

## *View from Turkey*

# Turkey's New Security Environment, Nuclear Weapons and Proliferation

DUYGU BAZOGLU SEZER

Professor of International Relations  
Bilkent University  
Bilkent, Ankara, Turkey

*Turkey has been touched deeply by the geostrategic changes introduced into the international system by the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This article will present and analyze Turkish perceptions of its evolving security environment in the post-cold war era as it impacts Turkish interests and policies, with particular reference to the implications for Turkish security of the existing nuclear weapons and potential proliferation in regions and countries that are located near its borders [1]. The article will describe and analyze the impact of the dissolution of the Soviet Union on Turkish security perceptions and policies. It will review developments and trends in the Balkans and in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region as they impinge on Turkish security. Turkish attitudes toward nuclear energy, the nuclear option, and proliferation will also be discussed.*

## The Disintegration of the Soviet Union

### The Retrenchment of Soviet/Russian Power

The retrenchment of Soviet/Russian power in its military, political, and ideological manifestations was the paramount development that redefined the geopolitical environment around Turkey in the early phase of the end of the cold war. Gorbachev's "New Thinking" in foreign and security policy and its realization in the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (1987), the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) (1990), and the Soviet commitment to unilateral cuts in manpower and heavy weaponry had already greatly moderated the Turkish perception of the Soviet threat. The subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union eliminated Turkey's common borders with Russia for the first time in several centuries. This historic development gave rise to the expectation that in the future Turkey would not have to fear direct exposure to the political and military power of its colossal northern neighbor, be it under Soviet or Russian control.

This work was originally sponsored by the Center for National Security Studies, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA, and prepared in early summer 1994. The author wishes to thank the Stimson Center, Washington, D.C., for allowing her to use portions of Occasional Paper 19, sponsored by the Center.

That the elimination of common Turkish-Russian borders was of historic importance can be seen in the negative lessons of history. The Soviet threat had impelled Turkey's post-World War II foreign and security policies of alliance with the West. Paradoxically, however, the 1920s and 1930s were years of mutual confidence and friendship. Those 2 decades appear a positive aberration when one recalls that for the Ottoman Empire (the progenitor of modern Turkey), Russian expansionism in the Balkans and around the Black Sea and the Caucasus, had been deadly threats to its territorial integrity and internal cohesion since the mid-eighteenth century. During its slow but persistent decline, the Western powers had stood by the Ottoman Empire ("The Sick Man of Europe," in the words of Tsar Nicholas I) in order to keep Moscow from radically altering the world's power balance by achieving control over Constantinople and the Mediterranean, then the lifeline of other far-flung European empires.

In broad terms, therefore, the collapse of Communism and the decline of Soviet/Russian power in Turkey's immediate neighborhood have relieved it of a major source of threat to its sociopolitical order and territorial integrity, both of which had forced Turkey to seek membership in the emerging Western alliance at the end of World War II.

The sense of relief at the early signs of the retrenchment of Soviet/Russian power is neither absolute nor final, however. It has been and will continue to be subject to Russian behavior, both domestic and international. Turkish assessments of the future behavior of Russia remain uncertain and highly speculative, largely because the Russian transition is not yet completed. The ultimate nature and direction of the new order in the Russian Federation and in the outlying lands freed from Soviet/Russian rule remain unresolved. Moreover, domestic and regional conflicts and tensions in former Soviet lands have replaced the general social and political stability of the Soviet era, warning of possible dangers ahead to which Turkey, so close to the Russian Federation and the "near abroad," may be especially sensitive for several interrelated reasons to be discussed below.

### **Will Democracy or Ultrationalism Triumph?**

First, it is not clear how long it will be before Russia manages to stabilize its domestic political system and economy. Prolonged domestic instability may increase the chances of a return to dictatorship, especially of an ultrationalistic type. Results of the national elections held in Russia on December 12, 1993, seem to have validated Turkish concerns by making the far right populist, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, the second most powerful politician in the Russian Duma [2]. Domestic developments had in fact raised troubling issues for the future of Russian democracy long before the national election results. For example, President Boris Yeltsin's ultimate reliance on military power to settle his scores with the hard-line parliamentary opposition, which he provoked into armed rebellion in October 1993 by closing down the Russian Parliament, already had raised grave questions about the commitment of the Russian leadership to democratic rule and about the growing entanglement of the Russian military in politics. The military has been rewarded by President Yeltsin for its allegiance during the October uprising in a variety of ways. For example, the draft military doctrine prepared by the Ministry of Defense was approved by the Security Council over its own draft when it met under Yeltsin's chairmanship in the

wake of the uprising. Conscription for the Russian armed forces was increased, and some of the restrictions on social benefits for the military have been lifted, even if modestly [3].

### **Long-Term Prospects in the Near Abroad**

There is also a broader dimension to any assessment of potential security risks from Russia. Given its geographical size, its large, skilled work force and trained brain power, its resource abundance, and the Western determination to underwrite the transition to a market economy, Russia could achieve a level of development that would permit it to recapture its superpower status in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Reorganized and modernized, Russian armed forces would then be in a position to help implement the foreign policy of a newly invigorated Russian Federation, which could possibly want not only to reclaim its superpower status but also the borders of Tsarist Russia.

It is important at this point to be reminded of the impact of the collective memories of the Turkish political elite, irrespective of their current ideological differences, in understanding the dominant themes in its assessment of how it expects Russia to evolve as an international actor in the medium term. Turkish-Russian history was a long stretch of seemingly unending series of wars, since the time of Peter the Great, for Russian expansion into Ottoman lands in the northern Black Sea, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. It is widely recognized that the Turkish straits were regarded by Tsarist statesmen as "the 'key' to the Russian house which properly belonged in the Russian pocket" [4].

The majority view within the political elite sees Russia as inherently driven toward empire, and to warm-water ports, as witnessed through history. Many argue that this inner thrust toward empire cannot be totally eradicated, or effectively checked, even after democratization has been consolidated. Russian attitudes and conduct toward the near abroad since early 1993 have provided ample evidence in support of some critical elements of this collective image. Following the early euphoria about the retreat of Soviet/Russian power, leading Turkish officials and public opinion makers profess that in the back of their mind lurks the image of a new Russian empire in the not too distant future. Turks will be most relieved if and when Russian behavior in the southern near abroad matches the words of Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, who has often tried to convince the West that Russia is not turning back to its imperialistic and nationalistic policies of the past [5].

Most elite perceptions in Turkey seem to approximate Henry Kissinger's original assessments. Writing in mid-1992, Mr. Kissinger expressed concern about the nature and direction of Russian power and foreign policy in the near future. Kissinger noted that hundreds of thousands of former Red Army troops remained in the territories of the former Soviet republics. The troops came and went and maneuvered without asking the permission of the newly independent countries. Moreover, he argued, the presence of at least 25 million Russians as minorities in those countries could easily provide the pretext for Russian intervention in interethnic conflicts. Finally, Kissinger warned that the eventual recentralization of the historic Russian empire (involving the reassertion of Russian control over the Black Sea and the Caucasus and a drive once again for access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean) should not be ruled out [6].

In a major speech before the Turkish Grand National Assembly at the beginning of the parliamentary year, September 1, 1993, President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey expressed concerns almost identical to those of Kissinger.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union has eliminated a big threat but ushered in a period full of uncertainties. The world has not achieved stability. It is true that Turkey has been freed from a 400-year old threat. On the other hand, instability in Russia continues to be of imminent concern to Turkey. The Russian Federation claims responsibility over the destiny of 30 million Russians living in other republics. Is the Russian Federation uneasy about the breakup of the Soviet Empire? Are local conflicts there going to be pretexts for the reconstruction of the Empire? To what degree is Russia behind these conflicts?

Clearly, Turkey is disturbed at what it sees as a gradual return by Russia to a spheres-of-influence policy in the near abroad, a policy that would be grossly incompatible with the independence of those countries. The near abroad countries have come to be viewed by both the Russian government and the opposition to hold utmost importance for Russian foreign policy and security interests. Armed conflicts in Tadjikistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova have given Russia reasons to seek wider legitimacy for its involvement. In February 1993, President Yeltsin appealed to the international community to grant Russia the authority to act as the peacekeeper in the former Soviet republics. Eventually it assumed that role in various republics rocked by internal conflict (i.e. Georgia), while simultaneously insisting that nonmembers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) could not engage in peacekeeping in the former Soviet Union.

