



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of International Relations

**TURKEY'S BALKAN POLICY UNDER AK PARTY
AND
CLAIMS FOR NEO-OTTOMANISM**

Suat Beylur

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2013

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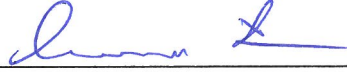
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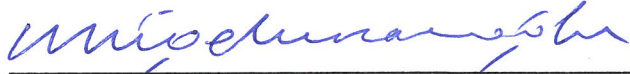
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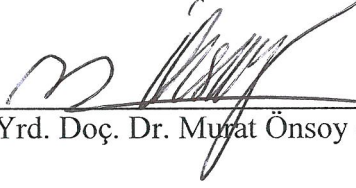
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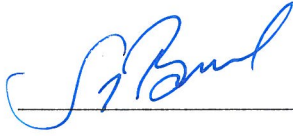
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ÖZET

Bu tez, Ahmet Davutođlu etkisiyle Őekillenen Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) dönemi Türkiye'nin Balkan politikasını incelemekte ve bu bağlamda kendisine yöneltilen neo-Osmanlıcı iddialarının doğru olup olmadığını, varsa ne oranda ve hangi alanlarda olduğunu ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Söz konusu amaca ulaşmak için öncelikle neo-Osmanlıcılık kavramının güncel politik anlamını kavramaya matuf Osmanlıcılıđın tarihi, siyasi ve entelektüel temelleri incelenmiştir. Sonra, AKP döneminde yeniden ortaya çıkan neo-Osmanlıcı iddialarının nedenlerini anlamaya katkı sağlayacağı düşüncesiyle sırasıyla Türk dış politikası analizi ve ardından Balkanların Osmanlı öncesi tarihine dair kısa bir giriş yapıldıktan sonra Osmanlı Devleti ve Türkiye'nin Balkan politikası ana hatları ile özetlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Sonraki bölümlerde ise ABD, AB, Ortadođu, Kafkasya ve Orta Asya gibi ana bölge ve konular üzerinden AKP dönemi Türk dış politikası“Stratejik Derinlik” doktrini bağlamında incelenmiştir. Daha sonra ise AKP dönemi Türkiye'nin Balkan ülkeleri ile siyasi, ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel ilişkileri detaylı olarak ele alınmıştır. Bunun yanında bu politikaların üst düzey ziyaretler, söylemler ve diđer kamu diplomasisi kapsamında deđerlendirilecek kurum ve kuruluşların faaliyetlerine nasıl yansıdığı üzerinde durulmuştur. En sonunda, bütün bu veri ve bilgiler üzerinden AKP'ye yöneltilen neo-Osmanlıcı iddiaların geçerli olup olmadığı deđerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: AKP, Balkanlar, Türk Dış Politikası, Türkiye'nin Balkan Politikası, neo-Osmanlıcılık, Stratejik Derinlik, Çok Boyutlu Dış Politika, Kamu Diplomasisi, Ahmet Davutođlu

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies Turkey's Balkan policy in the period of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) which is shaped by the Ahmet Davutoğlu's factor and, in this context aims to find out if Turkey's Balkan policy under AKP is neo-Ottomanist or not, and in which aspects and to what extent? In order to achieve that objective, historical, political and intellectual roots of Ottomanism for the purpose of better understanding of current political understanding of neo-Ottomanism were examined. Then, the Balkan policy of Ottoman Empire and Turkey was summarized with the main lines after analyzing Turkish foreign policy in general and giving a brief information about the pre-Ottoman Balkans history which are expected to provide some background to understand the grounds of claims of neo-Ottomanism reemerged in the period of the AKP.

