The Evolution of the National Security Culture and the Military in Turkey

Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu

"Turkey's cultural environment has influenced its quest for security through alliances, its circumspect foreign policy and the persistent efforts of successive governments to embrace the West."

Like any social behavior, modern Turkey's foreign and security policy is manifested in a historical and cultural context. The legacy of history is discernible in its relations with neighboring countries as well as its Western allies. Turkey's cultural environment has influenced its quest for security through alliances, its circumspect foreign policy and the persistent efforts of successive governments to embrace the West. The most elusive clues to understanding Turkish foreign and security policy are themselves best viewed in this cultural context. The evolution of Turkey's security culture and the role of its military are of special interest. The former has often been overlooked, and the latter has often been overemphasized. Therefore, these two interrelated factors deserve renewed attention and clarification while the limits of military interference in the policymaking process require further elucidation.

As Adda B. Bozeman argues, "each society is moved by the circumstances of its existence to develop its own approach to foreign relations. This means that diplomacy, and for that matter every other social institution, is bound to incorporate the traditions and values peculiar to the civilization in which it is practiced."[1]

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[1] Adda B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960) p. 324.

Similarly, in the words of Colin S. Gray, "cultures comprise the persisting socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a unique historical experience."[2] National security culture is not static; indeed, it "can change over time, as new experience is absorbed, coded and culturally translated."[3] In other words, it changes gradually as society responds to challenges from within and without. Some aspects of Turkey's security culture have persisted across historical periods and across different internal and external contexts. In some respects, however, this security culture has evolved across consecutive periods into the post-Cold War era. The purpose of this essay is to seek answers to the following questions: What has changed and what has persisted in Turkey's national security culture? What has the role of the military been in that evolutionary process?

Essentially, I suggest three arguments. First, Turkey has historically displayed a relatively consistent security culture of *realpolitik* which has evolved across the centuries from a dominant offensive character into a dominant defensive one. Second, since the 18th century, the process of Westernization has left its imprint on the national security culture. It has greatly motivated Turkey's Western-oriented policies and introduced liberal and internationalist elements into foreign policy. At the same time, it has given rise to an identity problem that has, in turn, complicated the understanding of Turkey's foreign and security policy behavior. Third, although the military continues to play a significant part in foreign and security policymaking, its role has limits and has diminished gradually. Contrary to the general view, Turkey's security culture is not completely influenced by the military. The civilian elites have also played an important part in its formation. Civilian participation tends to be increasingly significant in the post-Cold War era. That said, this article will mainly focus on the role of the military in foreign and security policy. It will deal with the domestic political and institutional aspects of the problem to the extent that they concern foreign and security policymaking.

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[2] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 131.
[3] *ibid.*

200

THE *REALPOLITIK* CULTURE

During the Ottoman Empire, its security culture evolved from an offensive *realpolitik* to a defensive one. The latter continues to affect foreign policymaking in modern Turkey. Long before the Peace of Westphalia, the Ottoman state had played an important role in Europe's international affairs. Its continuous relations with European powers made the concept of balance of power an indispensable component of its diplomatic-strategic behavior. The Ottomans were engaged in a long struggle with the Hapsburgs that was essentially a contest for world supremacy. In 1525, when King Francis I of France sought Ottoman support against Vienna, the Turks availed themselves of this opportunity to increase their pressure on Central Europe and to open a new front against the Hapsburgs in the Mediterranean. Ottoman support for France and the Protestants in matters of trade, and encouragement of the English, the Dutch and other anti-Hapsburg parties—notably the Moors and the Jews of Spain—heavily influenced its foreign and security policies. The newly rising monarchies of France, England, the Low Countries and the Protestant princes of Germany all thus benefited from the Ottoman *realpolitik*, which provided "an element of balance against the dominance of the Emperor and the Pope in Europe."[4] By promoting political decentralization in Europe, this contributed to the advent of the Westphalian system.

