, and a considerable part of the confused Turkish population supported the action. Russian authorities expressed their regret and discontent caused by the public support, and the “mild” attitude of the Turkish police against the terrorists. Aftershocks of the Avrasya hijacking followed with a series of public statements of Duma members and generals in Russia. A member of the Duma Committee of Security, Aleksandr Glebovich Nevzorov, stated that the PKK is not a terrorist organisation, while LDPR’s Aleksey Valentinovich Mitrofanov, the new chairman of the Committee of Geopolitics, talked about

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<sup>93</sup> For more information on Russian federalism and its problems, see Çokuur Gavriyev, *The Development of Russian federalism and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)*, Unpublished thesis, Bilkent University, Ankara, 2000.

<sup>94</sup> *Rusya Federasyonundaki Gelişmeler, Etkileri ve Türkiye*, Siyasi ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı, İstanbul, 1995, p. 263.

<sup>95</sup> Robert Olson, “Tukish and Russian Foreign Policies, 1991-1997: The Kurdish and Chechnya Questions,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 2, October 1998, p. 6.

the possibility to sell weapons to the PKK. Members of the high echelons of the Russian military were also ardently giving verbal support to the “Kurdish cause.” General Andrey Maklakov criticised Rosvooruzhenie’s efforts to sell helicopters to Turkey to use against the PKK, and General Yuriy Yefrenov, openly proposed the creation of an independent Kurdish state in the south-east of Turkey.<sup>96</sup> In June another move angered the Turks, when the Geopolitics Committee decided to form a permanent “Sub-committee on the Kurdish Question” in June.

While the Duma, particularly its institutions under the control of Zhirinovskiy’s LDPR was increasing its agitation in the Kurdish question, the government was also giving the message of reciprocity of the Chechen and Kurdish problems to Ankara. During a visit to Ankara in July 1996, former Russian Ambassador in Ankara, Albert Chernyshev, diplomatically warned Turkey, saying; “We must understand each other, people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.”<sup>97</sup> Until the end of 1996, the Kurdish-Chechen tension persisted, but the situation was mitigated with the signing of the “Protocol of Co-operation against Terrorism” in mid-December by foreign ministers Çiller and Primakov in Moscow, according to which both sides will strictly refrain from giving any moral or material support to the terrorist activities within the other party’s borders.

A couple of Kurdish congresses were organised with the complicity of some Duma members led by Mitrofanov. His active role in establishing contact with the PKK and LDPR was confirmed in the testimony of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the terror organisation. Mitrofanov personally brought Öcalan to Russia in late 1998, and engineered the LDPR proposal to the President to grant him political asylum.<sup>98</sup> The President and the government on the other hand, denied involvement in the Öcalan affair and any complicity with PKK

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<sup>96</sup> Robert Olson, “Turkish and Russian Foreign Policies, 1991-1997: The Kurdish and Chechnya Questions,” *Journal of Muslim minority Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 2, October 1998, p. 9.

<sup>97</sup> Robert Olson, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> *Kommersant*, 23 February 1999.

activities inside Russia. Yeltsin refused to grant asylum to the PKK leader in response to the Duma appeal for that aim in December, and finally have him deported from the country. Ankara reciprocated this action which saved bilateral relations about a year later when the Chechen crisis erupted once more, when Turkey adopted a clear policy of non-involvement in Russia's internal affairs.

In November 1999, Ecevit made a controversial visit to Moscow, about a month after the initiation of the second Chechen campaign of the Russian Federal forces. The timing of the visit and Ecevit's description of the conflict as an internal problem of Russia caused a domestic reaction. He stressed the importance and respect Turkey gave to the territorial integrity of Russia and the two prime ministers made a joint statement denouncing terrorism. In addition, he also expressed his and Turkish Nation's concern about the humanitarian side of the conflict, the conditions of the civilian people effected by the war. Ecevit's visit under such conditions demonstrated the importance he attached to Ankara-Moscow dialogue, and his government's will to proceed with the strategy of drying up the sources of support of the PKK.

The official non-involvement policy of Turkey in Russian internal affairs did not convince the Russian public, which mostly believed that Turkey was indirectly behind the insurgency, or at least supplying the rebels with arms and technical assistance. Towards the end of the first Chechen war, squeezed between the large public support for the Chechens and relations with Russia, Turkey let the "General Representation of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria" headed by the Chechen deputy prime minister Hosh-Ahmed Nukhayov, to Istanbul,<sup>99</sup> but refrained from any official contact with it. The Russian Ambassador to Ankara, Vadim Kuznetsov warned the government that "if any country recognised the Republic of

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<sup>99</sup> Gareth Winrow, "Turkey and the Newly Independent States of Central Asia...", pp. 177-178.

Ichkeria, the most serious consequences would ensue, including the suspension of diplomatic relations.<sup>100</sup>

Scenarios about a clandestine plan for erecting a Turkish Empire, which would be joined by independent Chechnya, were being published in serious newspapers.<sup>101</sup> Russian press was fully aware of the extensive coverage Turkish media gave to the pro-Chechen interpretations of the Campaign in Chechnya. On 6 July 2000, Turkish court released Magomet Tagayev, a man wanted in Russia for complicity in terrorist activities. Russian Foreign Ministry expressed its “regret and surprise against a background of numerous assurances by Ankara that it will fight all manifestations of terrorism.”<sup>102</sup> The hostage taking incident in Istanbul also exacerbated the image of covert Turkish support for Chechens in the Russian eyes. The small terrorist group led by a Turkish citizen of Caucasian origin<sup>103</sup> stormed the lobby of a grand hotel in Istanbul, taking the clients including Russians hostage. The crisis ended in two day without spilling blood, however the milder-than-usual treatment of the terrorists by the police and the large public support placed behind them brought Russian reaction.

Despite the fierce fight of rhetoric of non-governmental entities in both countries, governments did not actively oppose each other in the Chechen and PKK affairs. By the 2000s, both countries more or less covered their own Achilles heel, Turkey by a series of successful operations cutting the support lines of the PKK insurrection and Russia by winning an incomplete battle on the Chechen flatlands.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Statements of numerous high ranking Russian officials on a possible Caucasian Confederation to join Turkey included Parliament Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroyev's speech over the design for the Caucasian Confederation attached to Turkey in January 1998, and Vyacheslav Mikhailov, the Minister of Nationalities and Regional Political Affairs, talked about a project of establishing a Caucasian union without Russia in April 1998. Well-known writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn also mentioned such a possibility in *Argumenti i Fakty* on 15 September 1999.

<sup>102</sup> *Interfax Diplomatic Panorama*, 11 July 2000.

### 4.3.2. Central Asia

Turkey was the first country to recognise the newly independent states, five days before the Almaty agreement dissolving the Soviet Union. President Özal had already visited Central Asia in March 1991, but that was before independence and he was careful to visit Moscow as a first stop. After independence, the Central Asian heads of state or government visited Ankara in return, one after another, starting with Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakstan in September 1991, Saparmırat Niyazov, Islam Kerimov, and Askar Akayev followed suit. In February 1992, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin toured the five Central Asian countries, with a crowded delegation of government officials, journalists and businessmen.

