

IMPLICATIONS FOR TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE

Duygu Bazolu Sezer⁽¹⁰²⁾

Turkish interests in the Balkans

Turkey has been deeply concerned about the evolving situation in the Balkans in general and about the fate of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular since the process of the unravelling of Yugoslavia formally began in 1991.

Three quite easily identifiable considerations have defined the nature and scope of the attention paid by Turkey to the region: first, Turkey is a Balkan country geographically, historically and culturally. Therefore, it has a legitimate interest in the regional power configuration as well as the nature of the political regimes that prevail in the region. Second, the Balkans constitute a strategic link between Turkey and Western Europe. The latter occupies a central position in the whole gamut of political, economic, security and cultural links Turkey has formed with the outside world since its foundation in 1923 on the basis of Western-inspired Kemalist principles. Currently, roughly two and a half million Turkish citizens live in Western Europe, which accounts for more than half of Turkey's foreign trade. Turkey clearly cannot afford to be cut off from these relationships or from access to West European markets. Third, there is a powerful sense of affinity between Turks of Turkey and some peoples in the Balkans -- ethnic Turkish minorities, Bosnian Muslims, Albanians and now Macedonians, who form part of the legacy of Turkish rule in the Balkans, which stretched roughly from the fourteenth to the early twentieth century.⁽¹⁰³⁾

If the Balkans are of such vital importance for long-term Turkish interests in Europe, it follows, then, that Turkey would be sensitive to any major changes in the political and military status quo in the region that might threaten those interests. That, briefly is the geopolitical dimension of Turkish interests.

The human dimension is an equally powerful consideration. According to the then Deputy Prime Minister Erdal nönü, there are two million people of Turkish ethnicity in the Balkans and seven million Muslims.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Their kin and friends in Turkey, most of whose ancestors migrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Ottoman power receded from the Balkans, form a significant body in Turkish state and society (official estimates of Turkish citizens of Bosnian origin vary between two and four million). It is the numerous family ties, and not 'Islam', that draw many a Turk and Bosnian ('Boshnak') towards each other. Put differently, the perception in the external world that the Turks' concern for Bosnian Muslims emanates from their shared religion fails to explain the full dynamics of the relationship.

In order to appreciate the extent of popular pressure on the Turkish government on the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is important to understand the role of the psychodynamics generated by these extensive bonds of kinship and lively historical images. Turks entertain a highly sentimental view of non-Turkish Muslims, like the Albanians and Bosnians, who converted to Islam during the period of Ottoman rule. Originally

belonging to the Bogomil sect, Bosnians are known to have converted to Islam soon after the Turkish conquest in the late fifteenth century in order to escape further persecution by their intolerant Christian co-religionists.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Numerous Slav Muslims served in the Ottoman government at the height of its power. Some, like the celebrated Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, of Serbian origin, held the post of Grand Vizier. Against this background, Bosnian leaders have argued the case for Turkey's historical responsibility in their approaches to Turkey for support in their recent struggle.

Turkish concerns also rest on a deeper, more fundamental political and strategic consideration: the potential for long-term instability and conflict in the Balkans and Eastern Europe if the drive for a greater Serbia were allowed to prevail. Turkey believes that the goal of a Greater Serbia implies a forcible change in political borders to make them correspond to ethnic borders. Assuming that Serbian claims to large portions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were conceded under the principle of ethnic self-determination, who could guarantee that the next flash point would not be the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)? Would Greece not like to have its share of FYROM, and would this not also prompt Bulgaria into action? Who, then, could hold back Albanians from arguing a similar case for Kosovo? What guarantees would there be that ultra-nationalism would not catch on in Hungary, forcing it to press for a Greater Hungary? The dangers inherent in the ideology of a Greater Serbia pursued by Belgrade, in the grip of a communist-nationalist regime, bring to mind other threat scenarios, not only in the Balkans but in other regions inhabited by a rich mosaic of ethnically diverse peoples. Its success could send strong but ultimately catastrophic signals to, for instance, potential ultra-nationalists in many parts of the former Soviet Union, endangering peace and stability throughout Eurasia.

In as much as the fate of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been at the centre of Turkey's immediate concerns, the long-term implications of the dynamics unleashed by the crisis in former Yugoslavia for regional peace and stability at large form the fundamental element of Turkish security thinking about the Balkans in the post-Cold War era. No other Islamic country would be affected as directly and immediately by any major geopolitical and demographic change in the Balkans as Turkey. But, in dealing with its concerns, Turkey is not isolated: through various links with other countries and international institutions, it is in a special position to try to influence the management of the Yugoslav crisis. Turkey is the only Muslim country which shares with the United States and West European countries membership of NATO, still the leading security organisation in Europe. As an associate member of Western European Union (WEU), it has access to another European platform where its point of view can be elaborated. Its membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) allows Turkey to act as an interlocutor between, on the one hand, NATO and WEU, and on the other, the Islamic countries, which have by and large advocated opposing views and policies on the question of Bosnia.

Turkish policy towards the crisis in former Yugoslavia

Turkish positions and policies towards the crisis in former Yugoslavia went through two stages. Originally, Turkey adopted a low-key stance, favouring the continuation of the *status quo*, but with certain changes if the constituent republics so desired. It was genuinely concerned not to precipitate the crisis by acts that could be construed as interfering in former Yugoslavia's federal composition.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Once disintegration

ensued and seemed irreversible, and the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina -- a duly recognised member of the United Nations -- became the victim of Serbian aggression, the Turkish position changed.