Russia also began to object to some of the provisions of the CFE Treaty. Throughout 1993, Russian commentators expressed dissatisfaction with restrictions that the CFE Treaty placed on Russian forces in the flanks, more specifically those in the northern Caucasus. President Yeltsin sent shock waves through Turkey when, in a letter addressed to President Demirel in late September 1993, he declared that force ceilings established by the CFE Treaty for northern Caucasus were beginning to fall short of responding to Russia's needs, adding that they faced the risk of nonimplementation [7]. Russia also notified NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner of its dissatisfaction with the force ceilings in the part of Russia that adjoined the troubled region of the Caucasus [8].

Russian objections to implementation of the zonal ceilings on the flanks in the CFE Treaty have become a test case for the Turkish public of Russian intentions, particularly in the southern Caucasus. According to Turkish press reports, Ankara informally notified Washington that Turkey would take its own "measures" (meaning the redeployment of Turkish forces withdrawn under the CFE Treaty from eastern Anatolia), in the event that Yeltsin's new proposals were given a green light. On this question, as on most other questions pertaining to European security, the attitude of the United States would be of paramount importance. It was a relief for the Turkish public when U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated during the NATO council meeting in Istanbul from June 9 to 10, 1994, that his country was committed to preservation of the integrity of the CFE Treaty [9]. Reiteration of the same position by the council in the final communiqué, therefore, is of particular importance in somewhat helping to allay Turkish concerns.

In one of the most skeptical analyses of the post-Soviet role of Russia in the former Soviet republics in its south, Turkish Chief of General Staff Dogan Güres articulated evolving Turkish perceptions before the Fourth Antalya International Conference on Peace and Cooperation (organized by the Turkish Atlantic Council), on October 15, 1993.

The policy pursued by the Russian Federation which constituted the core of the former Soviet Union and which is the leader of the CIS has lately displayed disturbing signals. The Russian Federation considers itself responsible for the fate of 30 million ethnic Russians living in the rest of the former Soviet Republics.

Developments in the Caucasus give the impression that Russia has an unfavorable attitude toward countries that are not members of the CIS.

I find it difficult to understand the real meaning behind the initiatives to increase the ceilings established by the CFE Treaty, especially when viewed in the light of historical facts.

On the eve of President Demirel's official visit to Ukraine and Moldova from May 30 to June 1, 1994, General Güres repeated his grave concerns about potential Russian expansionism, especially in areas close to Turkish borders (e.g., southern Caucasus). He is reported to have prompted rebuttal in the Russian press [10].

In summary, the relative demise of Soviet power and the disintegration of the Soviet Union have been a mixed blessing from the perspective of Turkey. While the clearly defined and colossal Soviet threat has disappeared, the politico-military environment vacated by Soviet/Russian rule has become the breeding ground for potential risks and threats because of the deep tensions that have gripped this environment. Against the background of a power vacuum created by the Soviet collapse, the system of externally imposed constraints that had for so long managed to suppress potential local conflicts has disappeared, paving the way for violent resurfacing of some old ethnic, national, and territorial feuds and disagreements. The local conflicts and tensions have provided the Russian Federation the opportunity to assume the role of peacekeeper, and thus to reassert its influence in several of the former Soviet republics.

Turkey's physical proximity to the various theaters of tension and conflict, as well as its special ties with some of the parties to those conflicts (i.e., Azerbaijan, caught in a fierce and protracted conflict with Armenia which has irredentist claims on Turkey), have raised serious questions about the prospects for Turkey's continuing ability to remain physically untouched.

Moreover, developments in the near abroad, in general, and in the southern Caucasus republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan, in particular, have shown over time that Russia would have the willingness and capability to overwhelm buffers if it resolved to do so. In the almost 3 years that have elapsed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian behavior close to Turkish borders has left Turkey seriously apprehensive about the future intentions and behavior of the Russian Federation.

## Nuclear Weapons in the Former Soviet Union

From another angle as well, the international security environment has changed drastically since the collapse of the Soviet Union: The number of independent states in possession of nuclear weapons on their territory has automatically increased by three. Apart from the Russian Federation, recognized by the West as the sole nuclear weapons successor state, three potential nuclear weapons states have surfaced. According to the Alma-Ata and Minsk agreements signed in December 1991, Russia was to remain by 1995 the sole nuclear weapons state in the CIS. In this spirit Ukraine and Belarus committed themselves to the transfer of the nuclear weapons on their territory to Russia and pledged to accede to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear weapons states. Kazakhstan refrained for some time from a similar pledge, but in May 1992, it signed the Lisbon Protocol, a legal supplement to START I whereby Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan assumed the obligations of the former Soviet Union under the START I Treaty and promised to join the NPT in the shortest time possible.

In other words, all three former Soviet republics that inherited nuclear arsenals on their soil with the disintegration of the Soviet Union eventually acquiesced to Western and Russian pressures to give up these arsenals and denounce future nuclear weapons statehood [11]. In the case of Ukraine, this point was reached after much ambiguity, diplomatic tension, and difficult bargaining [12]. The evolution of Kazakhstan's position also displayed some fluctuation and ambiguity [13], giving rise to apprehension in the West about a potential "Islamic bomb." Belarus pursued a straight line in support of its original commitment to the principles of the Alma-Ata and Minsk agreements and the Lisbon Protocol [14].

Among a host of issues raised for international security by the fragmentation of political, and therefore physical, control over nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union, several directly bear on Turkish security interests and concerns. The potential of these weapons to seriously undercut the international nonproliferation regime and the nuclear disarmament momentum between the United States and Russia is the paramount threat to international security, and hence to Turkish security. The policy corollary to this perception is the suggestion that Western diplomacy should have focused its priorities on the actual implementation of negotiated nuclear disarmament agreements, instead of getting entangled in and held hostage by the political disputes created by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Turkish concerns are, first and foremost, preoccupied with the nuclear arsenal of the Russian Federation. The Russian nuclear force continues to be formidable despite some positive developments, like the ratification of START I and a series of unilateral cutbacks and stoppages by Russia. Moreover, the serious shortcomings suffered in maintenance and servicing of the weapons, as a result of severe budget constraints, diminish their reliability for the Russians. Yet unlike the United States, Russia reportedly continues with some significant weapons related activities (i.e. the continued production of tritium and plutonium) [15]. An article in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, which appeared on July 23, 1993, indicates that the Russian military closely follows the mood in the United States in favor of a universal ban on the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium [16].

In principle, Turkish concerns with respect to Russian nuclear weapons focus on intentions rather than capability. Turks, like the rest of the world, have learned to view these weapons as a fact of life, however awful, so long as they exist. Hence, Turks in

general do not anticipate to be threatened by a nuclear attack from the Russian Federation, but many consider with trepidation the possibility of nuclear blackmail. The Russian nuclear force remains potent enough to allow Russia to pressure and intimidate weaker neighbors, especially if it fell into the wrong hands (e.g., Zhirinovskiy's), inside Russia.

It is important to note that there is a nuanced assessment of the nature and purposes of Russian nuclear weapons. Turkish soft-liners tend to see a functional linkage between the purposes of these weapons and the regime in power. The regime in Russia today sits on the legacy of a highly rational and cautious Soviet attitude toward nuclear weapons. As Russian democracy matures, there should be less reason to expect reliance on nuclear weapons as a political tool or for nuclear adventurism. Needless to say, confidence in the steady progress of Russian democracy and its benevolent impact on the Russian mind in downplaying the significance of nuclear weapons as a political and military instrument, reflects the views of those who trust Russian rationality and prudence in nuclear matters, even when its foreign policy goals could grow more imperial.

The hard-liners have less confidence in Russia's ability to rid itself of authoritarian and imperial impulses. Even if democratization succeeds, threat of the use of nuclear weapons could remain a dangerous possibility in order to support the foreign policy drive toward empire. Two recent developments have magnified the apprehensions of the hard-liners who worry that Russia would not desist from resorting to coercion, even under a democratic regime. The first is the approval of a new military doctrine that contains several unnerving elements. The most disturbing aspect with respect to nuclear weapons is repudiation of the declaratory policy of the Soviet Union of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, in favor of first-use for the defense of Russia and its allies [17]. Accordingly, "the Russian nuclear umbrella" has now been extended to all the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty, guaranteeing their territories against invasion by any country that is an ally of any other nuclear power [18]. This posture can easily be viewed as a veiled warning to Turkey (which has shown a keen interest in promoting close political and economic ties with the former Soviet republics in the southern Caucasus and Central Asia) to keep its distance from the near abroad in the south. From a broader perspective, the position of the new military doctrine sanctioning first-use of nuclear weapons is seen as an instrument at the service of Russia's larger foreign policy objective of deterring other regional states from competing with Russia for influence and control in the former Soviet Union.