The Ottoman policy until the end of the 17th century can be defined as "offensive *realpolitik*,"[5] the objective of which was to maximize power by acquiring territory, population and wealth. After the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, the military balance between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers began to change at the expense of the Ottomans. Following that date, Ottoman *realpolitik* began to acquire a defensive character. This emphasized balance-of-power diplomacy—not to expand influence but to slow down retreat to the East. Major European powers facilitated implementation of this policy by striving to

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[4] Halil Inalcik, "The Meaning of Legacy: The Ottoman Case," in L. Carl Brown, ed., *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) p. 21.
[5] For offensive and defensive realism, see Benjamin Frankel, "Restating the Realist Case: An Introduction," in Benjamin Frankel, ed., *Realism: Restatements and Renewal* (London: Frank Cass, 1996) p. 15.

201

avoid creating a power gap in the Near East through an abrupt collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was reduced to a secondary power and became increasingly dependent on Western European powers in its struggle against the military imperialism of Austria and Russia.[6] From this time until 1952, when Turkey joined NATO, military and diplomatic isolation subjected Turkey to bargaining between the great powers over the Empire's territory. So the fear of loss of territory and the fear of abandonment became a major aspect of Turkish security culture in the Empire, and the same fears were strengthened by the Treaty of Sèvres, which provided for the partition of the Ottoman territories among the European Powers after the First World War. Inherited by the Republic, these fears continue to haunt some of the elite and public opinion.

Turkey's past experience with Greece and Russia has greatly influenced its present approach to security matters. After gaining independence in the 1820s, Greece pursued an irredentist Pan-hellenic policy, known as the "Megali Idea," which aimed at unifying all Greeks and resurrecting the Byzantine Empire. This policy led the Greeks to make incessant territorial claims on the Ottoman Empire. The Greek territorial expansion continued until the failure of the Greek invasion of Anatolia between 1919 and 1922. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Balkans were affected by the politics of irredentism on the one hand, and by extreme applications of nationalism on the other. As a result, the establishment of nation-states in the Balkans resulted in territorial losses on the part of the Ottoman Empire. It also caused massive relocations of peoples, and an extreme use of force became common practice between different ethnic communities. Implications of this Balkan version of nationalism has left its mark on present Turkish-Greek relations, creating a mutual distrust between the two nations and complicating the settlement of the Aegean and Cyprus disputes. Other Balkan nationalities—as well as the Armenians, Arabs and Kurds in the early 20th century—followed the Greek example, speeding up the territorial contraction of the Empire. The Turkish Republic is still threatened by ethnic

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[6] Roderic H. Davison, "Ottoman Diplomacy and its Legacy," in L. Carl Brown, ed., *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) p. 176.

separatism and irredentism. Syria's territorial claims over the province of Hatay and the PKK's separatist terrorist actions are, to a considerable extent, the legacy of the 19th century's nationalism.

The hostility between Turks and Russians has a long history. At the zenith of its power, the Ottoman Empire extended into southern Russia, Ukraine and the Caucasus. Russia's emergence as a great power in the 18th century brought about a significant change in the European balance of power to the disadvantage of the Ottoman Empire. For two centuries, successive Tsars expanded their territory at the expense of an enfeebled Turkey. This violent history, punctuated by 13 wars between Russia and Turkey, created a bellicose atmosphere of traditional enmity between the two nations. In the eyes of the average Turk, Russia remains a traditional enemy. This image somewhat softened after the Bolshevik Revolution and during the Turkish War of Independence. Both countries were then struggling against the intervention of Western powers. This temporary convergence of interests, however, did not last long. Republican Turkish leaders had no intention of adopting a Marxist-Leninist regime. On the contrary, they pursued Western-oriented reformist policies. Moreover, Atatürk had a deep distrust of communism and despite his friendship with Moscow, he pursued an anti-communist policy within Turkey. In 1932, he expressed his distrust of the Soviet Union as follows: "We Turks, being a close neighbor of Russia and a nation who has fought numerous wars against her, are following the events that are taking place there and watching the real danger as a bare truth. Bolsheviks have become a principal power threatening not only Europe but also the continent of Asia."[7] After the Second World War, this state of mind exacerbated Ankara's perception of the Soviet threat and prompted Turkey to align with the West.