In the subsequent chapters, Turkish foreign policy on the issues and regions such as the US, the EU, the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Central Asia were examined in the context of "Strategic Depth" doctrine. Afterwards, political, economic, social and cultural relations between Turkey and Balkan countries were handled in detail. In addition, it was put emphasis on how these policies reflect on high level visits, discourses and activities of foundations and institutions which can be considered as public diplomacy instruments. Finally, out of all of this data and information it is evaluated whether the claims for neo-Ottomanist oriented to the AKP are valid or not.

Key Words: AKP, The Balkans, Turkish Foreign Policy, Turkey's Balkan Policy, Neo-Ottomanism, Strategic Depth, Multidimensional Foreign Policy, Public Diplomacy, Ahmet Davutoğlu

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------------|---|
| AA : | Anadolu Ajansı |
| AKP: | Justice and Development Party |
| ANAP: | Motherland Party |
| BSEC: | Black Sea Economic Cooperation |
| BYEGM: | Directorate General of Press and Information |
| CHP: | Republican People's Party |
| COPD: | Coordination Office of Public Diplomacy |
| DEİK: | Foreign Economic Relations Board |
| DP: | Democratic Party |
| DPA: | Dayton Peace Agreement |
| EC: | European Council |
| ECHR: | European Court of Human Rights |
| EEC: | European Economic Community |
| EU: | European Union |
| EULEX: | European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo |
| FIPA: | Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| FP: | Virtue Party |
| FYROM: | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia |
| GSP: | Great Student Project |
| IRCICA: | Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture |
| KFOR: | Kosovo Force |
| MRF: | Movement for Rights and Freedoms |
| NATO: | North Atlantic Organization |
| NGO: | Non-governmental organization |
| OIC: | Organization of Islamic Conference |
| OSCE: | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| RP: | Welfare Party |
| SECI: | Southeast European Cooperative Initiative |
| SECP: | South East European Cooperation Process |
| SFOR: | Stabilization Force |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| SFRY: | Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia |
| SP: | Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe |
| TGNA: | Turkish Grand National Assembly |
| THY: | Turkish Airlines |
| TİKA: | Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency |
| TRNC: | Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus |
| TRT: | Turkish Radio and Television Cooperation |
| UCK: | Kosovo Liberation Army |
| UNDP: | United Nations Development Program |
| UNESCO: | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNPROFOR: | The United Nations Protection Force |
| USSR: | The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| YEI: | Yunus Emre Institute |
| YECC: | Yunus Emre Cultural Centre |
| YTB: | Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War has led to radical changes in the international system. This environment brought about new opportunities for the Turkish foreign policy as well as significant shifts. In this new international atmosphere, at the beginning of the 1990's, Turkey tried to pursue assertive and multidirectional foreign policy towards the Caucasia, the Central Asia, the Balkans, and the Middle East. This inclination to the regions where Turkey has long historical and cultural bonds was characterized as neo-Ottomanist. The traces of the change in the Turkish foreign policy at some extent have continued until the late 2000's with some changes under the shadow of political and economic instabilities.

Political and economic stability which was obtained with the AKP's rise to power reflected in the Turkish foreign policy with the new principles and strategies. In parallel to the poor relations with the EU (European Union) Turkey has pursued multi-faceted and multi-dimensional foreign policy in the Middle East, the Balkans and the other regions since 2009. This shift in Turkish foreign policy has come to be described as axis shift, rise of neo-Ottomanism or Islamization by some academicians, researchers, and columnists at home and abroad.

In the presence of AKP the interlocutor is Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's chief foreign policy advisor until 2009, and later became foreign minister. In his remarkable book called "Strategic Depth" Davutoğlu reinterprets the history and geography of Turkey in accordance with new international context which is made up of particularly September 11th, as analyzing Turkey's geopolitical and geostrategic position. This new approach predicts a new vision to the Turkish foreign policy which should consider historical legacy in all regions particularly in the Balkans and the Middle East.