The second disconcerting development on the question of Russian nuclear weapons from the perspective of the Turkish hard-liners concerns the hypothetical implications, for a regional state like Turkey, of the U.S.-Russian agreement to cease mutual targeting of nuclear weapons [19]. Some Turkish strategic thinkers hypothesize that Turkey may have been placed among the post-cold war targets of Russian nuclear weapons now that they are reported to have been detargeted from civilian and military centers in the United States. This hypothesis, however, apparently does not address the question of whether such retargeting would have been technically feasible in such a brief period. In short Turkish hard-liners, an important group within the Turkish political elite, regard post-Soviet nuclear weapons in Russia at best as crude instruments of intimidation and blackmail in dealing with the non-nuclear weapons states on its periphery whose behavior in the former Soviet Union may have seemed inimical to the interests of Russia. The soft-

liners, who have more confidence in Russia's peaceful nuclear intentions, argue that increased U.S.-Russian nuclear confidence does not necessarily translate to increased insecurity for Turkey.

Despite the gradations in Turks' opinions concerning the purposes behind the Russian nuclear arsenal in the post-cold war era and the nature of plausible Russian behavior in response to future challenges to its perceived national interests, Turks are unanimously weary of the mere existence of this awesome capability, and of having to live in the shadow of a foreign power's nuclear arsenal. After all, it is that very capability that allows the Russian Federation to retain the distinction of being one of the two military superpowers. It is only logical for Turkey, then, to support more nuclear disarmament rather than less. The long delay in the ratification, and hence the implementation, of START I as a result of the nuclear bargaining among post-Soviet states has therefore been a matter of serious security concern to Turkey. There is little reason for optimism at this point to expect that, once in force, START II will be followed up by START III. Furthermore, neither Turkey nor any other nonnuclear state on Russia's periphery (e.g., Poland or possibly a future nonnuclear Ukraine), can ever feel fully at peace because unlike Mikhail Gorbachev, who was committed to global denuclearization, the Russian military doctrine of October 1994 renounces such a goal indefinitely.

The Turkish view concerning the threat posed to the nuclear nonproliferation regime by the nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union rests on arguments shared by the international community, in general, but with special sensitivity to Turkey that is in physical proximity to both the former Soviet Union and the Middle East. Like the rest of the international community, the Turkish political elite is very much aware that the emergence of instant nuclear weapons states, even by inheritance, would pose an irreparable blow to the NPT.

Hence, Turkey appears to have condoned the Alma-Ata and Minsk agreements of December 1991, and the Lisbon Protocol of May 1992. Interestingly, however, a small minority among the Turkish political elite would have preferred to see Kazakhstan retain the nuclear weapons that were on its soil. They argue that Kazakhstan's security situation is unique among the former Soviet states because of its ethnic composition and its immensely rich natural resources, both of which could offer incentives for Russia to seek to compromise Kazakhstan's independence. A possible return of Kazakhstan into the fold of the Russian Federation would have a domino effect on the rest of the former Soviet Union in Asia. On the other hand, an independent nuclear weapons capability in the hands of Kazakhstan would deter a potentially expansionist Russia. This minority opinion contends that while a similar potential threat also exists for Ukraine, the West would not allow Ukraine's independence to be violated by Russia. If the West failed to guarantee Ukrainian independence, however, it would be offering legitimacy to a hypothetical nuclear weapons option by Ukraine. It is important to note that a hypothetical independent nuclear force for Kazakhstan is not perceived directly in association with the security interests of Turkey nor an "Islamic bomb," but as an indirect input into Eurasian security due to its anticipated contribution to the enhancement of the independence of Kazakhstan and the rest of the newly independent republics in Central Asia.

Turks' general approval of the recognition of the Russian Federation as the sole successor to the former Soviet Union in the sphere of nuclear weapons is based on the following considerations: (1) that it would prevent proliferation; (2) that it would ensure

the physical safety and security of the weapons and related material as well as that of C3, and (3) that it would prevent the leakage of nuclear material and technology that might facilitate international nuclear terrorism and unauthorized use. This does not mean, however, that Turks are fully confident about the actual state of affairs on these questions. Prime Minister Tansu Çiller of Turkey recently articulated Turkish concerns in a broader context.

Surely, we cannot remain aloof to reports suggesting some elements of the former Soviet bloc military and its industrial appendages have exercised what can only be charitably described as lax control over dangerous materials and weapons stocks. These and other manifestations of the proliferation problem merit an official NATO strategy that offers a genuine prospect of advancing our mastery of this, one of our most serious problems [20].

Reports in the international media of the theft of fissile material by Russian organized criminals [21], and earlier stories of potential "loose nukes" flooding the illicit arms market, have made Turkey sit on edge since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Turkish fears have been aggravated by its physical proximity to regions where political and socioeconomic dislocation have offered breeding grounds for illegal and illicit activities. Further aggravating Turkish fears has been the escalation since the Persian Gulf War of the struggle that the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), has been engaged in against the unitary Turkish state. Nuclear blackmail by PKK terrorists had not seemed a totally implausible scenario during the time between the failed coup in 1991 and mid-1992, when the whole world suspected Moscow of having lost control over strategic as well as tactical nuclear weapons spread over a vast area.

### **Can Russia Survive [22]?**

It is true that relations between the federal government and the constituent units that make up the Russian Federation have been subject to the pressures of political and economic revamping that has swept through the former Soviet Union since Gorbachev came into power. While the general desire for greater autonomy from Moscow may be viewed as a natural response of the periphery toward the center during times of profound transition and the chaos that accompanies it, the depth of rivalry between Moscow and several of the 21 ethnic republics as well as lower units appears to go beyond what would be considered a routine contest over power sharing in a federal system. The situation in the Russian Federation warrants close scrutiny because it involves independence-minded secessionist movements. In the words of a public official of Russian ethnicity in Bashkortastan, ethnic/national separatism poses the major challenge to the formation of Russia, which therefore must be rendered hopeless [23]. Of these, the movements in the Volga-Ural region and in the republics of Tatarstan and Chechnya appear to be especially forceful. A complicating factor for Moscow with regard to the centrifugal pressures in this particular region is the concentration of large numbers of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons facilities [24].

Notwithstanding the feverish ethnic nationalist and autonomy projects pursued in several non-Russian areas within the Russian Federation, most Turks believe that it will survive, by use of force if necessary. The dominant Turkish view comes close to the view

expressed by a former member of Yeltsin's government who contended that Moscow may have to use force to control unrest in the regions, and that the choice may be between disintegration of the Russian Federation and a police state [25]. Autonomy or independence movements among Turkic peoples like Tatars and Bashkirs is a delicate issue for Turkish-Russian relations because of Moscow's deep-rooted fear of Pan-Turkism and Turkey's potential power to pose as a sponsor, if not a provocateur, of such movements. Aware of Moscow's somewhat irrational fear of a potential Turkish role in Turkic nationalist movements in Russia, Turkish governments have traditionally tried to approach this particular issue with reserve and caution. The political and economic chaos in the former Soviet Union should make Turkish reserve presently even more valuable for the integrity of the Russian Federation. Meanwhile, Turkish ultranationalists and émigré groups of Turkic stock from the Russian Federation, who emigrated before and during the Soviet era, try with the help of a wide array of cultural activities to inform the Turkish public of the nationalist causes of their brethren in the Russian Federation.

Thus, ethnic national challenges to the integrity of the Russian Federation seem poised to evolve in the near future into a major risk to international security and, by implication, to Turkish security, because Russia certainly would respond to such challenges with unrestrained fury rather than with complacency. In that eventuality, the current nuclear dispute between Russia and Ukraine would seem trivial compared to the myriad of daunting nuclear issues that would emerge then, given the complexities of the ethnic map of the Federation, and the location of the nuclear weapons sites and the relevant industrial infrastructure [26]. Proliferation of nuclear weapons, nuclear leakage, and hence nuclear terrorism and unauthorized use would be expected to occupy the top of the list of possible risks.