Russians have always perceived its southwest tier, in general, and Turkey, in particular, not only as a gateway to the Mediterranean, but also as a possible invasion route to Russia. Given their traditional fear of encirclement, the Russians have always been acutely aware that the Black Sea and the Caucasus

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[7] *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri*, cited in Metin Tamkoç, "Turkey's Quest for Security Through Defensive Alliances," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* (1961) p. 8.

203

are critical strategic approaches to their homeland and to their important industrial areas and energy resources. In other words, the Black Sea basin is regarded as the "soft underbelly" of the Russian homeland. Thus, after the Second World War, Moscow perceived Turkey's alignment with NATO as a threat to its security. Ankara, aware of Russian sensitivities, acted with circumspection. It did not want to become provocative and took the utmost care not to threaten vital Soviet security interests and internal stability. For example, Turkey was extremely careful not to increase the range of tactical nuclear weapons deployed in the country and modernization programs improved the short-range systems without extending range. Moreover, Turkish radio stations refrained from broadcasting to Central Asia and the Caucasus. This policy toward its mighty neighbor, combining deterrence through alliances with reassurance, was inherited from the 19th century and, in many respects, is still discernible in the post-Cold War era.

WESTERNIZATION

In the 19th century, the primary objective of Ottoman foreign policy was to avoid being an object of European great power rivalries as a land ripe for partition. The Sublime Porte made every effort to remain active in international affairs, an actor equal to the others. In so doing, the Porte followed three modes of action. As I have already described, the first was a defensive *realpolitik* diplomacy. The other two courses of action can be understood as interrelated aspects of the Westernization process. One of them was the Ottoman Empire's integration with the European state system. The other consisted of measures to revitalize the state by modernizing the armed forces and the administration. This policy led to the imperial elite's opening up to European ideas and values and eventually to a comprehensive policy of Westernization, which gained momentum with the establishment of the Republic and the subsequent reform period. The military elite played a decisive role in this process.

Membership in the European State System

Thomas Naff states that "to a historian of Ottoman-European relations, the Ottoman Empire poses a large paradox." It

204

administered and controlled large areas of the European continent. It was heavily involved in European politics as a major actor. "The logical conclusion ought to be that the Ottoman Empire was, empirically, a European state. The paradox is that it was not."[8] In the view of Raymond Aron, the international system of the period including the Ottoman component was heterogeneous.[9] The Ottoman and European states were organized according to different principles and appealed to contradictory values. They had different socio-political messages for humanity, one originating from Christianity and the other from Islam. Both, reinforced by hostility and prejudice, regarded each other as totally different. Diametrically opposed concepts of state, law and government inhibited a reconciliation of their interests. Although the two opposing conceptions of world order were exclusive and inflexible at the outset, they had to accommodate themselves to the necessities of international relations by adopting a pragmatic outlook which generally accepted principles of equality and reciprocity, and the consequent extension of the limits of mutual recognition.[10] The Ottoman Empire's gradual decline after the 17th century and its continuous relations with European powers urged it to adopt Western diplomatic practices and processes. Ottoman statecraft was impelled to shift gradually from the notion of universal to that of territorial sovereignty; and from superiority and unilateralism to equality and bilateralism. This led to the development of international law between the Ottoman Empire and Christian states, on a footing of reciprocity and diplomacy. This process of mutual recognition finally resulted in Turkey's induction into Europe's state system (the Concert of Europe) with the Treaty of Paris in 1856, following the Crimean War. The Treaty only formalized a long process of integration, but without concluding it. The European powers acknowledged that the Ottoman Empire was a member of the Concert of Europe and committed themselves to respect the Empire's independence and territorial integrity. Contrary to the desire of Ali Pasha, then

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[8] Thomas Naff, "The Ottoman Empire and the European States System," in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) p. 143.

[9] For homogeneous and heterogeneous international systems, see Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, trans. from French, Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox (Malabar, FL: R.E. Krieger, 1981) pp. 100-02, 147-49.

[10] Adda B. Bozeman, *The Future of Law in a Multicultural World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971) pp. 82-84.