Pleased with the rapid development of the Turkish-NIS relations, Özal hoped to announce the creation of a Turkic Common market, and a Trade and Development Bank in the inaugural Turkic Summit held in Ankara in October 1992, nevertheless, the leaders of the Central Asian states seemed reluctant to commit themselves to an exclusively Turkic formation, which would automatically rule out other possible sources of economic support, such as Russia and Iran. The summit was a huge disappointment for Ankara. Even the prepared press communiqué was not issued since Kazak President Nazarbayev refused to sign a statement implying the recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) as an independent state, on the grounds that a parallel could be drawn between TRNC and the Kazakstan's Russian dominated north.<sup>104</sup> Similar results were achieved in the following five summits followed, in Istanbul, Bishkek, Tashkent, Astana and Baku.

The initial euphoria of Turkish fraternity is replaced by a more realistic attitude on the part of the Central Asians because of several reasons. The Turkish economy and opportunities

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<sup>103</sup> Muhammet Emin Tokcan, the leader of the terrorist group led also the hijacking the Turkish Black Sea ferry "Avrasya" in January 1996 from the port of Trabzon.

<sup>104</sup> Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, Praeger Publishers, Westport and London, 1999, p. 125.

it presented proved not to be a match for the needs of the economic recovery and restructuring projects of the NIS, while the CIS integration was viewed as more viable option for solution of economic problems. In addition to the natural attraction of the CIS economic integration, Russia implemented reactionary policies to cancel out Turkish initiatives towards the region. Also, the leaders of the Central Asian NIS quickly learned that foreign powers can be played against each other for their own advantage.

In a couple of years, the Central Asian states understood that the extent of Turkey's economic power did not match with their needs. Turkish credit and aid in kind was far from satisfactory, and their leaderships had to diversify their options of economic assistance. Their initiation as full members in the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) at the Quetta Conference in February 1993 was another step for enhancing economic relations between Turkey and Central Asians. However, the ECO, which was initially comprised of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, three actual competitors for regional development, proved to be an ineffective body of co-operation.

Despite the failure in becoming the economic and political leader of the Central Asian NIS, Turkey, with its Western-style secular democratic system gained a relative success against its theocratic rival, Iran, as a model for modernisation. The Central Asian leaders endorsed especially its stance against political Islam, since they saw it as the strongest danger in the process of state building. In the process, the Soviet educated leaders noticed the use of a slight appeal to Islam, and its symbols, but considered it a dangerous weapon which should better be left unloaded for the time being. Turkey also initially seemed to succeed to convince the Central Asians to adopt a modified version of Latin scripture, when a joint scientific commission agreed on a 34 letter common alphabet as early as 1992. However, none of the countries adopted the agreed form, implementing their own versions of Latin script, which were deliberately differentiated, and used only secondary to the still used Cyrillic alphabet.

On his last trip to Central Asia, President Özal was reported to be greeted by a Kyrgyz poet's words; "You left horseback with slanting eyes, and returned by plane with blue eyes."<sup>105</sup> Unlike the Caucasus, the cultural, social and linguistic differences between the Central Asian Turkic states and Turkey are incomparably wider. Central Asian Turkic languages and Turkey's Turkish are unintelligible for each other's native speakers without necessary training. Although the Turkic summits are officially called as the Summit of Turkish Speaking Countries, the *lingua franca* of the meetings have been Russian, due to the differences between the "dialects". There are also profound cultural differences between Turkish cultural messages and characteristics, and the Sovietised, isolated, and autonomous cultural heritage and traits of the Central Asian Turkic peoples.<sup>106</sup>

One major gap between the understandings of Turkey and the Central Asian leaderships was the latter's implementation of different tones of authoritarianism within their countries. Authoritarianism had been useful in keeping the stability and territorial integrity, and efficiently co-ordinating the efforts for economic recovery in the years of turmoil, but it also signalled that democracy was not in the agenda of the leaders. The most extreme case is that of Saparmırad Niyazov of Turkmenistan, who has created a crude Stalinist cult of personality to honour his own achievements.<sup>107</sup> Gigantic portraits of Niyazov, who adopted the surname "Türkmenbaşı" (The head of Turkmens), are on continuous display around the country's cities.<sup>108</sup> In Uzbekistan, Islam Kerimov is also encouraging a smaller-scale but strong cult making of his personality.<sup>109</sup> He was re-elected for another five-year term in

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<sup>105</sup> Olivier Roy, *La Nouvelle Asie Centrale ou la Fabrication des Nations*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1997, p.260.

<sup>106</sup> Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Regional and Global powers and the International Relations of Central Asia," in Dawisha, Adeed and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M.E.Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, p.219.

<sup>107</sup> Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia on its Own," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 4, no. 1, January 1993, pp. 97-98.

<sup>108</sup> When Niyazov decided to dye his hair to black, he simultaneously launched a campaign to replace his portraits around the country with ones of his new look.

<sup>109</sup> The coincidence about these two leaders is that they were both raised in state orphanages. Gorbachov, aware of the pervasive network of family based patronage systems of Central Asia, have chosen these two orphans as reformers. See, Martha Brill Olcott, "Central Asia on its Own," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 4, no. 1, January 1993, pp. 98-99.

presidency on 9 January 2000, with 91.9% of the total electorate. Besides the personality cults, most states in the region are controlled by networks of élites based on geographical association, common education and on extended family ties. Administrations are transformed into oligarchies, and the legislatures are rather weak with respect to the governments.<sup>110</sup>

Diplomatic relations between Ankara and Almaty were established when the permanent Turkish embassy in Kazakstan was opened in April 1992. Kazakstan is a significant element in Turkish policy toward the region, since it lies between Russia and the other Central Asian states as a border guaranteeing their independence and prevents Russia to pursue a neo-imperialist policy. It also distances Russia from the south of Asia, eliminating Moscow as a threat to energy sources around the gulf.

Kazakstan, however, is disadvantageous against Russia because of its large ethnic-Russian minority in the northern regions of the country. The region constitutes the largest bulk of the “Russians abroad”, a frequently used tool of the neo-imperialist elements in Russia to intimidate Kazak territorial integration or coax Almaty (later Astana) into cooperation with Moscow. Especially the Cossacks living in the north-west are eager to join the Russian Federation. Author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn too, called for union of northern Kazakstan with Russia. Despite the occasional Russian rhetoric about the secession of northern Kazakstan, few incidents directed to this end occurred. The alleged scheme to establish a separate state in the north named *Russkaya Zemlya* in 2000 is one of them. Kazak officials discovered the scheme and arrested 22 ethnic Russians in Ust Kamenogorsk region. Considering that Kazakstan’s 12,187 km long borders (6,477 km with Russia) are virtually indefensible, the Kazak leadership must be extremely cautious in its regional politics. There are also large groups of Uygur and Chinese on the east, Germans in the west and Uzbeks in

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<sup>110</sup> Fiona Hill, “Sustainable Development in Eurasia: The Case Continued engagement by the International Community,” *Insight Turkey*, vol. 2, no. 3, July/September 2000, p. 98.

the south, who disturbingly choose economic and cultural integration with the Uzbeks rather than Kazaks.

In October 1997, Astana (Akmola) was declared the new capital of Kazakhstan. The new capital was in the centre of the ethnic-Russian-dominated north, thus speculations were made about the leadership's intention to strengthen Russian influence in the country. However, coupled with the campaign of Kazakisation, the systematic replacement of ethnic Russians by Kazaks in the government posts, the reason for changing the capital seems to be directed to enhance Kazak element in the administration. The huge numbers of ethnic Kazaks will follow the capital to the north, eventually altering the ethnic composition and decreasing the demographical advantage of Russians in the region.