### **Unsettled and Unsettling Relations Between Ukraine and Russia**

As previously discussed, Turks take a dim view of the future prospects of the full independence of the republics in the southern Caucasus. This region is viewed with a sense of urgency for one objective reason: It lies adjacent to Turkish borders. Irrespective of the affinity felt toward Azerbaijan (the Turkic republic closest to Turkey linguistically, culturally, and geographically) and the various geopolitical advantages Turkey presumably would derive from a close bilateral relationship with it, Turkish concerns over the future of the southern Caucasus surpasses its interest in Azerbaijan. These concerns begin above all else from a strategic preoccupation with Russian power and intentions. The possible full return of Russian power to this region and the parallel loss of the sovereignty and independence of the republics would be perceived as the "beginning of history" that many thought ended in 1991. This possible scenario would appear all the more risky for Turkish security if political and military power in Moscow rested in the hands of ultranationalist forces, and this basic psychology would hold with or without the physical presence of the nuclear weapons in the region.

The interrelated questions of the future of Ukrainian independence and the nature of Ukrainian-Russian relations are of equal saliency to Turkish security, because of the basic law of physical proximity. In contrast to their rather cavalier attitude toward the independence of the southern Caucasus, the United States and Europe seem finally to

have concluded that Ukraine's independence constitutes one of the vital elements of European security in the post-cold war era [27].

Ukraine's salience for Turkish security flows from two interconnected considerations: (1) Ukraine stands as a natural barrier against Russian expansionism and (2) Ukraine's various assets make it a valuable friend and potential partner in bilateral and multilateral cooperative schemes. Like that of the Russian Federation, Ukraine's role is seen as indispensable to the success of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, an 11-member regional cooperative scheme with a focus on free trade, established in June 1992 on the initiative of Turkey. The visit of Turkish President Demirel to Ukraine on May 31–June 1, 1994, is indicative of the importance attached to the promotion of Turkish-Ukrainian relations.

Strains in Russian-Ukrainian relations over a host of issues (i.e., Ukrainian security, nuclear weapons, Crimea, the Russian minority, the Black Sea Fleet, and economic relations) do not lend much optimism to scenarios of a swift onset of stability and enduring peace in this part of the world. The problems besetting the Ukrainian economy in particular could severely undermine prospects for the resolution of bilateral issues in favor of Ukrainian positions. Ukraine is dependent on Russia's good will for economic relief. These scenarios could be reversed in favor of Moscow if a strongly pro-Russian government would hold power in Kiev. Newly elected President Leonid D. Kuchma may be expected to steer Ukraine in a collusion course with Moscow on most of the divisive issues, hopefully without compromising its independence. He is reported to have stressed that entering into an economic union with Russia, which he promised during his campaign, did not mean restoring Ukraine's Soviet-era links [28].

The dispute over Crimea has a special meaning for Turks and Turkey for historical, ethnic, and political reasons. The ancestors of present-day Crimean Tatars were part of the Ottoman Empire until 1783 when Tsarist Russia succeeded in driving the Turkish Empire from this strategic vantage point on the northern shores of the Black Sea. As in the case of the Volga Tatars, the Turkic ethnic makeup of the Crimean Tatars and the similarity in dialect of the Turkic language that both Tatars and Turks speak also create a sense of affinity. These sentimental elements are not allowed, however, to color the Turkish outlook on the future status of Crimea. Turkey believes that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) principle of the inviolability of borders by force needs to be the general guide to dealing with cases of secessionism. (Incidentally, this line of argument serves the interests of Turkey's own problem with the PKK-led Kurdish separatist movement.) Thus, the argument goes, Crimea must remain Ukrainian. Ukraine's foreign minister reportedly has written to his Turkish counterpart to ask Turkey to lend support to possible measures by his republic to prevent secession by Crimea [29].

There is yet another aspect to the question of Crimea that attracts Turkish interest: the return of the Crimean Tatars deported from their homeland by Stalin in the aftermath of World War II. Tatars in Crimea today total about 300,000, a small minority compared to 1.5 million Russians and 600,000 Ukrainians. Turkish public opinion views the situation of the Crimean Tatars as an important moral and political issue. In his speech to the Rada during his official visit to Kiev last May, President Demirel referred to Crimean Tatars as "a bridge of friendship" between Turkey and Ukraine and expressed appreciation at Ukraine's efforts to facilitate the return of the deported Crimeans.

Turks are also in sympathy with the position of Ukraine in its insistence on security guarantees before yielding on the issue of nuclear weapons. The trilateral agreement of January 14, 1994, between the United States, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine, therefore has been greeted favorably and, in fact with relief, because of its prospective positive dual role in preventing proliferation and the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian dispute.

Turks generally are not well informed about the internal dynamics of regional differences and cleavages that could possess divisive implications for the future integrity of Ukraine. If for example divisive forces are as powerful as they recently have been portrayed by some commentators [30], Turkish apprehensions about the future of Ukrainian independence would intensify. This would lead Turkey to reemphasize the need for increased Western economic assistance to Ukraine in an effort to help it initiate and implement major economic reforms.

Turkey, however, is not in a position to influence the course of events. Turkish positions and preferences would have practically no weight in influencing the direction of the mutual perceptions and policies of Ukraine and the Russian Federation, least of all those of the Russian Federation. Domestic developments in each, and the attitudes of the United States and the European Union, are likely to be the determining elements in how the question of the Ukrainian-Russian dispute unfolds.

## **Upheaval in the Balkans**

The post-Soviet Balkans on Turkey's northwest and west also have presented a new geopolitical space filled with conflicting movements and tendencies. While the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact have removed the combined ideological and military threat of over 4 decades, the region has fallen into deep political and military turmoil. The war in the former Yugoslavia in particular has and will essentially continue to destabilize the Balkans, because it has mobilized and further accentuated on a regionwide basis ethno-national, religious, and inter-state distinctions and rivalries that have deep historical roots in the collective Balkan psyche.

The Balkans are Turkey's opening to Europe. Two and one-half million Turkish citizens reside in Western Europe, Turkey's number one trading partner. An important portion of Turkey's foreign and security policy throughout the cold war years was woven around ties with West European countries, surpassed only by its ties with the United States within the Atlantic Alliance. Today membership in the European Council, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the CSCE, and associate membership in the Western European Union (WEU) and the European Union (EU), sustain its traditional ties to Western Europe. Thus, Turkey has high stakes in maintaining close and steady relations with Western Europe. One of the prerequisites of such a state of affairs is peace and stability in the Balkans.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina may continue to threaten regional peace and security for many years because of the following reasons: (1) It has destroyed an independent republic duly recognized by the United Nations and the victims have suffered great human and material losses; (2) It has allowed the combined power of nationalism and military might to prevail; and (3) The most recent peace proposal from the contact group,

composed of the major powers, continues to reward aggression by dividing Bosnia-Herzegovina and allowing Bosnian Serbs to retain a large portion of the territory they had captured by force. Paradoxically, the peace proposal has been rejected by Bosnian Serbs who want to retain an even larger portion of that territory.

Other flashpoints (i.e., Kosovo and Macedonia), further confound regional politics and raise tensions. Turkey fears that the 27-month-old war of aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina has unsettled regional relationships and balances so deeply and mobilized regional suspicions so extensively that a wrong move by anyone could set in motion developments that could ignite a general, Balkanwide war.

Against the background of war in the former Yugoslavia and a pervasive sense of insecurity, the absence of nuclear weapons states in the Balkans is a blessing. Turkish leaders do not anticipate nuclear proliferation in the Balkans in the foreseeable future, nor do they foresee a new nuclear weapons state in Europe unless the post-cold war security dynamics are radically overhauled under the impact of powerful new external and/or domestic pressures that could develop in the future. A nuclear-armed Germany, for example, would destroy not only a fundamental pillar of European security but that of global security as well [31]. Several arguments would seem to weaken a hypothetical case for proliferation by Germany. First and most critically, post-cold war Germany does not perceive a threat to its security, either from the East or the West. Second, Germany continues to be committed to the policy of security cooperation within the Western Alliance and security integration within Maastricht's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Finally, domestic politics and popular mood would not support or encourage German nuclear armament. Thus, Germany seems an unlikely candidate to go nuclear.