205

foreign minister, however, they refrained from formally accepting that the Empire was essential to the European balance of power.[11]

Turkey's integration process with Europe has undoubtedly been one of the major Ottoman legacies. Despite its ups-and-downs, it has been a fundamental aspect of the internal and external policies of the Republic. Turkey's alignment with NATO, memberships in the Council of Europe and the European Customs Union and Turkey's admission as a European Union membership candidate in the EU's 1999 Helsinki Summit have all been cornerstones in that yet-unfinished process.

INTERNAL REFORMS

The origins of "system penetration" between Turkey and Western Europe should also be sought in the Ottoman and Republican efforts to modernize. By the second half of the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire was a weakening state with shrinking territory, nationalist upheavals and decaying institutions. The decline was particularly noticeable in the military field. The recognition of the superiority of European military techniques and organization prepared the necessary ground for cultural, administrative and political borrowings from the West. The modern army needed officers trained in Westernized military schools, where, to a certain extent, they became familiar not only with new military techniques, but also with the Western way of life and Western culture and ideas.[12] Thus, the military emerged as the prime Westernizing force in modern Turkish history. The administrative and political modernization continued through the constitutional monarchies of 1876 and 1908. It culminated in the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the secularizing reforms of Atatürk, who had been educated in imperial military schools and had served on many fronts as a distinguished officer of the imperial army.

It is noteworthy that Ottoman statesmen were also aware of the close connection between domestic reform and foreign affairs and, at times, used domestic policy reforms with a view to reinforcing their foreign policies. Reforms served as "an element

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[11] Davison, p. 184.
[12] Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, "Officers: Westernization and Democracy," in Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü and Heinz Kramer, eds., *Turkey and the West, Changing Political and Cultural Identities* (London: Tauris, 1993) pp. 19-34.

206

of policy in Ottoman relations with Europe."[13] They used the policy of reform in two different ways. At times, they exploited it in order to attract foreign support. For example, the promulgation of a constitutional monarchy in 1876 was viewed as a means of gaining Western European support against Russia. Sometimes, however, in demonstrating their commitment to modernization, Turks hoped to avert European interference. This was particularly the case in measures taken to improve the legal status of their Christian subjects.[14] That Ottoman experience has left a negative imprint on the mindset of the political elite of modern Turkey. In the context of Turkey-European Union relations, one can often come across politicians and bureaucrats who emphasize that Turkey is trying to improve its human rights record not to appease Europeans, but for Turkey's own good. Moreover, despite the fact that Turkey is a party to most of the international human rights conventions that recognize the right of all the participants to monitor the implementation and violation of human rights in each signatory country, Turkish politicians often tend to shun this provision and adopt an intolerant attitude towards foreign human rights interventions, claiming the matter is one of Turkey's domestic jurisdiction.

LIBERALIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY AND THE MILITARY

After the First World War, the Turks fought against Western occupation. The aim of the War of Independence, however, was not to alienate the country from Western principles of government or socio-economic systems.[15] The objective, on the contrary, was to create a nation-state with a Western type of polity as soon as the danger of Western occupation was removed. The Republic, therefore, confined itself to central Anatolia and Eastern Thrace, where the majority of the population was Turkish-speaking; and it repudiated revisionist doctrines such as pan-Islamism. Although the Republican elite, including the military, blamed the expansionist tendencies of European powers, the West as such continued to occupy its privileged place as a unique source of

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[13] Naff, p. 169.
[14] J.P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) p. 52.
[15] Mehmet Gönlübol, "A Short Appraisal of the Foreign Policy of the Turkish Republic," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* (1974) p. 14.

207

inspiration in their minds.[16] The ultimate goal was to integrate the Turkish people within the Western community of nations. In their eyes, "there was only one civilization, the Western one, and they would join it in spite of the West."[17] Wars and Western attempts to invade the Turkish lands would not prejudice the profound sentiment of being an integral part of the West. Nevertheless, despite their attachment to the West, the Turkish elite and the military continued to harbor a certain distrust of the West. At times, in their analysis of current affairs, they underlined the lingering European prejudice against Turks and the "unchanged Western objective of disintegrating Turkey."[18] Such a paradoxical viewpoint continued to complicate Turkish political elite's and officers' conception of the West.