Turkey extended diplomatic recognition to Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina on 6 February 1992, in the belief that their integration into the international community was a prerequisite for successfully re-establishing peace and stability in the region threatened, above all, by expansionist Serbian ethnic nationalism. The new policies were designed to attain three immediate and interrelated objectives:⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ to bring an end to the bloodshed in Bosnia-Herzegovina; to preserve its independence and territorial integrity; and to prevent the escalation of the war into a broader regional war engulfing Kosovo, Albania, FYROM, the Sandjak and Vojvodina.

Turkish positions hardened as Bosnian Muslims, outgunned, were subjected to intense suffering and large losses of territory to the Serbs. On 7 August 1992, Turkey elaborated the details of an Action Plan to be implemented by the United Nations Security Council. It called for a series of non-military measures and, in the event that these failed to stop Serbian aggression, proposed more decisive measures: the selective lifting of the United Nations arms embargo to allow the Bosnian Muslims to obtain from the outside the means to defend themselves, and, ultimately, limited military engagement by the international community in order to enforce the United Nations sanctions and strike selected military targets on the Serbian side.

Turkey has also consistently shunned the option of the unilateral use of force - despite pressure by domestic opposition.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Speculation outside Turkey that it intended to exploit the conflict in Bosnia through a show or use of force has apparently failed to read the mind of the key decision-makers correctly. A highly visible bilateral and multilateral diplomatic track has decidedly been the preference in order to mobilise a more resolute stand to contain Serbian expansionism by the international community.

The Turkish Government has persistently declared that peacemaking in Bosnia-Herzegovina falls within the sphere of responsibility of the United Nations Security Council, and that Turkey would make a military contribution to any enforcement action only as part of a mandated international effort. In this spirit, in April 1993 Turkey joined the UN-authorized NATO operation to enforce the seven-month old 'no-fly' zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina and also in February and April 1994 supported NATO's activities to protect Sarajevo and Gorazde. After lengthy negotiations, the UN and Turkey agreed in principle on a contingent of 2,700 Turkish peacekeeping troops in total to serve in UNPROFOR in Bosnia, starting with the deployment of 1,500 men in late June 1994.

Turkey feels that the Washington Agreement of 18 March 1994, between Muslims and Croats is a positive first step towards a comprehensive political settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, because it holds out the promise of restoring the multi-ethnic nature of the country. In contrast, the so-called Vance-Owen and Owen-Stoltenberg peace plans were premised on the ethnic and geographical partitioning of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For almost a year Turkey had been actively encouraging a Muslim-Croat dialogue. Prime Minister Franjo Tudjman of Croatia paid a visit to Turkey in April 1993. Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin was present as witness at the

signing of the Sarajevo Joint Declaration, of 12 November 1993, between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia, on the cessation of the fighting between Muslim and Croat forces in Bosnia. Hence, the philosophy and the political bargaining behind the Washington Agreement had been actively supported by Turkey for nearly a year before it finally came into being. Obviously, it was the weight of the United States that led to the successful culmination of these behind-the scene efforts.

Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

A major venue for Turkish multilateral diplomacy on the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been the OIC, a 52-member forum for Islamic solidarity among African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Its membership includes almost one third of the members of the UN, which allows it to act in the UN as a pressure group on the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Special visits by teams of OIC members to several major EU capitals have also been undertaken.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

At the Fifth Extraordinary Session of the OIC Foreign Ministers (OICFM) held at Istanbul on 17-18 June 1992, to discuss for the first time the question of Bosnia, a nine-member Contact Group (OICCG) was formed to speak for the OIC at the UN. At the time Turkey was the chairman of the OICFM; its term expired in April 1993. Currently Pakistan, also a temporary member of the UN Security Council, chairs the OICFM, making it possible for the OIC to have a voice in the decision-making organ of the world body.

Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey have been among the most active members of the OICCG, even if the reasons that motivate each one of these states to take a broader interest in the Yugoslav crisis, notably the drama in Bosnia-Herzegovina, differ widely. However, two issues have been in the forefront of the overall strategy that the OIC has pursued regarding the Bosnian crisis: the repeal of the arms embargo against the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government and the use of force under chapter VII of the charter of the United Nations to stop Serbian aggression. Needless to say, these are the very critical questions on which Western Europe has adopted a diametrically opposed stance. After the OIC meetings in Istanbul, New York (September 1992) and Karachi (April 1993), the Special OIC Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad (12-13 July 1993), which was attended by the UN Secretary-General, expressed opposition to any plan that would partition and dismember the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. An ambitious Action Plan was drawn up to be submitted to the UN for expeditious implementation. Seven Islamic countries offered to contribute peacekeeping troops to UNPROFOR⁽¹¹⁰⁾ and at the OIC Contact Group meeting in New York (27 September 1993) the OIC reaffirmed its wish for an early deployment of troops from OIC member states to protect the 'safe areas'.

At the OIC meeting in Geneva (17 January 1994), ministers renewed their call for air strikes and issued a veiled threat of economic sanctions against countries backing a partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ministers warned that unless NATO implemented its commitment, made at the Alliance summit, to use air strikes against Serbian positions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, they would call on the international community to help the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina exercise the 'inherent right of individual and collective self-defence under Article 51 of the UN charter.'

At the OIC Emergency Session in New York (27 April 1994), the foreign ministers declared that UNSC Resolution 713 (1991) did not apply to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that the arms embargo being maintained against this republic as well was illegal, unjust and in direct contradiction of Article 51 of the UN charter. They promised to table a resolution in the Security Council proclaiming that Bosnia-Herzegovina did not fall under the arms embargo.