In a Europe that is likely to retain the nuclear status quo among the major powers for at least as long as the politico-military status quo lasts, there would be little reason to expect smaller states in Central Europe and the Balkans to entertain nuclear ambitions. This argument is not meant to underestimate the seriousness of the insecurities among the smaller states, as well as the insecurity felt by the Visegrad states toward Russia [32]. Yet their chosen path to security has been to seek institutional cooperation with, and preferably membership in, the EU, NATO, and the WEU. No country in Central Europe and the Balkans would rationally want to risk its chances with these coveted institutions by even hinting at the contemplation of a nuclear option, nor are their economies in a position to sustain a hypothetical nuclear weapons program.

The security dynamic between Greece and Turkey has been adversely touched by the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the ensuing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The perception that the Balkan balance may be changing to their respective disadvantage has intensified mutual fears and rivalry. It is possible that this new level of mutual insecurity, which is likely to endure as long as the Balkans remain so deeply unstable and unpredictable, may have given reason to Greece, in particular, to consider the nuclear option. Why Greece rather than Turkey? (1) The combative Greek psyche has been mobilized by the Macedonian question; (2) Greece is frustrated with the way the EU is handling the Macedonian issue; (3) Greece has an overall sense of suddenly having been encircled in the post-cold war era by two new, potentially hostile neighbors (Albania and Macedonia) along its borders. What makes the new political map seem even more threatening in Greek eyes is the nature of relations between Albania and Macedonia, as

well as between Bosnian Muslims and Turkey, the perceived arch enemy. A nuclear capability may appear to be the only credible instrument to deter a hypothetical ring of hostility, presumably led by Turkey, from encroaching on Greek sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It goes without saying that powerful countervailing forces operate against a hypothetical nuclear weapons course by Greece. Membership in the EU and the WEU is, theoretically, the best guarantee against the nuclear option. Greece also would have to have confidence that it would not be committing a grave strategic miscalculation, because a prospective nuclear weapons capability in Greece would certainly provide legitimacy to nuclear armament by Turkey, reproducing the existing conventional security dilemma in the nuclear sphere.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that at this point of Balkan politics and Greek-Turkish security dynamics, the scenarios above remain highly speculative.

## **The Middle East**

While the dramatic change in the Arab-Israeli conflict from confrontation to the search for a negotiated resolution marks a whole new era for regional peace and stability, the Middle East/Persian Gulf region seems likely to remain faced with several fundamental challenges in the 1990s. Some of them will have direct implications for Turkey's political and security interests.

The multiple sources of regional tension and instability in this part of the world tend to be viewed by the West through the lenses of its preoccupation with "Gulf security." Gulf security and stability are also of paramount importance for Turkey. Every serious hegemonial aspiration (e.g., Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in August 1990) is a challenge to Turkish security interests in the broadest sense. By siding with the anti-Saddam coalition in the second Persian Gulf war, Turkey demonstrated unequivocally that Turkish interests and positions on Persian Gulf security subsumed Western interests and positions. Turkey allowed United States aircraft to use NATO and Turkish air bases to launch air attacks on Iraq. While the crisis and the war highlighted Turkey's strategic location and importance as a Western ally, they cost Turkey \$5.6 billion in revenues lost from trade with Iraq and tourism, and war-related expenditures, during 1990 and 1991, according to World Bank estimates.

There are more specific Turkish interests and concerns as well, such as the pervasiveness of authoritarian regimes in the region, the unsettled nature of Iraq's role and status and its potential to press for regional hegemony again if and when international sanctions are lifted, the continuing vitality of the rivalry between Iran and Iraq, Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism and its proclivity to feed terror and train terrorists, Syrian irredentism over Lebanon, water scarcity and the resulting tensions over the transboundary water systems of the river Jordan and the Tigris and Euphrates, regionalization of the Kurdish question, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. These issues have traditionally been interactive and intertwined. The second Persian Gulf war has reinforced the linkages among them, thereby enlarging the scope of their potential impact on regional stability and security.

Key issues that link the other sources of insecurity mentioned above to create a highly insecure larger regional environment in the south for Turkey are regionalization of

the Kurdish question, tensions over the waters of the Euphrates, Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

### **Regionalization of the Kurdish Question**

In the post-cold war and post-Persian Gulf War period, Turkish security has come under heavy pressure in the south above all else because what were traditional inter-state conflicts of interest between Turkey and its three southern neighbors (Syria, Iraq, and Iran), have been more forcefully interlocked with what essentially is an internal Turkish problem, the separatist armed struggle waged against it since 1984 by the PKK. This linkage perhaps was unavoidable as Iraq's defeat by the coalition forces and its continued isolation have created an extremely fluid political environment. The power balance, altered by the elimination of Iraq as a significant player for some time to come, has not been recreated in some other fashion conducive to long-term stability. This fluidity, together with the political geography and demography that characterize the region, have allowed Turkey's neighbors to exploit anti-Turkey Kurdish activities as a lever in their approach to contentious bilateral issues with Turkey.

High-ranking Turkish officials have argued forcefully over the last several years that the Kurdish separatist armed struggle led by the Marxist-oriented PKK has found sanctuary in, and worse still, been assisted by Iran, Syria, and post-Gulf Persian War Iraq. These officials have paid visits to Teheran and Damascus to secure the two capitals' cooperation in arresting the sources of the PKK's strength in their respective countries. In the wake of a new round of PKK ambushes on civilian targets in the southeast in late October 1993, Turkish Prime Minister Çiller dispatched her special envoy to Syria, calling on "Turkey's neighbors to show whether they are friends of Turkey or not by taking all measures necessary against the PKK's use of their territories as sanctuary, training ground and source of weapons" [33]. Cooperation on mutual internal security matters was among the issues on the immediate agenda during an official visit to Teheran by President Demirel during July 1994.

The Kurdish question also has become internationalized, adversely affecting Turkey's relations with its allies. The United States and Germany in particular have incorporated a substantial human rights dimension concerning Turkish Kurds in their overall approach to relations with Turkey. The protection of Iraqi-Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq by coalition forces stationed at the Incirlik Airbase at Adana and the United Nations embargo on Iraq also have contributed to tensions in U.S.-Turkish relations, largely because of their high political, economic, and social burdens on Turkey. Turkey has lost annual revenues of about \$250–300 million from the oil pipeline that pumped Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean, in addition to several billion dollars in bilateral trade with Iraq lost due to the UN embargo. These losses have contributed to high rates of unemployment in southeastern Turkey, where social tension and political violence have escalated dramatically since the end of the Persian Gulf War. This deteriorating social and economic context has provided a fertile ground to the cause of the PKK.

The question of the future status of Iraq is therefore of utmost relevance to Turkish interests in terms of the stability of its democratic regime, economic well-being, foreign relations, and even territorial integrity. The international community's failure to bring

about a democratic Iraq has significantly undermined Turkish domestic and foreign policy interests. On the other hand, the entire region would likely be thrown into greater dislocation in the event of the fragmentation of Iraq.

### **Water Dispute over the Euphrates**

Both Iraq and Syria are believed to support the PKK in retaliation for losses they have suffered in the amount of the waters of the Euphrates available to them after January 1990, when Turkey's huge new Atatürk Dam, not far from the Turkish-Syrian border, began drawing water from the Euphrates. Turkey is the upstream country for the Tigris and Euphrates river systems. It has continued to honor a pledge made in 1987 to release a minimum of 500 cubic meters of water per second from the point where the Euphrates crosses the Turkish-Syrian border. Turkey has reassured the two countries that it will not manipulate the water situation as a political weapon; however, both Iraq and Syria have insisted on an agreement based on their terms, which essentially foresees the return of the pre-1990 de facto regime based on unobstructed flow of the river's waters into Syria, or, failing that, the apportionment of the waters among the riparians. Saddam Hussein sent warning signals to Turkey in spring 1990 to intimidate Turkey into restoring the status quo ante.

Post-Persian Gulf War Iraq has an additional grievance against Turkey (i.e., the active Turkish contribution to the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq). Though Syria has lost Iraq as an ally in the struggle against Turkey on the water issue, it is in a position to harm Turkish interests by indirect means in peacetime. As mentioned above, the Turkish security establishment is seemingly convinced that the PKK would not survive without tacit but extensive Syrian support; the state of Turkish-Iranian relations on the subject is not much different.