Many analysts see Uzbekistan as the most important state and the strongest candidate for regional leadership.<sup>111</sup> Tashkent has many advantages that the other Central Asian do not have. Uzbekistan, like Turkmenistan benefits from not having a common border with Russia, and pursue a more independent policy<sup>112</sup> and it has a considerable Russian-free population. It is also the strongest military entity among the others. It set up a National Guard on the basis of its own Ministry of Internal Affairs troops in January 1992. In the summer of the same year, the parliament adopted a law on defence that specified the make-up of the country's armed forces, to consist of land and air units, air defence forces, a special task force and the National Guard.<sup>113</sup> These unique arrangements made the country the only military power among the Central Asian NIS, with an operational army and air force. The newly established air forces were used against the Tajik opposition groups fighting the present government in early 1993.

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<sup>111</sup> For analyses about Uzbekistan's potential of regional leadership and stabilising role in Central Asia, see. S. Frederic Starr, "Making Eurasia Stable", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 1, January/February 1996, pp.80-92, also see, Svante E. Cornell, "Uzbekistan: A Regional Player in Eurasian geopolitics?" *European Security*, vol. 9, no. 2, Summer 2000, pp. 115-140

<sup>112</sup> Svante E Cornell, "Geopolitics and Strategic Alignments in the Caucasus and Central Asia," *Perceptions*, vol.4, no. 2, June/August 1999, p. 106.

Uzbekistan has a self-image of a “Greater Turkestan”<sup>114</sup>, and overt ambitions over its neighbours, especially Tajikistan. Initiating the Central Asian Economic Community of 1994 and joining in the GUUAM group of states in 1999, Tashkent increased its activity and self-confidence in international politics. Its relations with Turkey are far from stable. After the assassination attempts against Kerimov in February 1999, the Uzbek president openly accused Turkey of involvement<sup>115</sup>. The tension between the two countries increased when he pulled back Uzbek students having higher education in Turkey and did not attend the sixth Turkic Summit in Baku which was held on 8-9 April 2000. On the other hand, Turkish-Uzbek military co-operation continues, through arms shipments from Turkey to Uzbekistan and technical education of the Uzbek army by Turkish experts. Uzbek membership in the allegedly anti-Russian and pro-Western GUUAM is another positive step that will possibly pave the way for greater co-operation between Ankara and Tashkent.

Russian policies in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia are very different in practice. While incinerating and taking advantage of instability and conflict in the Caucasus, Russia implemented policies to strengthen stability in the Central Asian republics. The main instrument for this pro-stability policy is direct support for the leaders of these countries. Despite the nationalist rhetoric of the non-governmental circles, Russia did not encourage any secessionist movement in Central Asia, because of two reasons; Firstly, conflict and instability would endanger the large ethnic-Russian minorities in the region, and may trigger an unmanageable influx of Russians into the Federation, which would be a social and economic burden hampering the restructuring process; and secondly, that would also endanger the exploitation and transportation of the rich natural gas and oil resources which Russia aims to share the revenue.

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<sup>113</sup> Bess Brown, “Central Asia’s Military Establishments,” *RFE/RL Research Institute Draft Research Paper*, 29 May 1993, p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> Mustafa Aydın, *New Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus: Causes of Instability and Predicament*, SAM Papers no. 2/2000, Ankara, October 2000, p. 19.

Especially after 1993, parallel to its adoption of the “near abroad” approach in its security assessments, Russian Federation systematically pursued a policy aimed to prevent Turkey from penetrating into the region and from improving relations with its Central Asian kin. Russia opposed or criticised every kind of initiative to form unions and co-operative mechanisms between Turkey and Central Asians. It opposed their membership to the ECO and reacted negatively to the Turkic Republics Summits. According to Lukin, it is essential not to be drawn into a confrontation with the bigger Islamic countries (including Turkey and Iran), but to instead seek various avenues agreements and develop mutually beneficial interstate relations. “Russia must rebuff all attempts by Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan to encroach on Russian economic, political and military interests.”<sup>116</sup> Turkey’s geopolitical disadvantage against its regional rivals such as the Russian Federation and Iran, facilitated Moscow’s success in exclusion. Turkey lost the initiative and effective relations in the region gradually. Even in the Afghanistan civil war which in the periphery of the target are a of Turkish policy, Turkey was marginalised, as its protégé, ethnic-Uzbek General Abdürreşid Dostum was defeated and Taliban consolidated its victory and control over the country.

Turkey aimed to prevent Russia to become the “big brother” and establish another impermeable domination in the region again. However, the Central Asians leaders perceived the Turkish resistance to Russia as a deliberate attempt of replacing the *starshyi brat* with the *ağabey*, and themselves displayed a resistance to it. Having frustrated by the initial fruitless attempts to tighten the relations between the Central Asian states and Turkey, Ankara finally changed its attitude towards the region. The efforts of establishing and institutionalising ties with the motivation of ethnic kinship changed into a less intensive, and less ambitious labour for co-operation on cultural, social and educational matters. Although Özal’s vision proved to

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<sup>115</sup> Four officials of the TICA were claimed to be actively involved in the assassination attempts.

<sup>116</sup> Alexander A. Sergounin, “Russian Post-Communist Foreign Policy Thinking in the Cross-roads: Changing Paradigms”, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 2000, p. 226.

be unrealistic, the initial activist euphoria set the direction of Turkish policy towards the region for the rest of the decade.<sup>117</sup>

### 4.3.3. Ukraine

Turkey and Ukraine shared the common goal of preserving the post-Soviet status-quo in the whole area of former USSR in general, and around the Black Sea in particular. They formed their bilateral relations as a function of Ukrainian-Russian relations.<sup>118</sup> Initially, Ukraine viewed Turkey as the most important regional power and a representative of the West to counterbalance Russia's influence, and a guarantee for its independence, thus Turkish-Ukrainian relations developed with a quick pace. Kravchuk was convinced that ally-lacked Kyiv needed an alternative power source to stick, and this source was Turkey with its perceived potential of regional leadership. He became an ardent supporter of Turkey's BSEC initiative in 1991, and welcomed the Turkish aid to the Crimean Tatar population who are in constant influx to the peninsula. The two countries co-operated with each other on political and security issues. Turkey's backing of Ukrainian sovereignty over the Crimean peninsula and the status of BSF, was reciprocated with Kyiv's support to Turkish ambitions to alter the regime of the Turkish Straits, and Ankara's stance concerning the Karabağ issue.<sup>119</sup>

Especially after 1994, the West put its support directly to Kyiv, and with this strong backing of independence, Ukraine's need for nearer regional actors decreased therefore the intensification of Turkish-Ukrainian co-operation was cooled. The election of Kuchma as the President of Ukraine in the Summer of 1994, and his relatively pro-Russian foreign policy also contributed to the deceleration of bilateral relations between Ankara and Kyiv, however, the importance both countries give one on other remained on a high level.

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<sup>117</sup>Laurent Ruseckas, "Turkey and Eurasia: Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 1, Fall 2000, p. 222.