The results of this high-profile diplomatic activity conducted under the umbrella of Islamic solidarity cannot be called a success. Many in the OIC hold the strength of Western Europe's influence primarily responsible for the prolongation of the crisis and for the consolidation of Serbian power at the expense of the Bosnian Muslims. Leading Islamic countries also seem to have concluded that future prospects for their relations with Western Europe need not be affected by the failure of the latter to protect the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, officially, most Islamic countries refrain from any further activities beyond OIC statements in order to avoid real political confrontation with Western Europe. In many cases this attitude reflects a realisation of the particular country's own weaknesses as well as those of the OIC as a collectivity. Many acknowledge that they are confronted with internal problems of greater urgency, that they cannot afford to risk their political and economic relations with major Western countries, and that they lack power projection capabilities. In short, Islamic countries do not seem to be considering a reorientation of their relations with Western Europe on the basis of their disappointment with the former's Bosnian policies. Needless to say, this should be a valid assumption so long as the current leadership of these countries remains in power.

Turkish perceptions of West European/EU policies

towards the Yugoslav crisis

Turkish perceptions are related primarily to the crisis and war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The sense of urgency with which the government has followed the developments there and the ensuing diplomatic activism, the public appeal by the Bosnian government and Muslim leadership for Turkish support, detailed coverage by the national and international media of the suffering of the Bosnian Muslims, and the skilful offensive by the Islamist Welfare Party in domestic politics to outpace the mainstream parties on a pro-Bosnian stance -- these together have contributed to the mobilisation of public opinion.

Turkish perceptions can be analysed at the levels of the élite and the general public. The élite level comprises roughly three categories: realist-pragmatists, moralists and anti-Western ideologues.

The *group of realist-pragmatists* is identified as such because of its informed, analytical and responsible approach to world politics and its keen awareness of *realpolitik* considerations in and for the Balkans. It consists primarily of members of the establishment and circles close to it. Realist-pragmatists make a careful distinction between the various international actors collectively known as 'the West'. They feel that, broadly speaking, the United States and Western Europe/EU have behaved separately towards this first post-Cold War crisis in Europe. They believe that the end

of the Cold War has led the two transatlantic partners of nearly half a century to seek a redefinition of their respective roles and responsibilities for European security.

Encouraged by the calculated American preference, that of the Bush administration in particular, to leave management of the crisis to Europe, the EU, up to the end of 1993, assumed the role of primary manager of the crisis in former Yugoslavia. The potential power of the EU's leading role was seen as magnified by the permanent membership of Great Britain and France in the United Nations Security Council. Other arguments in the realist-pragmatist perspective are related to the weakness of the CSCE machinery, which had indirectly helped bolster the image of the EU as the primary actor, and the fact that, until early 1994, the United States in effect stood on the sidelines. Moreover, under the Clinton administration the latter vacillated between shifting positions on America's interests, objectives and proposed methods of crisis management in Bosnia, reflecting a general lack of direction in America's post-Cold War foreign policy priorities.

However, realist-pragmatists are convinced that Western Europe has not been able to manage the crisis effectively, for the following reasons: Western Europe was caught unprepared to cope with the first post-Cold War crisis, which erupted at a time when it was absorbed with the immense task of making the transition to the post-Cold War era. Despite the launching of the CFSP, several countries within the Twelve have been motivated more by their respective national interests than by collective goals, occasionally giving the impression that they have pursued competitive and frequently opposing priorities and goals. This apparent lack of unanimity has resulted in the EU's opting for the least risky strategies in crisis management. Realist-pragmatists are also aware of the fact that other security institutions, namely NATO, WEU, the CSCE and the United Nations, were similarly not ready for a challenge of this type, since the nature of the threat to European security from the Yugoslav crisis could not be defined unequivocally. The crisis has taken place in a region historically known for its violent and entangled inter-ethnic and interstate dynamics. The complexity of its numerous ingredients has contributed to the difficulty of devising swift and effective measures to manage the crisis. The very confusion about how to define the Bosnian war -- as interstate, civil war, tribal war or religious war -- is seen by realist-pragmatists as clear evidence of the conceptual hurdles encountered in coming to grips with the nature of the Yugoslav crisis.

On the other hand, this group is critical of the EC/EU having confined its activities to the diplomatic and humanitarian domains. The EC/EU desisted from serious consideration of the military option - except belatedly at the time of the two NATO ultimatums, in February and April 1994 - even in the face of ample evidence that the Serbs had used the diplomatic track as a stalling tactic to advance on the ground. West European countries shunned the military option because they were not willing to risk a long and costly war in Bosnia in order to save Muslim people from massacre.

In short, realist-pragmatists think that the EC/EU lacks the political will to assume military risks in cases where no clearly identifiable, supreme economic and strategic interests are at stake, as was the case in the Kuwait crisis. They also hold the view that this lack of determination has little to do with capability. While the EU and WEU do not possess an autonomous intervention capability, the fact that all members of WEU and all but one member of the EU are members of NATO has offered them the

opportunity in principle to invoke the NATO machinery, even if both organisations time and again objected to the use of force by NATO -- until the February ultimatum. There is considerable cynicism on this point. Many realist-pragmatists speculate that the EU would not have abstained had the victims been Christians in the midst of a Muslim world. Besides, had the EC agreed to the selective lifting of the arms embargo to allow Bosnian Muslims to defend themselves, so a well-trying argument goes, the question of EC or NATO intervention to stop Serbian aggression might not even have had to be raised.