What is significant about these political tensions in Turkey's relations with its southern neighbors is the fact that they have been taking place in the context of a major effort by each of them to acquire weapons of mass destruction, possibly including a qualitatively different nuclear weapons capability, as mentioned below.

### **Islamic Fundamentalism and Radicalism**

Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism is a potential threat that goes to the very heart of Turkey's domestic sociopolitical order. Ever since Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution took hold in Iran in 1979, Turkey has been apprehensive about Iran's declared goal of exporting the revolution to other Moslem countries. Iranian foreign policy has acquired greater pragmatism under President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Yet the power of domestic fundamentalists and Islamic radical forces in Turkey has been strengthened under the impact of both regional and domestic developments. At a minimum, the regional developments are generally believed to have been controlled by Teheran.

Notwithstanding Turkish concerns about Iran's support of the PKK-led separatist armed struggle, its possible role in the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism in Turkey, its ambitious armaments programs, and the implicit rivalry for influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the history of Turkey's relations with Iran under the Pahlavis was one of friendship and close cooperation. The positive legacy of that period, the need

for prudence in a highly volatile region, and a shared suspicion of Russian intentions in the near abroad probably will encourage the leaders of both countries to attempt to preserve dialogue in order to limit damage to their higher national interests. Iran, too, has security concerns about Turkey, the most important of which is Turkey's alliance with the United States and its membership in NATO.

### **Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

The possible proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is, to put it simply, an extremely scary thought for most informed Turks. On the other hand, the sense of alarm and urgency about the possibility of proliferation is not overwhelming—not yet. The Turkish political elite argues that Iraq's nuclear weapons program has been destroyed so extensively as to have eliminated Iraq's chances of fully and dangerously recovering the program for long into the future. At the same time, however, they contend that Iraq's permanent incapacitation will be a fact of life only if the United Nations sanctions and inspections remain in force. The political elite further argues that lessons learned from the clandestine path to "the ultimate weapon" that Iraq had pursued without detection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have impelled especially the United States and the IAEA to emphasize early detection, and hence prevention, of suspicious activities that would make it physically impossible to reach higher stages on the road to "the bomb." They point to a powerful precedent in support of this hypothesis. The U.S. and IAEA confrontation with North Korea over the latter's nuclear program (which both have suspected of including a covert weapons program) supports the view that potential proliferators in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region would not be tolerated by these actors. These, by the way, are not just any two actors in international politics: The former is the only remaining superpower and the latter is the leading watchdog of the international nonproliferation regime.

Israel's possession of nuclear weapons has not caused serious concerns in Turkey as a source of threat to Turkish security interests. Rather, it has been viewed with apprehension because of the rationalization it has provided to Israel's adversaries to attempt to go nuclear. Most Turks believe that part of the reason behind Iraq's pre-Persian Gulf War nuclear weapons program was, as Iran's current alleged efforts to fashion one is, the desire to create a deterrence capability against the Israeli nuclear force. The other and equally troubling motive force was regional hegemony.

Whatever the real balance between these two motives, Turkey would be made very insecure by the possession of nuclear weapons by any actor in the Middle East in addition to Israel, especially by its neighbors in the south and east. Nuclear weapons would become a real source of threat when placed in the hands of undemocratic and irresponsible regimes. Turkey's neighbors in the south are certainly undemocratic, often demonstrating risky and irresponsible behavior as well.

A nuclear-powered Iraq would be in a position to dictate its preferred solution to, above all else, the water dispute. A nuclear-powered Iran would be in a position to claim leadership of the Islamic world, and to exercise increased influence on Turkish domestic politics to the detriment of Turkey's Western-type secular democratic regime and Western-oriented foreign policy. In both cases, the greater danger would be the challenge these countries would pose to Persian Gulf security and hence to international security. A

potential nuclear weapons capability in the hands of either Iraq or Iran would translate to Iranian or Iraqi control over the Persian Gulf, and hence over the free flow of oil to the industrialized countries of the West.

Statements by various U.S. agencies, and academic studies and media reports about Iran's involvement in developing nuclear weapons bring the message to Turks that while the Iraqi nuclear menace largely has been eliminated, as long as the United Nations maintains its controls, Iran looks like a potential proliferator. There is, however, no conclusive evidence in support of this view [34]. As previously discussed, Iran's nuclear weapons prospects may seem limited, though not absent, given the new sense of alarm and mood of vigilance with which the remaining superpower and the IAEA have been chasing the issue [35]. In any case, various tools at the disposal of the nuclear nonproliferation regime are expected to be further stiffened. Moreover the potential primary target, Israel, is not expected to sit back and watch Iran successfully develop the bomb [36].

From a short-term perspective it is the proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction (i.e., chemical and biological weapons, and tactical ballistic missiles [TBMs]), that poses potential military risks to Turkish security. During the Persian Gulf War, Turkey faced the stark reality that it lacked defenses against both chemical weapons and TBMs. When Turkey allowed the United States to strike at Iraqi targets from Turkish territory during the war, two Patriot interceptor missiles were temporarily deployed near the Turkish-Iraqi border against possible retaliation by Iraqi Scuds, which did not come. Turkey seemingly shunned the TBM option in the 1980s, when its southern neighbors were ambitiously pursuing it, in order to discourage missile proliferation in the Balkans. Apparently it was calculated that Turkish procurement of TBM systems could fuel a qualitatively new arms race in southeastern Europe. Turkey chose instead to modernize its air defense force through plans for the procurement of 240 F-16s by the year 2000, of which 150 have already been coproduced in Turkey.

What makes Middle East armaments programs especially risky is the fact that no arms control agreements and confidence-and-security-building regimes (CSBMs) bind the actors to a system of restraints and constraints. In contrast, Turkey is party to the CFE Treaty and the CSCE-mandated CSBMs. Turkey has kept its southeastern region, that borders Syria, Iraq, and Iran, outside the zone of application of both instruments in order to be able to respond to the regional context in its south and east.

This article has thus far described and analyzed Turkish perceptions concerning the evolving security environment in the post-cold war era, with special attention to issues raised by nuclear weapons and their possible proliferation. Dominant themes and considerations in Turkish security thinking almost 5 years after the end of the cold war and 3 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union can be summarized as follows: fear of the restoration of imperial Russian borders, a scenario that would be especially alarming if ultranationalist domestic forces came into power in Moscow; concern that Russia could use its nuclear arsenal to cajole and intimidate Turkey into retreating from the foreign policy objective of establishing close political, economic, and cultural relations with the newly independent states in the southern Caucasus and Central Asia; apprehension that the instabilities and challenges generated by the protracted conflicts in the southern Caucasus and the Balkans may evolve into regional war; deep concern that regional and

international security would be severely undermined in the event that the international nonproliferation regime failed to prevent potential proliferators in the Middle East (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt) from covertly pursuing "the weapon"; fear that the protracted regional conflicts that have been taking place in Turkey's neighborhood (i.e., secessionist struggles in Georgia and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Turkey's east, and conflicts in the former Yugoslavia on Turkey's west), could evolve into larger wars with the participation of regional powers, drawing Turkey into their orbit if vital Turkish interests were put at risk.

The nature and direction of actual and plausible Turkish attitudes and policies toward the perceived threat of nuclear weapons and their proliferation in countries and regions that lie on or close to Turkish borders will be presented below.

## **Nuclear Weapons and Proliferation**

### **Would Turkey Go Nuclear?**

Turkey is party to the NPT and the IAEA and supports extension of the NPT at the forthcoming conference in April 1995. It does not possess the civilian nuclear technology or the materials that would make it theoretically possible for it to pursue a covert weapons program, even if it chose to do so. The Turkish Atomic Energy Agency operates two nuclear research centers, one near Istanbul at Çekmece and one in Ankara. The Çekmece center is equipped with a 1 MW research reactor, now 33 years old.

Turkey's unquestioning adherence to a non-nuclear weapons status was understandable in the context of the cold war when extended deterrence by the United States within the NATO framework was perceived to provide credible protection to the country. In retrospect, the absence of a firm commitment to development of civilian nuclear energy is less understandable given the extent of its early promotion and development in its neighbors (Iran, Iraq, and the former Warsaw Pact states of Bulgaria and the Soviet republic of Armenia).