During AKP rule, change in the Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans where the most vivid traces of Ottoman legacy can be seen can be handled in this connection. In

2009 which is described as “Balkan Opening” Turkey started intense political and economic cooperation with the Balkan states such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, and Macedonia. Turkey, on the one hand, undertook the role of order-instituting for the peace and stability in the region, while, on the other hand, made an effort to develop bilateral relations. To give an example, it is important to show the role and initiative that Turkey undertook in the Balkans regarding tripartite consultation meetings between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia and their fruitful results. Moreover, Turkey increased high level visits to the region and became more assertive in its discourses. In this period, there are also an explicit rise of Turkish institutions and foundations in terms of quality and quantity that carry out activities in the region. All these facts and developments in the Turkish Balkan policy are primary reasons to the claims for neo-Ottomanism. Davutoğlu’s Sarajevo address in 2009, which is given below hit record high these claims. From now on, discussions in this direction have continued both at home and abroad.

“Like in the 16th century, which saw the rise of the Ottoman Balkans as the center of world politics, we will make the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East, together with Turkey, the center of world politics in the future. This is the objective of Turkish foreign policy, and we will achieve this. We will reintegrate the Balkan region, the Middle East and the Caucasus, based on the principle of regional and global peace, for the future, not only for all of us but for all of humanity.”

“People are calling me neo-Ottoman, therefore I will not refer to the Ottoman state as a foreign policy issue. What I am underlining is the Ottoman legacy. The Ottoman centuries of the Balkans were success stories. Now we have to reinvent this.”¹

Starting from Davutoğlu’s address, this study aims to find out whether the claims for Turkey’s Balkan policy to be neo-Ottomanist have reasonable grounds or not. In order to achieve the goals of the study, the thesis seeks answers for the following questions;

¹Davutoğlu’s 2009 Sarajevo address, see at <http://www.esiweb.org/rumeliobserver/2010/12/04/multikulti-and-the-future-of-turkish-balkan-policy/> (Access:16.12.2012)

What are the principles and priorities of the Turkey's Balkan policy?

What are the similarities and differences of Turkey's Balkan policy between the periods of 1989-2002 and 2003-2011 in concern with claims of neo-Ottomanism?

What are the instruments of Turkey's Balkan policy under the AKP rule?

What are the reasons behind the claims of neo-Ottomanism?

Is Turkey's Balkan policy under the AKP neo-Ottomanist? If yes, in which aspects and to what extent?

For the purpose of this study while the latter was accepted, the focal countries will be Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo since the claims of neo-Ottomanism is particularly associated with these states. In addition, Greece and Bulgaria are also studied on the basis of Turkish minority. For this reason, these three countries were excluded when giving figures and data about the Balkan countries.

With regard to the concept of neo-Ottomanism which is used in this study, it mainly connotes proactive and assertive policies towards the former Ottoman space, mainly the Balkans under the AKP rule. Although, as a phenomenon, the intellectual roots of neo-Ottomanism goes back to the 19th century, it can be taken to the beginning of 15th century of the Ottoman Empire which is later called as "pax-Ottomana" in terms of social, cultural and economic life. The concept of neo-Ottomanism which is derived from the founder of Ottoman Empire evokes dislike for some because of its reference to the imperial past while, on the other hand, it is perceived in the context of social and cultural relations for the others. In this connection, this study is not basically interested in whether neo-Ottomanism is good or not, in fact, it is interested in whether there is any imperial intention in the AKP's social, cultural, political and economic relations with the countries in the Balkans.

Method of this study will be both analytical and comparative. Since this study mainly, deals with present time sources will be based on periodicals, articles and internet sources as well as books, surveys and reports.

The thesis is designed to have six main sections. The **second chapter** constitutes the theoretical framework of the study. In this chapter, historical, political and intellectual roots of neo-Ottomanism will be examined in three phases as follows, 1839-1912 period, 1989-2002 period (starting with former president Turgut Özal) and the AKP period (2002-2011). Afterwards, Turkish foreign policy from 1923 to 2000's will be briefly analyzed. The aim of the second chapter is to provide the possibility to more clearly understanding the rest of the study through the presentation of a theoretical basis.