The *group of moralists* comprises the great majority of the informed and attentive public with potential power to influence policy, i.e. leaders of political parties, especially those in the opposition, parliamentarians, prominent columnists and commentators in the media, universities, professional organisations and other interest groups which regularly follow world affairs. Mostly educated and urbane, these people are `appalled at the destruction of an independent country, its culture and the plight of its people.⁽¹¹¹⁾

It is not so much the Muslim identity of the victims but the perceived disregard for the principles of international and humanitarian law and respect for human rights which has created much resentment among the attentive Turkish public against Western Europe in its role as the principal crisis manager in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moralists seem to be very sceptical of the deeper motives held by West Europeans, who are seen as having sacrificed principles of international morality in order to implement a type of nineteenth century spheres-of-influence policy. The country perceived to have played the determining role in this policy is the United Kingdom (notably in the persons of Lord Carrington and Lord Owen), followed by France, in order to counterbalance the expanding German influence to the east of Western Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic. A partitioned Bosnia in which the Bosnian Muslims had to live in insecure, isolated enclaves (key elements of the Vance-Owen plan), which would make room for a greater Serbia, would serve these ends. Such perceived ulterior motives are viewed with a powerful sense of moral indignation.

The moralists also find unacceptable the argument that a selective lifting of the arms embargo would escalate the intensity of the fighting. Depriving the Bosnian Muslims of legitimate means of self-defence in full awareness that Serbs by contrast were heavily armed, is seen as signalling to the Serbs a go-ahead for the execution of their plans. The result has been the massacre of thousands of Muslims and the rape of many of their women. According to the moralists, the number of victims has reached an intolerable level, thus weakening the West European argument that the level of violence is kept low by maintaining the arms embargo. Finally, there is also frustration with countries that are proud of having developed a political culture of tolerance and human rights; this leads the moralists to accuse Western Europe of applying double standards.

The *group of ideological anti-Westerners* consists of people organised around an Islamist-world view and their political organisation, the Islamist Welfare Party. For a better understanding of the views of this group, a quotation from Professor Necmeddin Erbakan, the leader of the Welfare Party (WP) may be helpful: `Bosnia-Herzegovina became an independent country of 5 million people governed by the Muslims. In a short time the Serbs and Croats massacred 250,000 Muslims just

because they were Muslims. 50,000 innocent women were raped. Two million people were forced to leave their country. The genocide in Bosnia is probably the second biggest one in history after the West's genocide at Andalusia. The Germans saved the Croats. Unfortunately, Turkey behaved almost like a spectator in the tragedy of Bosnia. In fact, by simply saying that "everything that needs to be done has been done", Turkey implicitly reassured the Serbs against (Western) intervention, and, indirectly encouraged them to massacre the Muslims . . . As disclosed in the letter by British Prime Minister Major to Minister in charge of Foreign Affairs Douglas Hurd, the goal of the West is the elimination of Bosnian Muslims.⁽¹¹²⁾

Islamist views can be found in the press, the business world, and recently in the bureaucracy and the universities' theology faculties. The Islamists have successfully used the Bosnian war to discredit 'the West'. It should be noted that 'the West' is seen and presented as a monolith with no special distinction made of Western Europe. On the contrary, the Welfare Party is known to have been quite restrained in its position, towards Germany in particular, in order to avoid possible complications in its extensive operations among Turkish workers in that country.

The Islamists have also used the Bosnian war to discredit Turkey's Western-inspired and Western-oriented socio-political regime. Necmeddin Erbakan has made the tragedy of Bosnia the centrepiece of his list of accusations against the government, implicitly charging that it had left the case of the Bosnian Muslims in the hands of Western-dominated institutions like the UN, NATO and CSCE.

The Welfare Party has been a marginal political force since its foundation twenty-five years ago. Over a long period its share of the national vote stood at roughly 10 per cent. However, its success at the nation-wide local elections on 27 March 1994 created some panic among the modernist-secularists because it emerged as the third largest party. It captured over one-third of the municipalities, including Istanbul and Ankara and, less than two weeks after this victory, Islamist mobs staged anti-Western demonstrations in Istanbul and Ankara in response to the alleged use of chemical weapons by Serbs against the Bosnian Muslims of Gorazde. Other activities are also conducted and sold to the wider public as a demonstration of Islamic solidarity. For instance, it has been quoted by the press and WP officials that around \$2 billion were raised in 1993 to help Bosnian Muslims; most of the donations apparently came from Turkish workers in Germany.

In short, the Islamists, like the moralists, seem to be playing a critical role in shaping the attitudes of the general public towards the West. In order to appreciate that this is a new socio-political phenomenon, it is important to remember that Turkey is one of the few Muslim countries where anti-Westernism has never been part and parcel of the world view or the political orientation of the population. It had played a role only sporadically around special issues, such as the Cyprus conflict, and more systematically by the radical left in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, however, the psychology of the masses has come under different influences from different directions. More and more forces in the external environment and domestic politics have recently joined hands to carry to the Turkish masses the message that they should not only reclaim their original pure Muslim identity, but that they belong to the politico-cultural universe of Islam, which the West is set to destroy. Against the backdrop of these efforts, the unhappy fate of Bosnian Muslims has offered the most

opportune evidence in support of the Islamist political élite's conspiratorial theories about the West.

With the exception of the Cyprus conflict (which occupies a truly special position in the Turkish psyche), no other foreign policy issue has aroused such intense emotion among the Turkish *general public*, since the end of the Second World War, as the Bosnian question. The occupation of Afghanistan, for example, caused waves of protest in the Arab world, culminating in the dispatch of thousands of volunteers to fight the 'Godless Communists'. Not so in Turkey. The Bosnian question, in contrast, has struck a deeply emotional chord for all the reasons discussed at the beginning of the paper.

Extensive media coverage, especially the images seen in the electronic media, and the power of those formers of public opinion who have been classified here as moralists and anti-Western ideologues, have all helped to consolidate the spontaneous concern among the wider public about the fate of Bosnian Muslims, and to implant firmer and deeper scepticism about the West. Accordingly, one can suppose that the man in the street holds views that represent a crude simplification of those articulated by opinion-makers and opinion-leaders. He appears to believe that the West in general, and Western Europe in particular, has encouraged the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Serbia in order to eliminate a Muslim country from the midst of Europe.