Today when deep geostrategic changes in the world balance of force have doomed to irrelevance fundamental security considerations and calculations of the cold war era held by the world's leading states and their allies, Turkey sustains its unqualified commitment to non-nuclear weapons status. In a very real sense, it does not have another option. Mainstream opinion seems to be in agreement with this choice and objective, meaning that Turkey views its security needs in the post-cold war era along basically the pattern of the past 40 years: reliance on U.S. and NATO alliances for deterrence and on Turkish conventional forces for defense. The difference today lies in the degree of significance attached to these two traditional elements of Turkish security. The post-cold war security environment has led Turkey to press for a conventional force much stronger, especially in defensive capability, than the one it possessed during the cold war. This thinking explains the extensive modernization program that the Turkish armed forces have been engaged in since the late 1980s. On the credibility of U.S. and NATO deterrence for Turkish security, assessments differ, however, and are discussed below.

The Turkish commitment to non-nuclear weapons status is coupled with several strong qualifiers simply because Turkey needs to be reassured that it would be protected against proliferation if and when it did indeed occur. First, the nonproliferation regime

must not merely be maintained but it must be firmly and resolutely strengthened in its multidimensional aspects and layers in order to prevent proliferation through covert programs and clandestine operations that would support those programs. It seems absolutely essential that verification and safeguards, in particular, must be made highly intrusive and stringent. Second, the strategic balance between the United States and NATO and the Russian Federation must not be allowed to erode, by the former's unilateral moves to the disadvantage of NATO, until Russia gives sustained evidence that it has devalued the role of nuclear weapons in its overall foreign policy, including its policy toward the near abroad and their neighbors rather than merely in its Western policy. Third, the United States and NATO must desist from behavior that would raise suspicions in the minds of Russia and the potential proliferators in surrounding regions about the former's genuine commitment to the security of Turkey. In other words, the extended deterrence of the United States must remain convincing and credible to Turks as well as to de facto and de jure nuclear weapons states and potential proliferators.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly in view of the positive changes in U.S.-Russian and NATO-Russian relations that have transformed NATO's political philosophy and military thinking and strategy, many in the Turkish official establishment continue believe that Turkish security cannot and should not be conceived of in isolation of NATO. They believe that Turkey is protected against intimidation (which does not seem unlikely) and attack (which seems highly unlikely) by an aggressor, be it a nuclear weapons state or not. On the other hand, there certainly is a minority view that believes U.S. and NATO deterrence in the post-cold war era has lost its meaning, especially now that Russia has joined the Partnership for Peace. The practical implications for Turkish security policy of this difference of opinion with respect to NATO credibility seem to be near zero. Both groups press for a greatly strengthened conventional force, as previously discussed, and rule out a hypothetical nuclear weapons option.

Given Turkey's nonrecord on civilian nuclear energy until today, Turkish support for the international nonproliferation regime codified in the NPT and the IAEA statutes faces the risk of being interpreted as an implicit agreement with the discrimination built into these instruments between the nuclear "haves" and "have-nots." On the contrary, Turkey's firm stand against nuclear weapons proliferation should not be confused as a theoretical stand against civilian nuclear energy. Turkey would need to keep its options open for large-scale exploitation of civilian nuclear energy in the future. Its long-term interests, then, dictate that it share some of the principal concerns of the leading Third World states on the question of the discriminatory nature of the NPT, an issue likely to generate a highly divisive and disruptive debate at the NPT extension conference in April 1995.

The Islamic fundamentalists, whose power has been on the rise during the past decade, may be the only major political force whose ideology would inherently question Turkey's unqualified commitment to nonnuclear weapons status. The Welfare Party, which is the leading fundamentalist political party, rejects the pro-Western foundation of Turkish foreign and security policies because of its ideological opposition to the West [37]. According to the Islamists, Turkey must fear not only the Russian nuclear arsenal but equally that of the United States whose very military presence in Turkey is intended to cut the latter off from closer bonding with the Moslem world. Thus, they argue that Turkish security thinking and planning need to be restructured on the basis of decoupling from the United States and NATO and toward security relationships with the Moslem

countries. The Welfare Party refrains from being explicit about which model among the Moslem countries it plans to closely work with when in power: an anti-Western Iran, pro-Western Saudi Arabia, or anti-Western but secular Libya? It is also equally discreet about the potential role it envisages for nuclear weapons in Turkey's security policy. One could safely guess, however, that the Welfare Party's thinking about an "Islamic bomb" would not differ fundamentally from that of others in the Islamic world who cherish it as a symbol of prestige and power in the context of their ideological struggle with the West.

Finally, it is important to be reminded that Turkey takes the threat of the existence and proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction in its neighborhood as seriously as the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Arms control agreements and supply-side controls, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), are seen respectively as important steps in the right direction. Many are skeptical, however, about the difficulties that lie ahead in the implementation of the complicated CWC once it goes into force, and of the effectiveness of the MTCR as long as important supplier countries remain outside.

## **Conclusion**

The post-cold war era confronts Turkish security with a series of potential risks and threats not common to the cold war era. Regional tensions, rivalries, and armed conflicts, fueled especially by extreme ethnic nationalism, hegemonial and/or imperial aspirations and moves, and the potential for proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, stand out as the leading risks and potential threats to Turkish security.

The focal point of Turkish attitudes and policies toward these sources of potential threats have been, and seem most likely to continue to be, centered on the utilization of bilateral and multilateral tools of diplomacy. As a parallel measure, the Turkish armed forces is undergoing major reorganization and modernization to improve Turkey's conventional deterrence and defense capability. There is no public debate or considered judgment among the official and unofficial Turkish political elite about the wisdom and merits of going nuclear.

The Turkish political elite's image of Turkey as a law-abiding, stable, and reliable member of the international society and an ally of the West seems, by definition, to exclude a serious consideration by Turkey of risky and adventurous choices and objectives such as the nuclear weapons option. Moreover, they are keenly aware of the technological constraints that would have to be overcome and the economic sacrifices that would have to be endured if such a choice were made. The task of preventing proliferation therefore falls on the shoulders of the major powers and the nonproliferation regime (a much reformed one from here on) they have erected. Turkey does entertain serious and legitimate views that the risk of proliferation is real and that the risk would transform into a clear danger unless the custodians of international security and the nonproliferation regime were extremely serious about it. On the other hand, this seriousness of purpose must not be allowed to discriminate against the have-nots who need to rely on peaceful nuclear energy for sustained growth—a point on which most informed Turks are in agreement with the Third World.

## Notes

1. This article is based on open literature and views expressed during personal interviews given to the author by about two dozen individuals from different sections of the Turkish political elite (i.e., high-ranking public officials, leaders and politicians of major political parties, and the press). These individuals have been selected on the basis of their public reputation for expertise in world affairs and Turkish foreign policy, and to reflect as full a representation as possible of the spectrum of elite opinion.

The following literature has provided the written source material for Turkish views: records of the proceedings of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and its committees meeting in regular and special sessions on foreign policy over the past 5 years; press conferences, speeches, and other statements by the prime minister, the president and the foreign minister of Turkey; and press clippings from dailies representing major political viewpoints (i.e., *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Zaman*, and *Ortadoğu*. (The first three of these dailies represent centrist and right-of-center political philosophies in general. *Cumhuriyet* takes a social democratic viewpoint. *Zaman* is the voice of mainstream Islamists while *Ortadoğu* articulates the views of the ultranationalists).

2. In a recent article Jacob Kipp warns that "it would be dangerous to dismiss Zhirinovskiy as a self-destructive clown." See his "The Zhirinovskiy Threat," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (May/June 1994): 74.

3. For arguments rejecting the hypothesis that the Russian military has come out of the October crisis with heightened influence in politics, see Brian Taylor, "Russian Civil-Military Relations after the October Uprising," *Survival* 36 (Spring 1994): 3–30.

4. See Ivo J. Lederer, "Russia and the Balkans," in Ivo J. Lederer, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy: Essays in Russian Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 420.

5. Andrei Kozyrev, "Partnership for the Sake of a Single, Peaceful and Democratic Europe," published in *The Washington Times* and reproduced in *USIA Wireless File*, Jan. 12, 1994, p. 31–33.

6. Henry Kissinger, "Charter of Confusion: The Limits of U.S.-Russian Cooperation," *International Herald Tribune*, July 6, 1992, p. 5.

7. "Rusya'nin Kafkasya Atagina Ankara Engeli," (Ankara Objects to Russian Move in the Caucasus), *Cumhuriyet*, Sept. 23, 1993, p. 8; Sedat Sertoglu, "Rusya'dan Tehdit" (Warning from Russia) *Sabah*, Sept. 25, 1993, p. 1, 27.