<sup>118</sup>Duygu Sezer, "From Hegemony to Pluralism...", pp. 10-11

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

Turkey has seen Ukraine as the main block against Moscow's ambitions in the Black Sea region, and a guarantee for the security of the Turkish Straits. According to the strategists in Ankara, the weaker Russia is in the Black Sea, the securer the Straits become. The huge power imbalance between Turkey and Russia has been reduced enormously since 1991, and Ankara is quite delighted because of this change in the scales.

Besides the security factor, another major focus of Turkish interest in the Ukraine is the Crimean peninsula, a land which has a tremendous historical importance for the Turks. Since the Crimea is one of the major cradles of Turkish nationalism<sup>120</sup> and over 5 million Crimean Tatar descendants live in Turkey, its psychological importance is substantial. The Crimean diaspora in Turkey is highly interested in the region, a considerable share with the desire of returning to the peninsula and most of them concerned with economic and cultural assistance to the growing Tatar community. The Turkish government undertook some projects such as the construction of houses and social activity centres for the incoming Tatars to their homeland, initiated in the summer of 1994 by President Demirel during a visit to Ukraine.

#### **4.4. Reinforcing Turkish Policy in Eurasia**

After 1998 Turkey proved that it had the necessary military muscle and political will to intimidate its neighbours. The country's image as a deterrent military might was peaked by the political surrender of Hafez El-ESad of Syria to Turkish military threat, successful operations against the PKK in northern Iraq, and eventual capture of its leader in Nairobi. The threat of Islamic extremism and terror was also being countered successfully since the fall of the Çiller-Erbakan government. Getting rid of the most important internal and external threats

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<sup>120</sup> The Crimea, Volga-Ural region and Azerbaijan are the most important cradles of Turkish nationalist ideas. For more information about Crimean Tatars and roots of Turkish nationalism, see related chapters in Hakan Kırımlı, *National Movements and National Identity Among the Crimean Tatars: 1905-1916*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1996.

one by one Turkey, became increasingly self-confident in its policies. Especially after 1998, Ankara has focused its attention on the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Although it has never been published or leaked out in full, main topics of the National Security Policy Document of the Republic of Turkey (*Milli Güvenlik Siyaset Belgesi – MGSB*) are no secret; Islamic fundamentalism and ethnic terror are considered as then main internal threats to the country's security. Before its dissolution, the Soviet Union and Communism were perceived to be the primary threats to Turkey's external security, but the focus was shifted towards Greece and Iran after 1992. The latest major update of the document was made on the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu – MGK*) meeting on 31 October 1997, under Yılmaz's coalition government, and "strengthening the relations with Turkic Republics and supporting their leaderships" were emphasised as a priority of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>121</sup> On another MGK meeting on 21 August 2001, Turkey decided to reassess its Caucasian and Central Asian policy and launch a new diplomatic "offensive" toward the region.<sup>122</sup> According to the new plan, diplomatic representation in the region will be strengthened in quantity and quality; military relations and assistance will be intensified, especially in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan; "special attention" will be paid to the regional conflicts and disagreements such as the Karabağ, status of the Caspian Sea, and Islamic terror; and the co-ordination and coherence between the government institutions' and organisations' policies towards the region will be enhanced.<sup>123</sup>

As stated earlier, the pipeline derby had become the core of Turkish foreign policy, since the Russians frustrated overambitious Turkish efforts to establish dominant influence in the Caucasian and Central Asian states one by one, thus Ankara canalised its efforts to secure the Baku-Ceyhan route as the main medium of transport for the Caspian oil. OSCE Istanbul

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<sup>121</sup> *Hürriyet*, 9 August 2001.

<sup>122</sup> Ayhan Şimşek, "Türkiye'den Orta Asya Atağı" [Central Asian Offensive from Turkey], *Cumhuriyet*, 24 August 2001, p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

Summit presented an opportunity to enhance the Turkish project, and a number of agreements were signed by the heads of states of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia on the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline on 18 November 1999.

Progress in bringing Azerbaijan out of Russia's shooting range was also made. Azerbaijan's presidential adviser Vefa Gulizade proposed for a NATO base on the Apşeron Peninsula in January 1999<sup>124</sup>. He also proposed a formal military alliance with Turkey, mainly aimed enhancing safety of the pipelines, parallel to the planned GUUAM joint pipeline security force. The chairman of the pro-government Azerbaijani National Congress Party, İhtiyar Şirinov, also voiced his wish of joining the NATO system, signing a military co-operation treaty with Turkey, and accepting NATO or Turkish military bases in Azerbaijan.<sup>125</sup>

Turkey launched another initiative for peace and stability in the Caucasus by early 2000, following the tense period between Russia and Georgia over the alleged Georgian help to the Chechen rebels. On an official visit to Georgia, President Demirel proposed a Caucasus Stability Pact, which would be modelled after the Balkans Stability Pact under the framework of OSCE on 15 January 2000. Demirel's proposal was seen as a possible step towards a sort of regional co-operation that will assure security of the Caspian energy routes.<sup>126</sup> The Pact proposal foresaw a joint effort of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, under the trilateral support of the EU, Russia and the US, to enhance the security by co-operation in the security field, pay effort for regional and multi-regional integration by upgrading the BSEC

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<sup>124</sup> Today, it seems that the Azerbaijani intention to host a NATO base within its territory is shelved, partly because of the cooling of the Azerbaijani-US relations due to Washington's leaked designs for the post-Aliyev era, and partly because of the Baku's success in forcing Putin to mitigate the Russian attitude towards Azerbaijan. Russia, recently withdraw its request to station border troops in the Azerbaijani-Iran Border and strictly refrained from accusing Azerbaijan of supporting the Chechen rebels during the second campaign, unlike the first one.

<sup>125</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM," *European Security*, vol. 9, no. 2, Summer 2000, p.104.

<sup>126</sup> See, "A Stability Pact for the Caucasus", *Centre for European Studies Working Document*, no. 45, May 2000, at <http://www.ceps.be>. Also see, "Executive Summary. A Stability Pact for the Caucasus," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 199-203.

into a Black Sea-Caucasus zone which would be instrumental in enlarging the area of co-operation to the Caspian. Georgians and Azerbaijanis welcomed the proposal, while Russians took their time in responding, until Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov's visit to Ankara in May, bringing with him Russia's answer to Turkey's "Caucasian Stability Pact" proposal. Armenians have proposed their own security model based on a 3+3+2 format in which a system of regional security would be drawn up by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, guaranteed by Russia, Turkey and Iran, and sponsored by the US and EU.<sup>127</sup> Despite the initial interest it attracted, the stability pact idea remained an idea, since nothing concrete followed since.

On the strategic track, latest developments seem to offer a relative success in Turkish influence in the Republic of Azerbaijan. An important step to take Azerbaijan out of Russian cultural sphere came from the parliament, which banned the official and public use of the Cyrillic alphabet in the country by 1 August 2001.<sup>128</sup> Recently, Turkish-Azerbaijani military co-operation is also increasing significantly. Azerbaijani Military Academy, whose lecturers are mostly Turkish officers, gave the first graduates in 25 August 2001.<sup>129</sup> The graduates paraded in uniforms, which are almost complete replicas of the Turkish Army's, with Turkish military marches on the background. Before the parade, General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu, Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces was honoured by President Aliyev, with the highest decoration of state, "The Flag of Azerbaijan"<sup>130</sup>.

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<sup>127</sup> Gareth M. Winrow, "Turkey and Caspian Energy: The Importance of Geopolitics," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 69; Michael Emerson, "A Stability Pact for the Caucasus," *Insight Turkey*, vol. 2, no. 3, July/September 2000, p.24.