Future prospects for Turkey's relations with Western Europe

The potential impact on Turkish foreign policy of the inability and/or unwillingness of Western Europe to act as an effective crisis manager in Bosnia-Herzegovina appears to have been kept within bounds. The official establishment seems determined to keep strained relations with Western Europe on the question of Bosnia-Herzegovina separate from Turkey's fundamental foreign policy objectives and orientation.

Turkish officials maintain that Turkey made its basic choice of using the West as a model for its internal organisation and lifestyle, as well as foreign policy, at the time of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who, seventy years ago, began the task of building a modern country. They feel that the Eurocentric world view needs to be safeguarded against tensions generated by foreign policy challenges such as the questions of Cyprus and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The prevailing attitude seems to be a mixture of subtle resignation -- but not defeat -- and sharpened determination to 'stay with Europe despite Europe'.

Accordingly, so long as the balance of domestic forces continues to favour the modernist/modernisers, the Turkish commitment to integration with Europe is likely to remain powerful even if the prospects of the EU admitting Turkey as a full member are clearly seen to be remote. This basic commitment applies to Turkey's views about WEU too. The general public is not knowledgeable about WEU. It is NATO which continues to monopolise the public's attention as Turkey's real security partner. Even though the long-lasting passive stance of NATO *vis-à-vis* the Bosnian tragedy discredited it in the view of the Turkish public, NATO ultimatums to stop the Serbian strangulation of Sarajevo and later Gorazde have done much to restore its prestige.

The political élite seems to believe that, while the Maastricht treaty has given much greater prominence to WEU, this institution is still in a process of evolution as a security entity, politically and in terms of capabilities. The basic problem with WEU is its uncertain future or, to put it differently, the question of the nature and scope of its role and function as a security institution. Viewed from the more immediate time frame, the Yugoslav crisis has demonstrated the limited political and military power base of WEU, preventing it from playing an effective peacekeeping and/or peacemaking role. NATO, in contrast, continues to be the only viable security institution in Europe. While its performance on the question of non-Article 5 contingencies like the Bosnian crisis has fallen short of expectations, NATO stands out as the only truly credible institution for collective self-defence.

On the other hand, the decision-makers' view of the future prospects of Turkey's relations with Western Europe is complicated by important tensions or constraints. The primary sources of these tensions are, first, the effective exclusion of Turkey from European integration and, second, Turkey's ambiguous status within WEU as an associate member. Needless to say, these tensions have a life of their own irrespective of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

Given these systemic obstacles, Turkey appears to be trying to square the circle by persisting on a foreign policy orientation that is not given due recognition by the West Europeans. In other words, the official Turkish goal to join West European institutions as a full member appears unrealistic and untenable in the face of the unwillingness of the EU to admit Turkey as a member. Therefore, Turkish decision-makers have to struggle hard to defend their position against the domestic cynicism about Turkey-EU relations that is pervasive in the country. The Turkish public feels humiliated at what it considers third-class treatment of Turkey by Western Europe, and the war in Bosnia has added a new dimension to this perception. The misery which has befallen Bosnian Muslims -- for which West European diplomacy is seen as being primarily responsible, for the reasons discussed earlier -- has, while attracting intense sympathy for the victims, reinforced the sense of humiliation suffered by the 'Europeans', i.e. the major powers of Europe.

This negative public image of Western Europe represents a major obstacle in relations between government decision-makers and the Grand National Assembly, the Turkish parliament. As has been mentioned previously, the balance of political forces in the parliament and in the country at large still favours the modernists. Yet, that balance has been shifting towards an improved position of the traditionalist-Islamists and nationalists in more subtle ways than poll results seem to indicate.

Irrespective of their various political philosophies and identities, however, Turks may be converging, at an emotional level, on a very simple but elementary point: the need to preserve national pride. Turks' sense of national pride seems to have been playing a greatly enhanced role recently in the public debate on relations with Western Europe. It seems possible that injured national pride might inspire a search for complex coalitions among the proponents of all kinds of seemingly incompatible political ideologies, e.g. Westernisation, European integration, Islamism, traditionalism, nationalism -- especially within parliament with a view to winning domestic constituencies. In short, despite the government's resolute efforts to stay on course in its basic political and security orientation towards Western Europe, the domestic

tensions discussed above might ultimately overwhelm official Turkish resolve and undermine the basis of support for a pro-Western policy if left in the present state of limbo.

The simplest but starkest lesson of the Balkan crisis has been that war has not become obsolete, that force prevails, and that collective security organisations like the United Nations continue to be ineffective agents of national security. The erosion of faith in collective security organisations is qualified, however, by the fact that these organisations can perform the tasks expected of them if there is a consensus among the great powers to act. Therefore, peace and stability in today's international system continue to demand responsible leadership by the great powers. Irrespective of this problem, Turkey believes that peacekeeping has become a very important aspect of crisis management in the post-Cold War era, hence its efforts to improve its ability to make important contributions. This has already resulted in the fact that Lieutenant-General Çevik Bir of the Turkish Armed Forces served as the Force Commander of UNOSOM II's command structure (with 300 Turkish peacekeepers taking part in this UN force) and that Turkish peacekeeping forces have also been invited by the UN to serve in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The future of Turkey-EU relations is a question that deserves much thought, goodwill and patience on both sides. As regards Bosnia, things seem simpler and of more immediate salience. The following steps could help the EU recover some of its erstwhile prestige in the eyes of the Turkish public: the EU should extend firm and clear support to the Croat-Muslim federation, encourage Bosnian Serbs to join it or to live together with it in a state entity, and provide generous aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina for its recovery and reconstruction. The EU could invite Turkey, the only major regional actor that has supported the cause of the Bosnian Muslims from the time of Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence, formally to take part in the international 'contact group' in order to enhance the legitimacy of the decisions of this group by making its composition more balanced. The EU could also resolutely back the International Tribunal established by the United Nations Security Council on 23 May 1993 to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in former Yugoslavia, and support the Turkish candidate for election to the tribunal if and when a vacancy among its eleven members occurs in the future.