Chapter 3 examines historical background of the Balkans in two phases in connection with its geo-cultural and geo-strategic significance. In the first phase, after giving a brief information about pre-Ottoman Balkan history, Ottoman settlement and expansion in the Balkans and its policy are discussed with respect to importance of the region. In the second phase in the historical background, Turkey's Balkan policy will be handled in three periods; inter-war period, cold war period and post cold period until AKP's come to power. Except the cold war era, Turkey has always strong interest in the Balkans both historical and political reasons. This interest in many ways has increased in the AKP rule.

Chapter 4 examines AKP's foreign policy with a wider aspect with Davutoğlu factor and tries to show changes in it on the basis of regions and issues such as relations with the EU and the US, Russia, the Caucasia and the Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Bringing a new vision to the initiative policy starting with Turgut Özal, AKP has started to pursue a dynamic, multidimensional and proactive policy based on doctrine of "Strategic Depth". Even though its effect and results are open to debate, it can be said that Turkey's relations with the EU, the USA, the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, Caucasia, and Russia have gained a momentum and transformation as a reflection of this new look. This multidimensional and assertive policy of AKP has attracted attention particularly in the Balkans and the Middle East and caused for claims that Turkey is walking away from the West and pursuing neo-Ottomanist policy since the two regions are the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. Against the claims of neo-Ottomanism, Davutoğlu states that Turkey is neither a passive country nor a bridge

between the West and Islamic countries anymore. In fact it is a regional power due to its geography, history and potential.

Chapter 5 examines Turkey's Balkan policy in terms of political, economic and cultural relations as giving importance to the discourses, mutual high level visits and perception of the countries in the Balkans. The aim of this chapter is to provide some statistics and analytical data to come to the findings for claims of neo-Ottomanism. Finally, in the **conclusion chapter**, all the above-mentioned discussion is summarized and findings of the study are given. With these features, this study is hoped to assist to understand Turkey's Balkan policy under AKP rule and find out if it is/ has neo-Ottomanist inclination or not. In this way, this study might be used to make estimations for the future, and also, be utilized as a base for the future academic researches in this field.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Neo-Ottomanism

Neo Ottomanism is a concept derived by referring to Ottomanness identity and concept of neo-Ottomanism which is often used to describe the shifts in the policy of Turkey, refers to Ottomanness identity and Ottomman idea. In order to come up with a definition of neo-Ottomanism it is necessary to look at the phenomenon of Ottomanness and historical, political and intellectual background of Ottomanism

Ottoman State became an Empire upon the conquest of Istanbul about 150 years after its establishment. This period was the beginning of the policies of embracing, protecting and peace providing which would be called later as “pax-Ottomana”² by Ottoman historians, in the framework of “millet system” towards all nations. Even though Turks were the main actor and Turkish was the dominant language in the army and some other institutions in the empire, all nations were set free to use their own religions and languages.³ In this context, the Ottomanness might be understood as an implicit identity which connotes that all nations of the Ottoman Empire had an Ottoman belonging as a supra-identity if not legally.

This implicit Ottoman identity was damaged during the period of decline and seriously weakened in the stagnation period especially after Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) in which the first land loss was experienced. Nationalist movements starting after the French revolution and its reflections on the empire was the last strike inflicted on the Ottomanness idea. Revolts and land losses which started in the early 19th century induced state administrators and intelligentsia to search some remedies. Proclamation of

²İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Barışı*, İstanbul, Ufuk Kitapları, 2004,p.1

³Ibid., pp.8-9

Tanzimat (1839) was one step taken in this direction. Ottomanism movement emerged in this environment as an approach that would ensure state integrity and public unity.⁴

Ottomanism is the idea of “considering different religious and ethnic groups living within the empire as a single Ottoman nation and uniting these components in the framework of a common empire ideal”⁵. Ottomanism, in its origin, implies adaptation of the fair administration system having sustained under the consciousness of Ottomanness for centuries to the 19th century. The idea of Ottomanism having been dominant during the period of 1839-1913 underwent four different phases.