<sup>128</sup> *Milliyet*, 31 July 2001.

<sup>129</sup> *TRT 1 TV* (State Television of Turkey), 25 August 2001; *Cumhuriyet*, 26 August 2001.

<sup>130</sup> General Kıvrıkoğlu became the first to be presented with this decoration.

## CONCLUSION

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Russian Federation, although lost its full control of the region and global political influence, still boasts a massive nuclear arsenal, and continues to be a great power with formidable might and potential. Its geopolitical advantages drawn from its colossal size, historical and infrastructural relations with the neighbouring countries, growing economic power and the “great power mentality” of its political élite may translate naturally to a neo-imperialist policy over the post-Soviet states, and revival of the Union. For the decade elapsed it, Moscow proved not to be adequately ambitious for such a revival, or possibly simply not capable of achieving it, however, it should be remembered that a decade is shorter than the life span of the Weimar Republic.<sup>1</sup> The rhetoric of the Russian politicians from Kozyrev-Yel'tsin to Putin evolved into a much more assertive tone through years, but Russia still seems to be incapable of matching its actual foreign policy conduct with its rhetoric.

Following a large-scale domestic debate between the Western-prone "Atlanticists" and conservative "Eurasianists" on the new character of the Russian State, its foreign policy priorities, methods of formulation and conduct, and mainly the "national interests", Russia re-entered the post-Soviet space in a more assertive manner after 1992-1993. It projected its economic, political and military might to the “near abroad”; Caucasus and Central Asian regions, where Turkey also intend to establish itself as a new regional power in the post-Soviet “power vacuum”. Ankara and Moscow, waged a small-scale cold war for dominant influence in the intersection areas of their spheres of interest, but both had paid extreme caution on not allowing the tensions spill over the whole of the bilateral relations. Currently, Russian Federation seems to have the upper hand in this rivalry, because of geo-strategic

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<sup>1</sup> For an interesting comparative analysis on post-Soviet Russia, and the Weimar Germany, see Galina Starovoitova, “Modern Russia and the Ghost of Weimar Germany,” in Heyward Isham, ed., *Remaking Russia: Voices from Within*, M.E.Sharpe, Armonk, 1995, pp. 129-145.

advantages it possesses. The Soviet Union left behind a legacy of infrastructural dependence to Moscow and seed of ethnic conflict all over its internal periphery, as a result of Stalin's carefully planned and implemented nationality policies and federal border arrangements. Furthermore, most of the ex-Soviet republics are led by former politburo members and regional Party leaders, who are not physically or psychologically uncomfortable with continued dependency to Moscow. In the short term, it seems extremely difficult, if not impossible, to break this interdependence between the former Soviet Republics and the Russian Federation, and among each other.

For the first time in generations, Russian interests are defined in regional rather than global terms, and the new theoretical framework that shapes the Russian way of viewing the international affairs is *realpolitik*.<sup>2</sup> On the Turkish side, the country's attitude in foreign affairs has evolved into a more active one, breaking the traditional policy of relative isolation and non-intervention. Despite clashing interests, Turkey saw Russia as a possible partner in an alternative alignment in Europe, after of frustration EU Luxembourg summit. Positively, Turkish-Russian relations have been relieved of the overpowering tension and total mistrust bred by the perception of Russia as *the enemy*.<sup>3</sup> The demonic archenemy images of both nations faded considerably, thanks to the developing ties in the economic interaction and tourism. However, it should be remembered that Turkish-Russian dialogue has been born largely out of necessity, because of the two countries' respective weaknesses; Russia being economically crippled, and Turkey being excluded from Europe. Reluctantly, they chose to downplay the rivalry on the strategic arena, in the Caucasus and Central Asia, while concentrating their efforts on enhancing trade. Despite the relative success in sustaining

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<sup>2</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy," in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, M.E.Sharpe, New York, 1997, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Turkish-Russian Relations a Decade Later: From Adversity to Managed Competition," *Perceptions*, vol. 6, no. 1, March/May 2001, p. 83.

friendly bilateral relations particularly in the economic field, the basic character of indirect bilateral relations over the ex-Soviet territory does not promise a bright future, since neither of the rivals have an intention to share the benefits of collaboration, and behave extremely exclusionary towards each other, especially in the Caucasian and Caspian energy politics. If this nature persists, political tension and possibly confrontation would be likely, no matter how cautiously foreign policy will be conducted.

**APPENDIX**  
**CHRONOLOGY**

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**1990**

- January Riots in Baku, Soviet army intervention. Ayaz Mütellibov was installed as president of Azerbaijan.
- 4 March Republican elections in Russia.
- 13 March Abolition of the CPSU's leading role (Article 6 of the 1977 Constitution).
- 14 March Gorbachev elected president of the USSR by the Congress of People's Deputies.
- May Yeltsin was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of RSFSR.
- 12 June Declaration of sovereignty of RSFSR by the Congress of People's Deputies of RSFSR.
- 12 June Ivan Silayev appointed Prime Minister of RSFSR.
- 20 June RSFSR declared sovereignty.
- 20 August Gagauz SSR was constituted inside the USSR.
- 3 September A Russian SSR was proclaimed in Trans-Dnyester.  
Ion Snegur became the President of Moldova.
- 11 October Yeltsin assumed the authority of premier. Kozyrev appointed foreign minister of Russia.
- 25 October Kazakstan declared state sovereignty.
- 20 December Eduard Shevardnadze resigns as Foreign Minister.

**1991**

- January Baltic Crisis in the Soviet Union.
- 15 January Bessmertnikh appointed Foreign Minister of the USSR.
- 17 January Gulf War began.
- 25 February Military Wing of the Warsaw Pact is abolished at Budapest Summit.
- 11-16 March Turgut Özal's visit to the Soviet Union.
- 17 March Referendum on the preservation of the USSR.
- 23 April Gorbachev and leaders of the nine republics sign the preliminary Union Treaty. Starting the "Novo-Ogaryovo Process" for replacing the USSR with a loose confederation.
- 12 June Yeltsin elected as the first President of the RSFSR.
- 23 June Yılmaz Government replaced Akbulut's. Safa Giray appointed Foreign Minister.
- 18 August Gorbachev kidnapped by August Coup plotters.
- 19 August "August Coup" launched, the White House besieged by Soviet troops.
- 21 August Latvia declared independence.
- 21-22 August Coup fails because of the mass demonstrations.
- 24 August RSFSR declared independence. Gorbachev resigned as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.
- 24 August Ukraine declared independence.
- 25 August Belarus declared independence.
- 27 August Moldova declared independence.
- 30 August Azerbaijan declared independence.
- 31 August Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan declared independence.
- 5 September State Council set up by Congress of People's Deputies to govern in emergency.