THE IMPACT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND WESTERN EUROPE

Ali Hillal Dessouki⁽¹¹³⁾

With the exception of the Palestine question, probably no other issue has mobilised Muslim sentiments and emotions as much as the fate of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Television coverage of events has brought pictures of Muslims' miseries there to millions of Muslims all over the world, and this has created a negative, hostile attitude towards those perceived as responsible for the prolongation of the tragedy. The objective of this paper is to analyse basic Islamic views and perceptions of events in Bosnia and reflect on their probable impact on the future of relations between the Islamic world and Western Europe.

Two methodological caveats are in order at the outset. The first relates to the extent to which the Islamic world can be considered as a unified actor. The more than fifty Islamic states, defined as those having populations with a Muslim majority, belong to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Islamic political ideas and movements have demonstrated their character as a transnational, trans-state phenomenon capable of exercising influence in a number of Islamic states. The Muslim Brothers society in the 1940s and the contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements are just two cases in point. It remains true, however, that Islamic states constitute an amorphous entity. They differ in almost all aspects of their economic and political organisation and thus have different national interests and foreign policy orientations. Their reactions to the Bosnian tragedy have been multiple and diverse, and have varied from the symbolic verbal (political statements, declarations of solidarity) to popular expressions of Islamic brotherhood (such as fund-raising campaigns or humanitarian aid) and perceptions of threats to political values and/or national interests.

The other caveat relates to the importance of distinguishing between governmental and popular reactions: in many instances, governments' positions are not a true reflection of the intensity of popular feelings. With the exception of rich oil-producing states, most Islamic countries belong to the 'South' as broadly defined. They are societies that have ceased to advance. Their economies are characterised by a failure to develop and their politics by lack of democratic structures and a crisis of legitimacy. As a result, they abound with political protest movements that are usually termed Islamic fundamentalist in the West. These groups are involved in a multitude of activities, from political agitation and mobilisation of popular feeling to assassinations and the use of organised violence. Their influence varies from being a moral call for authenticity or a cry of the dispossessed to a credible challenge to ruling regimes and the holders of power. Thus, many Islamic governments find themselves caught between friendship towards Europe (and the United States), which constrains their ability to adopt strongly critical positions, and mounting domestic pressure to support the Bosnian Muslims.

Having these two caveats in mind it is possible to argue that though the Muslim world does not constitute a unified actor in international politics, Muslim peoples constitute

a sort of 'psychological human entity' and are mobilisable around a number of symbolic issues such as Palestine, Afghanistan and Bosnia. The mobilisation of Islamic sentiment in many instances creates internal political pressures which governments cannot ignore. In this context, Muslim perceptions and views of the European role in managing the Yugoslav crisis are generally expressed in the form of criticism, anger and condemnation. A prevailing popular feeling is that a solution of the Bosnian problem will be achieved at the expense of the Bosnian Muslims,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ and that instead of condemning the aggressor, European states are using their influence to force the weak to make more concessions.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

We can thus distinguish two lines of thinking and justification. The first involves criticism of European states' positions as lacking in coordination. The second involves a condemnation of Europe's ambiguous policy as evidence of a perceived long-standing European hostility towards Islam. I have called the first 'the instrumental argument' since its adherents refer to problems of policy-making and formulation of joint policy objectives due to European states' different national interests. The second is called 'the conspiracy argument' to refer to those views which interpret European reactions from the perspective of the victims' religion.

The instrumental argument

In this view, criticism of Europe's policy is based on tactical and analytical considerations. It is found primarily in official statements by most Islamic countries as well as in the declarations of the OIC. One focus, in this view, is intra-European differences on how to deal with the crisis in former Yugoslavia. A second focus is Europe's lack of political determination, which is explained by the absence of any EU member's vital national interests in the case of former Yugoslavia.

These views are reflected in the statements of many officials. For instance, Amr Moussa, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, has described the efforts of European mediators as lacking in credibility and taken the view that they would not lead to a resolution of the conflict.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Ambassador Raof Ghoniem, Former Egyptian Ambassador to Bonn till 1993 and now Assistant to the Foreign Minister for European Affairs, has emphasised Europe's 'political failure' in handling the Yugoslav crisis, attributing this failure to the absence of appropriate European institutions capable of dealing with the new problems of post-Cold War Europe. He has also referred to the differences between European states' national interests, which have led to indecision and underlined Europe's double standards on the issue of human rights: Europe, which talks loudly about the need to respect human rights, is in his view ignoring one of the most dangerous violations of human rights in modern history. European advice to Third World countries on human rights would not command any credibility or seriousness unless Europe upheld human rights in Bosnia, he maintains.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

The joint communiqué issued by the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Turkey in February 1994 also referred to the tragic violations of human rights at the heart of a continent which prides itself on its commitment to these rights.⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Political commentators of all persuasions in Egypt have reflected similar sentiments. For instance, Ibrahim Nafi', editor of *Al-Ahram*, the semi-official Egyptian daily

newspaper, has pointed out that Europe was fully aware of the tragedies and violations of human rights in Bosnia, and its failure to intervene represented a crime by omission. Said Sonbol, a Christian writing in the daily *Al-Akhbar*, has said that the Bosnia tragedy has unmasked the ugly face of the big powers because there was little difference between Serbian crimes against Muslims and Nazi crimes against Europeans.