The period of 1839-1875 that started with the Tanzimat Charter as the first phase is based on political pragmatism which aims to prevent separatist movements. Ideas of Sadık Rifat Paşa deemed as the ideologist of the Tanzimat orienting to ensure central authority determine core lines of this period. According to the Tanzimat Charter Sultan is the guarantee of ensuring all his national subjects living in fair and equal conditions without any religious and ethnic discrimination according to these borders.⁶ Following saying of Mahmut the Second is a reflection of this thought: “I just distinguish my subjects as Christians in the church, Jews in the synagogue and Muslims in the mosque.”⁷

Ottomanism of the period of 1868-1878 emerged as a reaction to authoritarian centralist policies of the Tanzimat. New Ottomans shifted the pragmatist Ottomanism thought having been executed until this period to an intellectual level in the constitutionalist framework. Islahat Fermanı dated 1856 recognized that all national subjects are legally equal by taking the Tanzimat Fermanı a step further with the concept of “citizen” which was officially used in the Ottoman state for the first time. These new regulations caused some unrest among Muslim Ottomans. New Ottomans, particularly Ali Paşa, Fuat Paşa, Mustafa Fazıl Paşa and Namık Kemal advocated that the way of removing Muslim/non-Muslim inequality was Constitutionalism (Meşrutiyet) by stating that

⁴Mehmet Köçer, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Türkçülük Akımının Ortaya Çıkması*, Elazığ, Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi Araştırmaları, Sayı: 3, 2003, p.11

⁵Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce Tarihi*, Cilt 1, Cumhuriyet Devreden Düşünce Mirası, Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi, 8. Baskı (İstanbul, İletişim, 2009) p.88

⁶Ibid.,pp. 92-96

⁷ Köçer, op.cit, p.11

Islahat Fermanı was proclaimed as a result of external pressures and made Muslim disadvantageous against minorities.⁸ The Ottoman Basic Law of 1876 (Kanun-i Esasi) is the most comprehensive official written text of Ottomanism. The policy dividing the society into the communities was left and the Ottoman identity was approached upon the statement included in the Basic Law of 1876 as follows: “Everyone in the nationality of Ottoman state is unexceptionally identified as Ottoman regardless of their religion and sect”.⁹ However, this new period with principles determined by the constitution would not be a remedy for dissolution of the Ottoman and, therefore the movement of New Ottomanism lost power in a short time.

The fact that the assembly that had been suspended in 1878 due to the Ottoman-Russian War was not opened in spite of the elapsed long time caused reaction of Ottoman politicians and intellectuals.¹⁰ Young Turks who emerged as an opposition against absolutism of Abdülhamit the Second is the third phase of Ottomanism. They were mainly influenced by the ideas discussed in Europe during this period. Having exposed to an attitude against the rights granted for minorities at the beginning, Young Turks formed in an anti-imperialist identity in time.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that there was a consensus among Young Turks led by the figures like Prince Sabahaddin, Abdullah Cevdet, Ahmet Rıza. In other words, there was no consensus on what was meant by the concept of Ottomanism. The only issue agreed on was that Basic Law should be re-enacted and the reorganization should be continued.¹²

The last phase of Ottomanism was experienced following the second Constitutional era proclaimed in 1908. In this period, political opinions were able to be freely written and discussed in newspapers by virtue of the constitution. Even this new environment could not help to cease the dissolution of the empire due the level of nationalist consciousness. Nevertheless, some intellectuals, such as Süleyman Nazif Bey and Mustafa Sati Bey as well as some opposition groups continued to advocate the idea of Ottomanism against