6 September	Cevher Dudayev seizes the power with a coup in Chechnya.
6 September	Leningrad renamed as St. Petersburg.
7 September	Baltic States recognised by RSFSR.
9 September	Tajikistan declared independence.
21 September	Armenia declared independence.
23 September	Communist coup in Tajikistan.
27 October	Turkmenistan declared independence.
27 October	Dudayev elected president of Chechnya.
1 November	COMECON dissolved.
1 November	Chechnya seceded from the Russian Federation.
9 November	Turkey recognised Azerbaijani independence.
19 November	Shevardnadze returns as Foreign Minister of the USSR.
20 November	VII. Demirel Government in Turkey. Hikmet Çetin appointed Foreign Minister.
26 November	Prime Minister Demirel criticised Azeri annulment of Karabağ's autonomy as contrary to regional stability.
1 December	Ukrainian referendum for independence passed by 90.3%.
1 December	Nazarbayev was elected President of Kazakstan.
7 December	Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian leaders sign an agreement creating the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Belovezhskaya Pushcha.
8 December	Declaration of the CIS. End of Soviet Union as a geopolitical reality and a subject of international law.
10 December	Kazak SSR renamed into the Republic of Kazakstan.
12 December	Five Central Asian presidents agree to join the CIS in Ashgabat.
16 December	Kazakstan declared independence.
16 December	Turkey recognised Armenian independence.
21 December	Almaty declaration on the foundation of the CIS.
23 December	Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan joined the CIS.
24 December	Russia took over the Soviet seat in the UN Security Council.
24 December	Yeltsin closed Pravda and disbanded Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
25 December	The RSFSR renamed as the Russian Federation.
25 December	Gorbachev resigned as president of the USSR.
29 December	Russian-Armenian Friendship and Security Treaty.
31 December	USSR officially ended.

## 1992

January	Turkish International Co-operation Agency (TICA) was founded to co-ordinate Turkish aid to and projects in the Central Asian NIS.
14 January	Establishment of diplomatic relation between Turkey and Azerbaijan.
20-22 January	Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin's visit to the Russian Federation.
4 February	Kozyrev's visit to Turkey for a meeting of Black Sea littoral states. A friendship and co-operation treaty was signed..
26 February	Armenian capture of Hocalı.
28 February	Prague CSCE summit confirmed that Karabağ is a part of Azerbaijan. Work for creation of the Minsk Group was initiated.
2 March	Turkey began to control air traffic to Armenia.
20 March	Kiev CIS Summit.
24-28 March	Çetin's tour in Central Asia.

31 March	Federal Treaty between Russia and its autonomous republics (except Chechnya and Tatarstan).
20 April	South Ossetia called for Russian sovereignty.
21 April	Founding of permanent Turkish Embassy in Kazakstan
May	Department for the Relations with CIS States introduced in Russian MFA
May	Armenian capture of Şuşa.
14 May	"Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation on Setting up of a Joint Economic Commission for Trade and Economic Co-operation" was signed in Ankara.
15 May	Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF) supporters march to the parliament. Mütellibov forced to flee the country. Isa Gamber, an APF member became acted president
15 May	Treaty on Collective Security signed by Russia, Armenia, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. (Turkmenistan refused to sign on the grounds that it prefers bilateral relations even within the CIS).
17 May	Armenian capture of the Laçın corridor.
18 May	General Pavel Grachov was appointed Russian Minister of Defence.
25 May	Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance was signed between Kazakstan and Russia.
25-26 May	Prime Minister Demirel's visit to Russia. "Treaty on the Basis of Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation" was signed.
15-16 May	Tashkent CIS Summit. Collective Security agreement concluded.
7 June	Ebulfez Elçibey was elected President of Azerbaijani Republic.
15 June	Yegor Gaydar appointed as Prime Minister.
24 June	Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance was signed between Kazakstan and Uzbekistan.
25 June	Yeltsin visited Turkey to attend BSEC Summit in Istanbul.
25 June	Heads of states or governments of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine signed in Istanbul the summit declaration on the BSEC, thus setting up a regional structure of multilateral co-operation in various fields of economic activity.
6 July	Moscow CIS Summit.
25 July	Inception of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the Istanbul Summit.
7 October	Azerbaijan had withdrawn from the CIS as the Parliament refused to ratify the Almaty Agreement..
30 October	"Co-operation Agreement between the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Turkey and the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation" was signed in Moscow.
30-31 October	First Turkic Summit in Ankara.
2-6 November	The first meeting of the Turkish-Russian Joint Economic Commission was held in Ankara.
30 November	ECO which originally consisted Turkey, Iran and Pakistan expanded to include the five Central Asian post-Soviet republics.
14 December	Viktor Chernomyrdin appointed Prime Minister in Russia.
16 December	Interagency Foreign Policy Commission created by Yeltsin within the Security Council.

**1993**

- 3 January START-II signed by Yeltsin and Bush.
- 22 January Minsk CIS Summit; 6 of 10 members sign CIS Charter.
- 25 January "Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation" was issued.
- February The Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC was founded.
- 1 March Hikmet Çetin's visit to Russia.
- 9 March Turkish-Azeri agreement on the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline was signed by Turkish Foreign Minister Çetin and his Azeri counterpart Bagirov.
- 11 March Turkish speaking countries agreed to adopt a common alphabet.
- 11 March Congress of People's Deputies passed resolution limiting powers of the government to implement economic reforms.
- 19 March Georgian parliament accused Russia of waging an undeclared war against Georgia with the aim of detaching Abkhazia from the rest of the country.
- 4 April Armenian capture of Kelbecer corridor.
- 14-16 April Özal's visit to Baku. The President declared that a Turkish-Azerbaijani military alliance is possible.
- 23-26 March Congress of People's Deputies attempted to impeach Yeltsin.
- 25 April Referendum for confidence on reforms. 58.5% supported Yeltsin and 52.8% supported economic reforms.
- 30 April UNSC Resolution 822, which called for the withdrawal of foreign and local Armenian forces from occupied territory in Azerbaijan.
- 16 May Demirel elected President by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey
- 28 May Russian forces under General Shcherbak completed withdrawal from Azerbaijan.
- June Hüseyinov's coup ousted Elçibey and replaced him with Aliyev.
- 25 June I. Çiller Government.
- 27 July Sochi Agreement on Cease Fire in Abkhazia and on the Control Mechanism of its Observation was signed by representatives of Georgia, Abkhazia and the Russian Federation.
- 31 August Soviet troops withdrawn from Lithuania.
- 8-9 September Çiller's visit to Russia. it was agreed to set up Turkish-Russian Working Groups in the fields of industry and transfer of high technology, energy and transportation. Those working groups started to function shortly after and several meetings were held in Turkey and in Russia.
- September Azerbaijan rejoined the CIS.
- 21 September Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet of RF dissolved by Yeltsin.
- 22 September Congress of People's Deputies appoints Vice President Rutskoy "president".
- 2-4 October Storming of the Ostankino TV Station, Mayor's office and the House of the Soviets.
- 2 November "Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation" was adopted by the Security Council.
- 18 November Yeltsin signed the decree establishing the arms export-import company to be known as Rosvooruzhenie.
- 12 December Elections of first federal assembly of Russia and referendum to ratify the new Constitution.
- 23 December Turkmenistan and Russia sign a treaty giving Russians in Turkmenistan the right to have dual-citizenship.
- 28-29 December Azerbaijani foreign minister Hasan Hasanov visited Turkey.