It is interesting to analyse Muslim political reactions to various positions of countries in Europe. Greece, Romania and Russia are perceived as outright allies of Serbia. On the other hand small European states such as Belgium and Austria have been perceived more favourably as neutral and more understanding of the Muslims' just cause.⁽¹¹⁹⁾ This is perhaps because these states have not intervened actively in the crisis and have therefore not taken any controversial positions. The same is true of Germany, whose policy has been described in one statement issued by a solidarity committee in support of Bosnia as 'the most honorable of any European country.'⁽¹²⁰⁾ The authors of such a statement must however be unaware of the political and historical constraints which limit German involvement in crisis management. It is ironical that the role of the United Kingdom and France is viewed in a negative way: European states which have done little other than give verbal support for the Bosnians enjoy a positive image in the eyes of Muslim observers, while those which have sent troops to establish a truce and provide humanitarian aid are criticised.

The conspiracy argument

This argument is upheld primarily by persons of religious persuasion. Its point of departure is the fact that the victims are Muslims. The argument has various shades, from the simple statement 'If the Bosnians were Christians or Jews, things would have been different' to the more ideological belief in a 'historical enmity of Europe towards Islam'.

The leading official religious figure in Egypt, Sheikh Al-Azhar, has emphasised the failure of the EC/EU to decide on the issue and related it to religious fanaticism and racial discrimination. Another official religious figure in Egypt, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, has noticed that Muslims are usually victimised everywhere -- in Burma, the Philippines, Somalia and Bosnia. The Mufti of Syria, in a Bulletin published by the Committee for Humanitarian Help of Egypt's Medical Association, described the situation in Bosnia as 'a crusade against Muslims in Europe' that unmasks Western claims regarding human rights and religious freedom.

Newspapers in the Gulf have also expressed anger and disdain towards Europe's indecisive position and have seen the Serbian aggression as 'a conspiracy against Islam'. Pictures of the devastation in Sarajevo were prominently shown on television around the region, creating strong feelings against any continuing Serbian aggression.⁽¹²¹⁾ Reflecting such sentiments in the Gulf region, Kuwaiti newspapers have referred to Europe's hostility to Islam. A European bias against Islam and Muslims has been identified and it has been demanded that Saudi Arabia - being the largest country in the region - should ask the UN Security Council to give further consideration to the Islamic dimension of the crisis.⁽¹²²⁾

More explicit manifestations of the argument of conspiracy against Muslims are widely found among militant Islamic groups, which relate Europe's Bosnian policy to long-standing enmity towards Islam. In a book by Mohamed Moro, an Islamic fundamentalist writer in Egypt, the author argues that the situation in Bosnia reflects 'a civilisational conflict' and 'a conflict between right and wrong', forces of right being represented by Islam and forces of evil represented by Western civilisation. Europe's objective is to eradicate Islam from the continent. If the West manages to achieve this, it will turn against Muslims in other parts of the world. The target is not Bosnia-Herzegovina but Islam in Europe. The outlook for Muslims in Europe is gloomy and there are many manifestations, the author argues, to substantiate this view. One manifestation was the obliteration of the Islamic cultural identity in Bulgaria. Another was the pauperization of Muslims in Albania so that they became an easy victim of Christian missionary activities. The Kosovo region will be the scene of the coming confrontation. The cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina must be seen in this broader context, the author argues.⁽¹²³⁾

Another Islamic author reminds his readers that the tragedy of Bosnia-Herzegovina is not the first of its kind in the history of Islam. It was preceded by disasters inflicted on Muslims by the Tartars and the crusaders. Other tragic events cited include the fall of Granada and the persecution of Muslims in India and Israel.⁽¹²⁴⁾

'Conspiratorial' views are systematically found in fundamentalist publications. They are part of a world view which is based on the inevitable conflict between Islam and other religions. The crusades, the fall of Andalusia, colonialism, Zionism and communism are all different manifestations of such irreconcilable conflict. These views are essentially ideological; those who hold them place all wars between Muslims and non-Muslims over the centuries within a single context and offer one interpretation for all of them: European enmity towards Islam and Muslims. But why is there this enmity? Some Islamic writers refer to history: at the time of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims invaded Europe and reached the gates of Vienna. Others point to the legacy of the crusades. A third group refers to Islam as representing a moral and spiritual power in the face of decaying Western materialistic civilisation.

Policy implications

If existing ruling regimes and policies in Islamic states were to continue, Europe would not have much reason to worry about its future relations with the Islamic world. Islamic states are mostly weak and divided. Such regimes depend on European help and assistance and do not have much political influence to exercise. The situation, however, remains unstable and open to change, given the domestic crises faced by present regimes in Muslim countries. There are at least three broad areas of policy implications in this regard.

Firstly, the continuing situation in Bosnia is creating an environment that is conducive to the spread of negative perceptions towards Western Europe. Militant Islamic groups have skilfully used the tragedy to cultivate anti-Western and anti-European feelings. European hesitancy and indecisiveness have been exploited to reinforce the image of a Western Europe that does not care much about the fate, let alone human rights, of thousands of Bosnian Muslims. One major argument is that of double

standards; commentators contrast Europe's reaction to Serbian aggression with its policy towards Iraq or Libya.

Against the background of this political climate, in many Islamic countries, especially the rich Gulf states, fund-raising campaigns have been organised in support of the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Islamic countries that enjoy political pluralism, such as Egypt, solidarity committees have been established, which organise press conferences and public meetings on Bosnia.