⁸Selçuk Akşin Somel, *ibid.*, p.104

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.105-106

¹⁰Sina Akşin, *Türkiye Tarihi 3, Osmanlı Devleti 1600-1908*, Ankara, Cem Yayınevi, 1988, pp. 163-165

¹¹Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türkler'in Siyasi Fikirleri, 1895-1908*, (15.Baskı), İstanbul, İletişim, 2008, p.307

¹²Somel, *op.cit.*, pp.107-108

Turkist, oppressive and authoritarian administration of the Union and Progress government.¹³

Ottomanist movements underwent three phases; Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism since 1830's. Foreign conjuncture and hasty pragmatist approaches in the period of identity formation as well as the absence of political and intellectual readiness can be seen as none of the forms of the Ottomanism had found consensus. Nevertheless, the movement of Turkism started with Young Turks and continued with the Union and Progress has constituted the intellectual base and political ground of the Republic of Turkey established after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Even though the Ottoman Empire ceased de facto after the end of the World War I, some continuity can be observed between the Ottoman State and the new Turkey established under the leadership of Ottoman military and intelligentsia stratum including the Union and Progress. This continuity "is clearly seen in institutional, political, demographic and international areas"¹⁴. From this point of view, abolition of the Sultanate by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) in 1922 is just a system transformation. Indeed, the former administration was transformed into the Republican regime proclaimed in 1923.¹⁵ Despite all, the idea of being Ottoman was largely ignored and marginalized with "Turkish History Thesis" and the "Sun Language Theory".¹⁶ Building a consciousness of Turkishness was based on eliminating the Ottoman idea. This approach which can be defined as "dismissal of the heritage" had generally continued until 1980's with exception of Cyprus Peace Operation in 1974 which can be considered the starting point of the accusation of neo-Ottomanism from the Greek side.

Identity discussions started with the new period under prime ministry of Turgut Özal in 1983 and some international events like collapse of the Eastern Block in 1989 and dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1990's consequence let the idea of being Ottoman has

¹³*Ibid.*, pp110-113

¹⁴ A. Nuri Yurdusev, "Osmanlı Mirası ve Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine", *Yeni Dönemde Türk Dış Politikası, Uluslar arası IV. Türk Dış Politikası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, (Ed: Osman Bahadır Dinçer, Habibe Özdal, Hacali Necefoğlu), Ankara, USAK, 2010, pp.47-53

¹⁵ İlber Ortaylı, "Osmanlı Bizde Yaşıyor", *İlber Ortaylı ile Tarihin Sınırlarına Yolculuk*, (Haz: Mustafa Armağan), İstanbul, Ufuk Yayınları, 2001, p.157

¹⁶Şaban H.Çalış, *Hayalet Bilimi ve Hayali Kimlikler, Neo-Osmanlılık, Özal ve Balkanlar*, Konya, Çizgi Kitabevi, 2001. p. 81

emerged once again in the Turkish politics.¹⁷ Dynamic and initiative foreign policy implemented by Özal towards the former Soviet space and the Balkans especially after 1989 when he became the President, and his discourse based on “Turk-Islam synthesis” caused some reactions with the claims of “Ottoman reflex” at home and abroad. In this period, there was always a reference to the Ottomans in Özal’s discourses on the issues such as Turkic world, developments in the Balkans, and the Gulf Crisis.¹⁸ Beside discourses, Özal’s will to be involved in the Gulf War was remarkable due to his idea of recovering Mosul and Kirkuk regions.¹⁹ Debates on discourse and policies of Özal which may be defined as Ottomanist were continued around the concept of neo-Ottomanism created by Cengiz Çandar²⁰ who is a close friend and supporter of him.