**1994**

- 11 January New Turkish Straits traffic regulations were promulgated.
- 3 February Georgia and Russia signed a treaty allowing Russia to establish permanent military bases in Georgia and station troops on the border with Turkey.
- 8-11 February Haydar Aliyev's visit to Turkey.
- 28 March Treaty of Military Co-operation was signed by Kazakistan and Russia.
- 29 March Nazarbayev offered an "Eurasian Union" of CIS states in Moscow.
- 1-6 April The second meeting of the Turkish-Russian Joint Economic Commission was held in Moscow
- 20 April "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation on Co-operation in Military Technical Matters and in the Field of Defence Industry" was signed in Moscow.
- 5 May Azerbaijan signed the PfP Treaty.
- 6 May Aliyev visited Turkey to discuss future political and military strategies.
- 9 May Mass demonstration outside the Lubyanka calling for the restoration of the Soviet Union organised by Ruts koy and adherents.
- 12 May Mass demonstration at the Ismailovskiy Complex lamenting USSR organised by Zyuganov.
- 22 June Partnership for Peace Framework Document signed by Russia and NATO.
- 1 July The new regulations regarding the maritime traffic through the Turkish Straits and the Sea of Marmara went into effect.
- 15-20 July Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets visited Ankara for debt rescheduling related to the Turkish Eximbank loans extended to the USSR.
- 19 July Debt rescheduling agreement signed by Turkey and Russia concerning the loans expanded to the Soviet Union by Turkey between 1989-1991.
- 27 July Russian engineered cease fire between Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- 27 July Müm taz Soysal appointed Foreign Minister of Turkey.
- 20 September The "Contract of the Century" was signed between the Western Oil Consortium and SOCAR, state oil company of Azerbaijan.
- 24 September Treaty of Economic Union signed by nine CIS members.
- 18-19 October Turkic Summit in Ankara.
- 28 November Murat Karayalçın appointed Foreign Minister of Turkey.
- 28 November Russian Security Council voted to send troops to Chechnya.
- 11 December Russian troops invaded Chechnya. First Chechen War launched.
- 20 December AIOC formed by the Azerbaijani government.

**1995**

- 1 January The CSCE renamed the OSCE.
- 20 January CIS Customs Union was founded by Russia, Belarus and Kazakistan.
- 25 January Kurdish House opened in Moscow.
- March Statute on the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued.
- 17 March Coup attempt against Aliyev in Azerbaijan. Çiller government and MİT were blamed of involvement.
- 16 March Armenia accepted two Russian bases into its territory.
- 27 March Erdal İnönü appointed Foreign Minister of Turkey.
- 9 May Prime Minister Çiller attended the ceremony on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the World War II in Europe, which was held in

	Moscow and also held official talks with Premier Chernomyrdin.
30 June	The second BSEC summit meeting of the heads of state or government was held in Bucharest.
25 August	Bishkek Turkic Summit.
14 September	President Yeltsin's decree on "the Affirmation of the Strategic Course of the Russian Federation with Member States of the CIS."
18 September	Second Summit of Turkish Speaking Peoples in Istanbul.
21 September	Second Turkish World Summit in Izmir.
? October	Russian-Moldovan treaty granting more autonomy to the "Dnyester Republic" and withdrawal of Fourteenth Army from Moldova.
15 October	II. Çiller Government. Coşkun Kırca appointed Foreign Minister of Turkey.
30 Oct-1 Nov	"Third International Conference of the Kurdish Parliament in Exile" organised with the support of the Russian State Duma Committee of Geopolitics in Moscow.
4 November	Turkey announced that it would begin to concentrate troops in the border with Armenia and Georgia.
5 November	III. Çiller Government. Deniz Baykal appointed Foreign Minister.
15 December	Debt rescheduling agreement signed on the basis of the terms and conditions of the "Paris Club Agreements". Under these arrangements Russia's debt repayment to Turkey will be made in semi-annual instalments with the last payment taking place in the year 2011.
15 December	Turkish Eximbank will make available 350 million dollars in new credits for financing the export of Turkish goods and services to Russia thus bringing the total amount of Turkey's credit facilities to Russia to 950 million dollars.
17 December	Russian Duma elections held. CPRF dominated elections.
<b>1996</b>	
5 January	Kozyrev resigned.
9 January	Yevgeniy Primakov appointed Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.
January	Hostage crisis in Chechnya.
16 January	Hijacking of the Turkish Black Sea ferry "Avrasya" by a group of terrorists led by Muhammet Tokcan, a Turkish citizen of Caucasian origin.
29 March	Integration accords were signed by Russia, Belarus, Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan in Moscow.
2 April	Russia and Belarus signed the "Agreement on the Formation of a Community".
April	Russian sources announced that Chechen President Dudayev was killed.
12 April	II. Yılmaz Government in charge in Turkey. Emre Gönensay replaced Baykal as Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs.
16 June	First round of Presidential elections in Russia was held.
26 June	Ukraine adopted new constitution.
3 July	Second round of Presidential elections was held. Yeltsin beat Zyuganov in run-off.
8 July	Erbakan's coalition government in charge in Turkey. Çiller assigned as foreign minister.
14-18 July	The Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Mustafa Kalemli paid an official visit to Moscow to sign the "Protocol on Co-operation

	between the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.”
5 August	Chechens took Grozny back.
14 August	Primakov re-appointed foreign minister.
17 October	Yeltsin removed Lebed from his post of Secretary of Russian Security Council.
21 October	Fourth Summit of Turkish Speaking Peoples held in Tashkent.
25 October	President Demirel visited Moscow to attend the third summit meeting of the BSEC.
28 November	Lukashenka signed new constitution and replaced Belarussian parliament.
1 December	Russian troops began withdrawal from Chechnya.
17-19 December	Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Çiller visited Moscow. A “Memorandum on Co-operation in the Field of Combating Terrorism” was signed.

### 1997

April	Union Treaty signed between Russia and Belarus.
26 May	Russian-Belarus Union Charter signed by Yeltsin and Lukashenka.
28 May	Russian-Ukrainian agreements on the Black Sea Fleet.
31 May	Russian-Ukrainian Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Partnership, by which Russia endorsed Ukrainian territorial borders.
11 June	Russian-Belarus Union Charter went into effect.
28 June	Tajik Peace and Reconciliation Accord signed in Moscow.
30 June	III. Yılmaz Government in charge in Turkey. İsmail Cem appointed foreign minister.
24 July	Russian MFA condemned Turkish proposal to integrate Northern Cyprus.
10 September	Kremlin spokesman Sergey Yastrzhembskiy said that Russia will pull out of the S-300 deal in return of withdrawal of Turkish troops from Northern Cyprus.
10 October	Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan formed the GUAM in Strasbourg.
14 October	Russian Foreign Ministry dismissed Turkish concerns over the S-300 missiles being supplied to Southern Cyprus.
16 October	Russian Foreign Ministry distances itself from the meeting of several Duma deputies with Osman Öcalan, a PKK leader.
20 October	Astana (till 6 May 1998 - Akmola) is declared the capital of Kazakhstan by the President’s Decree
25 October	Azeri oil started to flow from Baku to Novorossiysk via Grozny.
6 November	Russia expressed concern about Turkish military manoeuvres in Northern Cyprus.
11 November	Russian Foreign Ministry said that Turkey must withdraw its forces from northern Iraq.
13 November	Boris Nemtsov said that Azerbaijan should use both the Russian and Turkish pipelines to export its oil.
29 November	Viktor Chernomyrdin and Güneş Taner discuss gas supplies to Turkey.
12 December	Turkey was declined as candidate state for EU in the Union’s Luxembourg Summit.
15-16 December	Chernomyrdin visits Turkey. Deal for a gas pipeline was signed.
17 December	“National Security Concept (Blueprint) of Russian Federation” issued.