In foreign policy, the principle formulated by Atatürk—"Peace at home, peace abroad"—became the cornerstone of Turkey's conduct in external relations. This implied a policy based on the maintenance of the status quo and on the survival of a relatively homogeneous national state with a clear Turkish identity. For this reason, the Turks have always been very sensitive about the Treaty of Lausanne and have vehemently opposed any development that might disrupt the "balances" established by that treaty. In line with this thinking, Atatürk decided to cut his country's traditional ties with the Arab world, and Republican Turkey distanced itself from Middle Eastern politics. From 1923 to 1941, Turkey's main preoccupation was to balance cautiously the measures taken by the revisionist powers and to consolidate its security by a series of agreements and pacts of non-aggression with its neighbors and with European powers. Two prominent examples of this policy were the successful reconciliation with Greece in 1930 and, in response to the Italian threat, the conclusion of the Balkan Pact with Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania in 1934.

Nonetheless, certain developments that have been taking place in Turkey since the early 1950s have been gradually affecting the Republican elite's (and officers') conception of international relations by introducing elements of cosmopolitanism and

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[16] Karaosmanoğlu, p. 29-31.
[17] Ferenc A. Vali, *Bridge across the Bosporus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971) p. 56.
[18] Colonel (ret.) Burhan Göksel, *Hatira ve Misalleriyle Askeri Tarihin Milli Egitim ve Kültüründeki Yeri ve Önemi* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Baskanligi, 1983) p. 7.

208

liberalism. After the Second World War, democratization became an indispensable element of Westernization. The first significant development, in this regard, was Turkey's transition to a multi-party regime in 1950 and its alignment with NATO in 1952. Beyond the Soviet threat after the Second World War, Turkey's decisiveness in joining NATO derived mostly from a profound belief in Western values and in the virtues of Western political systems. NATO membership solidified Ankara's Western orientation by establishing a long-lasting institutional and functional link with the West. As Bernard Lewis pointed out, "The Turkish alignment with the West is not limited to strategic and diplomatic considerations. It is the outward expression of a profound internal change extending over a century and a half of Turkish history and sustained attempt to endow the Turkish people with those freedoms, economic, political and intellectual, which represent the best that our Western societies have to offer."[19]

Most high-ranking military officers either visited or served in various NATO headquarters and in the United States. Such experiences abroad have given these officers an international outlook and contributed to their sense of professionalism. Although their major priorities are strategic and defense-oriented in character in dealing with their foreign colleagues, their commitment to maintaining their country's ties with the West prevent them from overlooking Western views on political matters, including Turkey's problems with democratization. Yet, it is still difficult to say that these officers have overcome all the misunderstandings and differences of opinion with their colleagues in Allied countries. Given Turkey's peculiar geo-political setting, their approach to NATO is at times dominated by a purely national and regional outlook.

The second important development took place in the 1980s. The civil government of the Motherland Party, which came to power in the 1983 elections, made significant efforts to integrate with the world economy and to alter the state-controlled, protectionist economic structure of the country and to promote enterpreneurial interests. President Özal, a firm believer in economic liberalism, placed emphasis on international economic interdependence. Economic liberalization facilitated Turkey's joining the European Customs Union in 1995 and its EU

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[19] Bernard Lewis, "Modern Turkey Revisited," *Humanities* (May/June 1990) p. 15.

209

candidacy in 1999. Although it may take years to complete the task of liberalization, the policies adopted have already had significant effects on Turkey's foreign policy. The rising importance of economic considerations in external affairs has increased the role of enterpreneurial groups and managerial elites in foreign policymaking and introduced a significant element of transnationalism into the outlook of the traditional foreign and security policy elite.

The liberalization of the economy has also had an impact on the defense industry. Earlier, there was a total lack of cooperation between the public and private sectors. Almost all the plants were owned and operated by the armed forces and by a state economic enterprise—the Machinery and Chemicals Industries Agency. The readiness on the part of the military to cooperate with the private sector has led many Turkish and foreign firms to look for possibilities of investment in Turkey. The intensification of business relations between the private sector and the armed forces is likely to moderate the military's state-centric conception of internal and international politics.