Neo-Ottomanism of Cengiz Çandar considers the Republic of Turkey as the successor of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, existence of Turkey and being a significant actor in regional and global level would depend on the establishment of very close relationships with countries founded in the former Ottoman space.²¹ More specifically, neo-Ottomanism is neither invader nor chauvinistic nor nationalist even though it relies on an imperial background. Turkey should play an active role on the lands inherited from the Ottoman by developing a more cosmopolite identity by going a step further than Ottomans.²²

Some authors and academicians like Hadi Uluengin, Zeynep Göğüş and Nur Vergin also supported multi dimensional and active policies of Özal and advocated neo-Ottomanist thought of Cengiz Çandar. Another group gathered around “Ağaç Yayıncılık” led by Bekir Şahin reacted to the use of Ottomanism idea supported by them for years by combining with an “alafranka” word “Neo” and started the initiative of “Nev Ottomans” with a Persian prefix against neo-Ottomanists. Nev Ottomanists who said that neo-Ottomanism is an empty claim argued with conjectural and political

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.88

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.119

¹⁹ Berdal Aral, Dispensing with Tradition ? Turkish Politics and Özal’s Decade (1983-93), *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.37, No:1, Jan.2001, pp.72-88

²⁰ Cengiz Çandar, “Türk Dış Politikasının Değişmeyecek Hiçbir Hükümü Olamaz”, *Mülakatlarla Türk Dış Politikası*, Cilt-2 (Ed:H.Özdamar, O.B. Dinçer, M.Yeğin), Ankara, USAK, 2010, p.115

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.114

²² *Ibid.*, p.163

realities supported a form of Ottomanism in cultural sense. After a short period of time, they have withdrawn from these disputes and disappeared.²³

Similar discourses, though with a more Turkist emphasis continued especially towards Caucasus and the Central Asia, however concrete policies could not be generated during the period of Süleyman Demirel who became the president after Özal in 1993. It is also possible to see an Ottomanist aspect in both domestic and foreign policy approach of the chairman of the Welfare Party, Necmettin Erbakan who had an Islamic background after Özal Era. This approach may be seen in the words "...creation of the Greater Turkey as the Ottomans did..." stated by Erbakan as the foreign policy goal at the 5th Congress of the Welfare Party in 1997.²⁴ Disputes on neo-Ottomanism fell off the agenda for some time during the period after the closure of Welfare Party in 1998.

In the light of the discussions above, it can be said that claims of neo-Ottomanism for the Turkish foreign policy started with Özal (1989-1993) and was carried on by Demirel (1993-2000) especially for the Middle East and the Central Asia since Turkey set a vision to have initiative in the mentioned regions that contradicts Turkish traditional pro-Western stance.²⁵

AKP which came to power in 2002, has ensured political and economic stability in a short time; taken significant steps for accession of the EU by taking advantage of the period started with 1999 Helsinki Summit; established good relationships with Syria and Iran; carried out some policies different from the United States (US) as seen in the rejection of the US demands to use Turkish military bases against Iraq with the resolution of March 1 of 2003 and strong reaction against Israel in the Palestine question. These unfamiliar policies of AKP's Turkey and development of relations with the countries and communities in the territories of former Ottoman Empire by emphasizing on the common history and cultural bonds based on Ahmet Davutoğlu who was the backstage foreign policy maker and foreign policy chief advisor of the Prime Minister led neo-Ottomanist arguments to be directed towards AKP at that time.

²³ *Ibid.*, p154-157

²⁴ M.Hakan Yavuz, Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo Ottomanism, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 7:12, 1998, p.23

²⁵ Alexander Murinson, Turkish Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century, *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, Vol:97, Sept. 2012, pp.7-15

In this period, some columnists and observers supported the vision of the AKP while some others argued that these policies would drift Turkey to a dangerous adventure in the disputes that restarted inside and outside the country in 2003.