**1998**

- 6 January Russian MFA criticised US-Israeli-Turkish naval exercises to be held in the Eastern Mediterranean saying it could undermine the security of Arab states.
- 15 January Russian MFA criticised Turkish co-operation with Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.
- 9 February Russian MFA expressed concern about Turkish troops in northern Iraq.
- 19 February The head of LUKoil, Vagit Alekperov, and Turkish Energy Minister Cumhuri Ersümer hold talks in Moscow on the transport of Russian oil via Turkish territory and LUKoil operations in Turkey.
- 20 February Turkish and Russia foreign ministry officials held talks in Moscow on strategic stability.
- 1-2 March Foreign ministers meeting in Ankara on transport of Caspian oil and gas to world markets. Russia and Iran was not invited.
- 4 March The Russian Duma appeals to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to “grant special political status to the Kurdish regions.”
- 23 March Yeltsin sacked Chernomyrdin, appointed Sergey Kiriyenko prime minister.
- 24 April Kiriyenko confirmed as prime minister
- 18-21 May Turkish Chief of General Staff Karadayı’s visit to Russia.
- 27 May Russian MFA condemns Turkish military activity in Northern Iraq.
- 5 June BSEC Charter declared in Yalta Summit of the Heads of State.
- 22 June Russian MFA calls for demilitarisation of Cyprus.
- 6 July Declaration between Kazakstan and Russian Federation on everlasting friendship is signed.
- 7 July The MFA said that it is perplexed by Turkey's intention to propose to NATO the creation of so-called special peacekeeping forces for the Caucasus region within PFP. It also called for dialogue between Turkey and Greece on Cyprus.
- 10 July Greek Cypriot Defence Minister Ioannis Omirou visited Moscow.
- 13 July Greek Cypriot President Glafkos Klerides visited Moscow. Yeltsin confirms the supply of S-300 missiles go ahead.
- 20 July Russian Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznyov visits Ankara.
- 3 August Russian envoy to Cyprus Vladimir Chizov talked with Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders.
- August Russian financial crisis.
- 23 August Yeltsin sacked Kiriyenko, called back Chernomyrdin as interim prime minister.
- 10 September Chernomyrdin resigned as Duma rejected him twice.
- 11 September Primakov was appointed prime minister, Igor’ Ivanov was appointed foreign minister.
- 2 October Yeltsin appointed Vladimir Putin and Igor’ Ivanov to the Security Council.
- 6 October Russian MFA condemned Turkish attacks on PKK bases in Iraq.
- 9 October Abdullah Öcalan brought to Russia by LDPR Duma deputy Mitrofanov.
- 16 October Russian State Duma issued a statement criticising the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus.
- 26 October Zhirinovskiy visited Turkey.
- 29 October Igor’ Ivanov’s visit to Turkey for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic.
- 6 November Turkey adopted a revised set of regulations regarding the Turkish Straits

- traffic.  
 7 November Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Avdeyev visited Turkey to discuss Cyprus.  
 8 December Turkey threatened to tighten the rules for passage of oil tankers through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

### 1999

- 11 January IV. Ecevit Government in Turkey.  
 26 January Turkish and Russian officials discuss CFE Treaty in Ankara.  
 12 March Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary became members of NATO.  
 24 March Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada ratified the Russian-Ukrainian Treaty of 31 May 1997, giving Russia the right to use Sevastopol as its main naval base for twenty more years.  
 24 April Uzbekistan joined the GUAM, to change name into GUUAM.  
 12 May Primakov sacked. Stepashin proposed for Prime Ministry.  
 13-15 May Impeachment attempt against Yeltsin, eventually failed.  
 19 May Stepashin appointed prime minister.  
 19 May Russian MFA condemns Turkish military activity in northern Iraq.  
 28 May V. Ecevit Government in TR.  
 7-9 June Turkish organised Georgian-Abkhazian Summit in Istanbul.  
 29 June Igor' Ivanov expresses regret at the passing of Death sentence on Abdullah Öcalan.  
 9 August Stepashin cabinet sacked by Yeltsin. Putin appointed prime minister.  
 August Chechen armed incursion into neighbouring Dagestan.  
 17 August Major earthquake in north-western Turkey  
 September Chain of large-scale urban bombings in Russia in Moscow, Volgodonsk and Buynaksk, which left nearly 300 dead.  
 30 September Russian armed forces moved into Chechnya.  
 27 October Massacre in the Armenian parliament, leaving prime minister Vazgen Sarkisyan and eight deputies dead.  
 4 November Treaty on co-operation between Kazakhstan and Belarus for 1999-2008 is signed  
 4-6 November Ecevit visited Moscow to meet Putin. 4 agreements were signed.  
 ? November OSCE Summit in Istanbul.  
 8 December Yeltsin and Lukashenka signed the treaty that created the Union State composed of Russia and Belarus.  
 12 December Turkish MFA condemns Russian random violence targeting civilians in Grozny.  
 31 December Yeltsin resigned as President. Putin became the acting president.

### 2000

- 10 January New "National Security Concept of Russian Federation" was adopted by the Security Council.  
 15 January President Demirel visits Georgia, and proposes a "Caucasian Stability Pact".  
 26 January Turkish State Minister Abdülhaluk Çay called for a ethnic Turkish community of Azerbaijan and Central Asian states.  
 18 February Çay condemned the Russian genocide in Chechnya.  
 28 February Klebanov visited Turkey. Turkey and Russia set up a commission of

	military co-operation.
1 March	Chechen emissary Yandarbiyev visits Turkey.
26 March	Presidential Elections in Russia. Putin becomes President.
28-29 March	Demirel visits Turkmenistan.
8-9 April	Sixth Turkic Summit in Baku. Kerimov and Niyazov did not attend. Kasyanov appointed Prime Minister.
12 April	The "Agreement between the Government of Turkey and the Government of the Russian Federation on Co-operation in the Maritime Areas in the Black Sea" was signed in Istanbul on April 12, 2000
19 April	Turkish MFA expressed appreciation of Russian Duma's ratification of START II Treaty.
21 April	Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation adopted.
13 May	Putin signed the decree ordering the creation of seven "federal districts" within Russia.
16 May	Demirel's term as president expired. Ahmet Necdet Sezer elected as X. President of Republic of Turkey.
21-23 May	Turkish MFA under-secretary Loğoğlu's visit to Moscow.
25 May	Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov's visit to Ankara, bringing with him Russia's answer to Turkey's "Caucasian Stability Pact" proposal.
25 May	Upper house of the Kyrgyz parliament adopted Russia as an official language.
28-29 May	Cem's visit to Azerbaijan.
10 October	Eurasian Economic Union was found with the agreement signed by Russia, Belarus, Kazak, Kyrgyz and Tajik presidents, as a body to replace the CIS customs union on the model of EU.
23-25 October	Kasvanov's visit to Turkey.
<b>2001</b>	
7-8 June	Igor' Ivanov's visit to Turkey. Discussions between Turkish and Russian officials were concentrated on economic relation and the Blue Stream Project.
1 August	Azerbaijan banned the use of Cyrillic alphabet.
10 August	Construction of Trans-Black Sea gas pipeline (within the Blue Stream Project) was started.
24-26 August	Turkish Chief of General Staff, General Kıvrıkoğlu visited Azerbaijan.

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