In August 1993, a delegation representing the committee of solidarity with the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina (controlled by members of the Muslim Brothers Society) managed to meet the French Ambassador in Cairo. The meeting ended on a sour note because of the language used in a letter addressed to the French President, which was deemed unacceptable by the French Ambassador. The letter attacked France's 'shameful' policy and accused French soldiers serving in the UN peacekeeping force of bias against Muslims.⁽¹²⁵⁾ Some months later, the French initiative of January 1994 was described as 'unethical', since it attempted to persuade the United States to put pressure on certain countries to stop supplying arms to Muslims in Bosnia.⁽¹²⁶⁾ British and French statements about withdrawing their forces in the event of danger to their lives, or if a political settlement of the crisis was not reached soon, were interpreted as an 'open invitation to Serbian militias to impose their will by force.'⁽¹²⁷⁾

Secondly, fundamentalist Islamic groups are using the Bosnian tragedy for domestic political purpose. Their objective is twofold: to mobilise more popular support in their struggle for political power and to embarrass moderate ruling regimes by demonstrating their inability to defend 'Muslim Brothers'. The prevalence of these feelings is likely to strengthen militant groups and further weaken moderate ruling regimes. This might explain the policy of Islamic states individually and collectively (through the OIC) to declare their support for the cause of Muslims in Bosnia. The OIC, for example, has established a committee in the UN to follow the issue and coordinate Islamic diplomatic efforts. However, the position of Islamic states has been anything but strong. No one is ready to challenge the UN Security Council resolutions in public but all at least ask for a removal of the arms embargo, and countries like Pakistan and Egypt have offered considerable contributions to the UN peacekeeping force.

Criticism of Islamic states' weak position towards the tragedy is not confined to militant Islamic groups or the like, but is reflected in the print media by a broader sector of political commentators. For instance, Mostafa Amin, the most influential daily columnist in Egypt, has demanded that all Islamic states arm Bosnian soldiers and smuggle weapons to them, warning that, were the present situation to continue, Islamic states would fall one after the other. Mohamed Asfour, a liberal writer, has condemned Islamic states which have not severed diplomatic links with Serbia. Another commentator, Salama A. Salama, has requested Egypt to withdraw its forces from Bosnia. Egypt should not be party to a 'European conspiracy' on Bosnia that was evident if one compared European and other Western reactions to the tragedy in Bosnia with their firm stand against Iraq.⁽¹²⁸⁾ The Lebanese newspaper *Al-Hayat* has also criticised the weak position taken by Islamic governments.

Negative images and perceptions of Europe, are also well served by references in Western publications to the 'clash of civilisations', the 'green peril' and the Islamic 'threat'. These are translated and disseminated by militant Islamic circles as confirmation of their belief in the long-standing conflict between Europe and Islam. European indecisiveness over the Bosnian tragedy is given as material evidence of that conviction.

A third implication relates to the image of Europe as a credible political and security partner. For many, Europe appears unable to make up its mind or to act decisively at times of crisis. The image is one of a Europe that is a weak power which depends heavily on the United States. This is likely to have a wider impact on Europe's role in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. It has already been reported in some Arab newspapers, for example, that Saudi Arabia's decision to purchase American rather than European aircraft was a sign of dissatisfaction with Europe. Some commentators argue that Russia and the United States are gaining from European weakness.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Europe had recognised its inability to resolve the Yugoslav problem; it needs Russia to put pressure on Serbia and the United States to entice the Muslims.

On the other hand, all these perceptions must be assessed in the larger context of European-Islamic relations. Relations between states and regions are not unidirectional, nor are they built around a single issue. Thus, however intense Muslim feelings towards Europe's handling of the Bosnian crisis may be, these feelings are not the only, or the most important determinant of relations between Europe and Muslim countries. Europe has multifaceted relations with many Islamic states. For a while, there was a working Euro-Arab dialogue, and European positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict have been perceived as reasonable and more understanding of Arab views compared with those of the Americans. French policies towards Iraq and Iran are also seen as a moderating factor in Muslim-European relations. Thus, both negative and positive perceptions of European policies tend to balance each other. They are not static but rather changeable. Many individual Muslims may have contradictory, coexisting perceptions. For instance, given the history of encounters between Europe and Islamic peoples, Europe is seen in an ambivalent way. It is a model of development and democracy to be emulated yet at the same time a source of military threat and colonial expansion to be resisted. These two types of perception exist simultaneously and each one can be mobilised by certain events.

While it cannot be concluded that Europe's handling of the Bosnian crisis is in itself a primary factor in the weakening of moderate regimes in Islamic states, or that it constrains their ability to cooperate with European states, it remains true that the Bosnian drama has generated certain strong anti-European sentiments among the population in Muslim countries, especially within circles related to Islamic groups. Even undemocratic governments have to take notice of these pressures and, at least verbally, react to them. Since a possible destabilisation of important countries such as Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia is not in Western Europe's interest, a European initiative to include more Muslim troops in UN forces, or a call to lift the arms embargo after or in connection with a settlement, would help a lot.

Finally, the West European position on Bosnia has generated a negative image *par excellence*. For some, it has recalled certain colonial legacies and revived long-standing animosities. For others it presents a conundrum: how can West European

countries, which cherish principles of international law and human rights, tolerate the tragic situation in Bosnia? Images, however, do change and develop in different directions. The long-term implications will depend a lot on how the Bosnian tragedy is brought to an end. A more active European role in reaching a political settlement that is acceptable to the Bosnian government would help change Europe's image. Efforts made towards Bosnia's reconstruction and economic development will be crucial in this process. Beyond the question of Bosnia, the continuation of active European support for the Middle East peace process, the provision of technical and economic assistance to the newly established Palestinian authority, and the improvement of preferential trade and cooperation agreements with key Islamic states will be of equal importance.