The end of the Cold War also led to fundamental changes in Turkey's national security culture and in the approach of the civilian and military elites to international affairs. Ankara began to exert influence in Central Asia, the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Balkans. This constituted a significant shift from its previous policies of non-involvement. After the Cold War, Turkey began to pay particular attention to regional cooperative security and multilateralism in foreign affairs. Its interest in cooperative security and multilateralism extended from its willing involvement in the Gulf War and participation in peace operations to the initiation of regional arrangements such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The Gulf War deeply affected old patterns of behavior by involving Ankara in an inter-Arab conflict. One guiding principle of Republican Turkey's policy towards the Middle East was to refrain from intervening or taking sides in local conflicts. Moreover, Ankara was very reluctant to accept any extension of NATO's area of responsibility. In the post-Cold War strategic environment, however, new perspectives on foreign policy began to be reflected in the thinking of the Turkish elites, and this change in viewpoint became evident during the Gulf War. President Turgut Özal unequivocally sided with the anti-Iraq coalition and

210

the United Nations over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Ankara's contribution to Allied operations included the prompt and effective closure of the Iraqi oil pipeline to the Mediterranean, the granting of permission for Turkish airbases to be used in mounting offensive operations against Iraq, the deployment of nearly 150,000 Turkish troops in the area bordering Iraq to tie down substantial numbers of Iraqi troops in the North and participation in NATO naval operations (patrolling and searching for mines) for the purpose of maintaining the Security of the Sea Lines of Communications security in the Mediterranean. Turkey's vigorous support of the coalition effort underlined once again the geo-strategic significance of Turkey and reconfirmed the convergence of security interests between Turkey and the West.

The Gulf War also had an impact on civil-military relations. On 3 December 1990, in the heat of the Gulf crisis, the Chief of General Staff, General Necip Torumtay, resigned his office because he found Özal's "unconventional" way of dealing with the Gulf crisis unacceptable. Although most of the Turkish press reported that the departure of the general was a "warning" to President Özal because of his Gulf policy, politicians regarded it as a "democratic act." General Torumtay's response to speculations made by the press confirmed that his resignation would not bring about a military-civilian conflict:

> There is no conflict between the military and civilian officials. The Turkish Armed Forces commanders know very well that the civilian authority has always the final word. The Army knows where it stands... Of course, in meeting with civilian officials differences of opinion will arise. But this is only to be expected.[20]

In the past, fundamental disagreements between military and civilian governments had led to military takeovers three times but not to resignations of the chiefs of General Staff. In his brief letter of resignation, Torumtay stated that the principles he believed in and his conception of government did not permit him to continue serving in his post.[21] In his memoirs, he clarified what exactly he had meant in his letter of resignation. He underlined, as the major reason for leaving the office President Özal's derogation from the established governmental and bureaucratic

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[20] *Dateline*, 15 December 1990, p. 2.
[21] Necip Torumtay, *Memoirs of General Torumtay* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayinlari, 1994) p. 130.

procedures by keeping the military out of the decisionmaking and crisis-management processes during the Gulf crisis. Torumtay was also critical of the government which, according to him, had no preparation for such a contingency and made no efforts to decide on a clear political objective for the country's involvement in the Gulf crisis. He pertinently argued that, without a political objective defined by the civilian government, the General Staff could not develop a military strategy.[22] Despite the chief of General Staff's resignation, however, other high-ranking officers did not make any declarations criticizing the government or President Özal.

Turkey's new activist multilateralism within NATO is also affecting the elite's outlook. Ankara is enthusiastically contributing to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programs. For example, Turkey has established a PfP Training Center in Ankara. It participates in multinational military and naval exercises in the Black Sea region. It has initiated the creation of a Multinational Peace Force in Southeast Europe and a Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Force. Furthermore, Turkey actively participates in peace operations in the Balkans. The Turkish land forces participated in UN peacekeeping operations in Bosnia with a brigade. The navy participated in Operation Sharp Guard in the Adriatic, whose mission was to monitor and impose the arms embargo on former Yugoslavia. The air force joined NATO's Operation Deny Flight in Bosnia and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo with a squadron of F-16s. All these activities are contributing to the consolidation of Turkey's foreign and security policy elite's liberal understanding of international affairs.