8. For Russian views, see "Why Russia Wants to Change CFE Treaty Limits," condensed text of article by Manki Ponomaryov, Staff commentator of *Krasnaya Zvezda*, in, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* (CDPSP). XLV: 43 (November 24, 1993), pp. 13–14.

9. "ABD: AKKA'yi Deldirtmeyez" (USA: We Will Not Allow A Dent in the CFE Treaty"), *Cumhuriyet*, June 10, 1994, p. 1, 9.

10. *Yeni Günaydin*, a medium-sized Turkish daily, reporting from Moscow, said that remarks by General Güres were given wide coverage in Russian television and press, including *Krasnaya Zvezda* and *Sevodnya*. See, "Org. Dogan Güres'in *Yeni Günaydin*'a demeci Moskova'yt karistirdi," ("Comments by General Güres, to *Yeni Günaydin* Raises Storm in Moscow"), *Yeni Günaydin*, June 3, 1994, p. 1, 5.

11. As of the end of March 1994, the parties have acted on START and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as follows:

- The U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to the ratification of START on October 1, 1992.
- The Belarusian Parliament approved the ratification of START on February 4, 1993. Belarus formally acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state on July 22, 1993.

- The Kazakhstani Parliament approved the ratification of START on July 2, 1992. Kazakhstan formally acceded to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapons state on February 14, 1994.
- The previous Russian Supreme Soviet approved the ratification of START on November 4, 1992, but with the condition that Russia will not exchange instruments of ratification until the other three treaty parties of the former Soviet Union fulfill all of their Lisbon obligations, including accession to the NPT.
- The Ukrainian Parliament's original resolution of ratification on November 18, 1993 contained unacceptable conditions that precluded START's entry into force. However, on February 3, 1994, the Rada rescinded those conditions and authorized the government of Ukraine to exchange instruments of ratification. The Rada has not yet acted on the question of Ukraine's accession to the NPT. See *USIA Wireless File*, Mar. 3, 1994, p. 15.

12. For Ukraine's position, see John W. R. Lepingwell, "Ukraine, Russia, and the Control of Nuclear Weapons," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2 (Feb. 19, 1993): 4-17; Sergei Kiselyov, "Ukraine: Stuck with the Goods," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (Mar. 1993): 30-33.

13. For Kazakhstan's position, see John W. R. Lepingwell, "Kazakhstan and Nuclear Weapons," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (Feb. 19, 1993): 59-61.

14. For the position of Belarus, see John W. R. Lepingwell "Belarus and Nuclear Weapons," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (Feb. 19, 1993): 17.

15. Reported in the BBC World Service, July 31, 1994, in a commentary on a conference on nuclear arms control organized by Dr. Kathleen Bailey at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the University of California. Some of the papers presented at the conference, "NPT: Review and Extension," were subsequently published. See, Kathleen C. Bailey and Elaine Price, *Director's Series on Proliferation* 5 (August 12, 1994), 6 (October 17, 1994) and 7 (December 27, 1994), UCRL-LR-114070-5, UCRL-LR-114070-6 and UCRL-LR-114070-7, respectively.

16. "U.S. Plan to Curb Plutonium Output Welcomed," *FBIS-SOV*, (Aug. 3, 1993), p. 7.

17. Basic Provisions of Military Doctrine Adopted," *CDPSP XLV* (Dec. 1, 1993): 11-12.

18. "Basic Provisions," p. 12.

19. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev refers to this agreement as one of the successes of U.S.-Russian cooperation. See his "The Lagging Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (May/June 1994): 59. For earlier announcement by Yeltsin that Russian nuclear ballistic missiles would no longer be directed against U.S. military and civilian targets, see Regina Cowen Karp, "The START Treaty and the Future of Strategic Nuclear Arms Control," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1992* (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 36. See also "Russia's Strategic Missiles No Longer Targeted at USA and Britain," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB)* SU/2011 B/3 (June 1, 1994), and "Russian Missiles Not Targeted on UK or U.S. but Rocket Troops Vigilant as Ever," *SWB* SU/2013 B/11 (June 3, 1994).

20. TansuÇiller, "Turkey and NATO," *NATO Review*, Apr. 1994, p. 3.

21. *Cumhuriyet* reported from New York, on May 28, 1994 (p. 2), that two kilograms of enriched uranium were stolen in Russia. On July 23, 1994, *Milliyet* (p. 11) and *Cumhuriyet* (p. 1, 19) reported the discovery by the authorities of 10 kilograms of uranium in Istanbul presumably smuggled into the country from the former Soviet Union.

The Turkish public grew more restive as reports appeared in the international press about three seizures of highly enriched nuclear material within four months by German authorities and the ambivalent attitude of Russian authorities to nuclear control. See, "Nuclear Thefts Do Happen, Russian Says," *International Herald Tribune* (August 20-21, 1994), p. 1, 5; "Germany Links Economic Aid for Russia to Nuclear Control," *International Herald Tribune* (August 22, 1994), p. 1, 4; Rick Atkinson, "Theft of Nuclear Materials: Did Germans Overstate Danger," *International Herald Tribune* (August 24, 1994), p. 1, 7, and; Jeffrey Smith, "Bid to Curb Nuclear Smuggling Lags," *International Herald Tribune* (August 29, 1994), p. 7.

22. This subtitle has been borrowed from an article by the same title by Jessica E. Stern, "Moscow Meltdown: Can Russia Survive?" *International Security* 18 (Spring, 1994): 40–65.
23. "Separatism Seen as Threat in Bashkortostan," *FBIS-SOV*, Aug. 9, 1993, p. 36.
24. Stern, "Moscow Meltdown," p. 59.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
26. For a map, see *ibid.*, p. 37.
27. For West's views on Ukraine, see Peter Van Ham, *Ukraine, Russia and European Security: Implications for Western Policy*, Chaillot Papers 13 (Paris: Western European Union, Feb. 1994), pp. 33–41.
28. "Strict Rule Vowed in Ukraine," *International Herald Tribune*, July 20, 1994, p. 2.
29. Haluk Geray, "Kiev Ankara'dan Destek Istedii," ("Kiev Wants Ankara's Support"), *Cumhuriyet*, May 24, 1994, p. 9.
30. For a gloomy picture of the implications of regional differences, see Misha Glenny, "Ukraine's Dangerous Divide," *International Herald Tribune*, July 15, 1994, p. 5.
31. For a contrary position arguing that a nuclear deterrent in the hands of Germany would increase stability, see John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15 (Summer 1990): 5–56. Mearsheimer similarly argues for a nuclear-armed Ukraine as a contribution to stability. See his "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (Summer 1993): 50–66. Mearsheimer is a leading member of a group of political scientists referred to as "proliferation optimists" by Scott D. Sagan in, "The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons," *International Security* 18 (Spring 1994): 67.
32. For a useful volume on different aspects of Central European security concerns, see Jacob Kipp, ed., "Central European Security Concerns: Bridge, Buffer or Barrier?" *European Security 1* (Special Issue, Winter, 1992).
33. "The Prime Minister Calls on Turkey's Neighbors Not to Support Terrorism," *Milliyet*, Sept. 21, 1993.
34. For the history of how Iraq and Iran have reached the point that they have, see Anthony H. Cordesman, *After the Storm: The Changing Military Balance in the Middle East* (London: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 504–17 and 421–27, respectively.
35. For example, as part of its strategy of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability, the United States reportedly urged the European Community (now EU) in June 1993, to curb sales of dual-use high-technology to Iran. See "U.S. Urges EC to Curb High-Tech Sales to Iran," *Financial Times*, June 10, 1993, and "U.S. Asks to Ban Arms-Linked Sales to Iran," *The New York Times*, June 10, 1993.
36. For example, Israel is reported to have held a series of contacts with North Korea (with whom it does not have diplomatic relations) in June 1993, in the hope of stopping the latter from providing nuclear technology and a nuclear-capable missile to Iran in return for economic cooperation. See "Israel Seeks to Keep North Korea from Aiding Iran," *The New York Times*, June 20, 1993.
37. The Welfare Party mustered roughly 20% of the popular vote during the local elections held last March, capturing nearly one-third of the municipalities, including the two largest cities in Turkey, Istanbul (population, 10 million), and Ankara (population, 4 million).