There is a widely accepted view among NATO members that the function of the PfP is to orient its participants toward the core democratic values of the Atlantic Alliance. From this perspective, Turkish foreign and security policy elite believe that Turkey's membership in Western institutions, together with its "intercultural role as a stable bridge between Europe and the rest of Eurasia"[23] puts Turkey in a unique position to project Western values to the newly independent states in the Caucasus and

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[22] *ibid.*, pp. 109-13. See also Metin Heper, "Democracy in the Third Turkish Republic," *Armed Forces and Society*, 22, no. 4 (Summer 1996) pp. 627-29.
[23] Howard A Reed, "Özal, Turgut (1927-1993)," in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 277.

212

Central Asia. It is also believed that Turkey's new activism will, in turn, consolidate its own Western identity.

The military continues to consider itself as the guardian of the state, established and maintained according to Atatürk's Republican and secularist principles. In other words, the task of the armed forces is to protect the political and territorial integrity of the state as well as its secular character not only against external threats but also against its internal enemies. In the military's eyes, there are two fundamental internal enemies: one is the militant Islamist movements that threaten the secular character of the state; the other is the Kurdish separatist movement represented by the PKK. They, however, carefully distinguish the majority of Turkey's Kurdish citizens from the PKK, which is viewed as a terrorist organization.

One may argue that the military assigns the utmost importance to its internal missions and has no intention of giving them up completely in the near future. Therefore, according to the military, the politicians should not "display an attitude or make any suggestions or comments that will discourage, confuse, weaken or overshadow the determination of the Turkish Armed Forces to struggle against separatist or fundamentalist activities that target the country's security."[24]

Although the military still plays a decisive role in political decisions concerning any domestic or international issue, in those two matters, its general role in politics has certain boundaries. Furthermore, limitations imposed upon the military's political role tend to be increasingly effective. As the Torumtay incident has also demonstrated, the military is gradually accepting the supremacy of the civilian power.[25] The military, after three direct interventions (in 1960, 1971 and 1980), chose to wield influence in politics indirectly, especially through Turkey's National Security Council (NSC), which is a constitutional advisory body to the government. In terms of Article 118 of the 1982 Constitution, the NSC is composed of the prime minister, the chief of the General Staff, the ministers of national defense, internal affairs and foreign affairs, the commanders in chief of

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[24] "Military: Won't Tolerate Moves Aimed at Eroding Image," *Turkish Daily News Electronic Edition* at http://www.Turkishdailynews.com (21 March 1998); cited by Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000) p. 31.

[25] For the military's gradual acceptance of the supremacy of civilian rule, see William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994) pp. 287-88.

213

the army, navy and the air force and the general commander of the gendarmerie, under the chairmanship of the president of the Republic. The NSC submits to the Council of Ministers its recommendations on the formulation, establishment, and implementation of the national security policy of the state. The Council of Ministers, according to the same constitutional provision, should give priority consideration to the recommendations of the NSC.[26]

As one Turkish political scientist suggests, the Turkish military, contrary to most of the armed forces in the Third World, had adopted "a refined concept of autonomy," by which it controls politicians through constitutional mechanisms.[27] This reflects the intention of the military not to undermine the democratic regime by usurping civilian authority. Moreover, it is to be noted that the Turkish military enjoys the support of the vast majority of the population, including the media, particularly in its struggle against terrorism, separatism and Islamist extremism. For example, military operations against the PKK in southeastern Turkey as well as in northern Iraq have received unconditional support from the majority of the public and the media. It is equally important to note that these have been undertaken based upon a governmental decision in March 1995. On 25 April, Prime Minister Tansu Çiller told the Turkish Parliament that Turkish forces would intervene in northern Iraq again and again if required to destroy the PKK camps and logistic facilities there.[28]

Although the military is usually encouraged by the public and media to maintain its guardianship over territorial integrity, national unity and secularism, there is a widespread desire for further democratization in the public. Moreover, Turkey is facing considerable pressure from its Western allies for greater

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[26] Former President Süleyman Demirel, who has until recently served as the chairman of the NSC, defines the Council as a purely advisory body whose members, including those from the armed forces, provide the Council with their expertise and updated information on their respective fields of specialization rather than representing their own institutions. See Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, "Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Turkish Case," *Armed Forces and Society*, 26, no. 45 (2000). In early May 2000, the Turkish General Staff informed the government that the armed forces were in favor of an increase in the number of the civilian members of the NSC. See *Milliyet*, 9 May 2000, p. 19.

[27] Ümit Cizre Sakallioğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics*, 29, no. 2 (January 1997) p. 153.

[28] James Wyllie, "Turkish Objectives in Northern Iraq," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 7, no. 7 (July 1995) p. 307.

214

democratization. In this respect, European leverage has increased since Turkey's acceptance as a candidate for EU membership at the Helsinki Summit of December 1999. Traditionally being the leading promoter of Turkey's Western vocation, the military cannot remain insensitive to Western views in the area of democratization. A prominent example is constituted by the exclusion of the military judges from the State Security Courts. Since 1998, Turkey has been under pressure to reform the State Security Courts by acting in conformity with the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, which concluded that the presence of a military judge in the State Security Court was a violation of the principle of independence and impartiality of the judiciary, provided by the European Convention of Human Rights, of which Turkey is a signatory. In June 1999, the Turkish Parliament revised the Law of the State Security Courts and put an end to the presence of military judges and prosecutors. The trial of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan took place after this revision. President Demirel approved the revision by declaring that the Parliament had rid the country of one of its greatest burdens.[29]

Another area in which the military will continue to play a major role for some time is the defense budget and procurement policies. Parliamentary debates on technical defense matters are almost nonexistent. Defense budgets are usually approved by the Grand National Assembly without any opposition. The reason for this automaticity, however, stems more from the lack of interest of politicians than the assertiveness of the military. Turkish politicians have not, as a rule, professed great interest and inclination towards involvement in the technicalities of defense policy. They usually take office without knowledge of military strategy and weapon procurement problems. Thus, in most cases, the advice provided by the members of the General Staff plays a determining role. A growth in the role of civilian politicians in defense policy would then depend to a considerable extent on the improvement of their interest and knowledge in security and defense matters.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Ottoman Empire, the security culture evolved from offensive *realpolitik* to defensive *realpolitik*. In the Republic, the

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[29] *Briefing*, issue no. 1247 (21 June 1999) p. 7.

215

defensive non-involvement *realpolitik* was moderated by the adoption of liberal economic policies and an activist multilateralism in foreign policy in the 1990s.

During the last centuries of the Ottoman state, the imperial elite initiated the process of Westernization and adopted their state's formal integration with the European state system as a major foreign policy goal. The military played, and continues to play, a leading role in this process. Atatürk's Republican and secular reforms constituted a breakthrough in the Westernization process. They set Turkey on a course of no return by anchoring it in the realm of Western values. The military continues to regard itself as the guardian of the nation's vital interests, defined in terms of territorial integrity, national unity and secularism. It enjoys considerable public and media support in carrying out its mission in this restricted area. After the Second World War, Turkey accepted democratization within a multi-party system as an indispensable component of Westernization. Turkey's polity has yet to get over the paradox between the military's relative autonomy in politics on the one hand, and the consolidation of the democratic regime as an integral part of Westernization and a fundamental condition of being a full member of the European Union on the other.

Nevertheless, the present trend reflects that the military is gradually withdrawing from the political scene. There are several reasons for this process of disengagement: First, in the contemporary era, democratization cannot be disintegrated from Westernization. As the prime agent of Westernization, the military has been increasingly mindful of this historical development since the end of the Second World War. Second, the Turkish armed forces are proud of being a highly professional institution. The military knows quite well that its involvement in politics leads to an erosion of its professionalism as well as to a loss of their prestige, particularly among their colleagues abroad. Third, there is growing pressure for further democratization coming from public opinion and the liberal media. Fourth, a process of institutional integration with the West began after the Second World War by Turkey's membership in the Council of Europe and NATO. It was finally consolidated by its EU candidacy at the EU's Helsinki Summit in December 1999. The EU membership process is expected to promote further democratization and to gradually reduce the role of the military in politics.✤

216