At the beginning of these discussion, the columnist and chief editor of the newspaper *Hürriyet*, Ertuğrul Özkök stated that he supports active foreign policy of AKP and emphasized that a more imperial policy should be followed in the post-Ottoman space in his commentary titled “yes, we have an eye on abroad” dated August 19 of 2003.²⁶

The author of the newspaper *Yeni Şafak* Ali Bayramoğlu criticized this article of Özkök ironically a day after in his commentary named “The Game of Neo-Ottomanism” and considered such an approach dangerous by reminding “Enver Pasha Syndrome”.²⁷

One year after these discussions, Michael Rubin, senior scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and senior editor of the *Middle East Quarterly*, drew attention to the foreign policy of AKP that moves away from the US and tends towards EU and Islamic world in his commentary entitled “The Problems of neo-Ottomanism”, argued that Turkish foreign policy is neo Ottomanist by giving reference to some articles published in the press of the Balkan and the Middle East countries including above mentioned comment of Ali Bayramoğlu.²⁸ Hereafter, neo-Ottomanist arguments oriented towards Turkish foreign policy by some foreign politicians, academicians, journalists and observers have gradually increased especially during the second term of AKP with Ahmet Davutoğlu who was appointed as a foreign minister in 2009.

Sylvie Gangolf, Analyst of *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien*, argues that claims of neo-Ottomanism towards Turkish foreign policy are mainly based on some perception and prejudices in some Balkan countries such as Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria. They believe that Turks still have some irresistible desires to conquer the Balkans and Christian lands like in the old days. Another view which is

²⁶ Ertuğrul Özkök, *Evet Dışarda Gözümüz Var*, see at <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/printnews.aspx?DocID=166113> (Access: 12.01.2012)

²⁷ Ali Bayramoğlu, *Yeni Osmanlılık Oyunu*, see at <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/agustos/20/abayramoglu.html> (Access:12.01.2012)

²⁸ Michael Rubin, *Shifting Sides? The Problems of Neo-Ottomanism*, see at <http://www.meforum.org/628/shifting-sides> (Access: 12.01.2012)

mostly accepted is that Turkey, in its Balkan policy has always prioritized Turkish and Muslim minorities as seen in the examples of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, etc. Because of this perception whenever Turkey has taken any initiative in the Balkans is met skepticism and caused for claims of neo-Ottomanism²⁹

Inside Turkey, in parallel to current mainstream opinion which supports Davutoğlu's statements, Baskin Oran says "Turkey's Balkan policy is neither new and neo-Islamist nor purely neo-Ottoman. Not neo-Islamist because Turkey is equally concerned with the Balkans, Greece and Europe as it is with the Middle East..." by drawing attention to the similarity between AKP's and Ataturk's westernist foreign policy".³⁰ Being at the centre of these claims and discussions, Davutoğlu describes "the claims of neo-Ottomanism for Turkish foreign policy as an ill-intentioned approach against Turkey" and states that the foreign policy being followed is a natural and indispensable tendency towards the Balkans where Turkey have historical, cultural and kinship bonds which had been ruptured for a long term.³¹

In conclusion, neo-Ottomanism is an expression to define the Turkish foreign policy towards the neighboring regions that were within the territories of the former Ottoman space which is asserted to be intrusive. In this context it is seen that neo-Ottomanism discussions based on the formation of 19th century Ottomanism have been oriented to first, foreign policy of Turgut Özal and later, AKP rule with ten-year of interval since 1990's.

There are several understandings of the concept of neo-Ottomanism which are differs from each other both inside and abroad. Some asserts that neo-Ottomanism itself has an imperial sense since it refers to the Ottoman Empire while others consider it in the sense of cultural and historical background in terms of "pax-Ottomana" as well as

²⁹Sylvie Gangloff – The impact of Ottoman legacy on Turkish policy in the Balkans (1991-1999) at <http://www.ceri-sciences-po.org>(Access: 12.02.2012)

³⁰ Baskin Oran, Turkey's Foreign Policy in a Changing World, *International Conference*, Oxford 30 April, 2 May, 2010

³¹Ahmet Davutoğlu, Neo-Osmanlı Yakıştırması Kötü Niyetli, see at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/18601714.asp> (Access:12.01.2012)

multidimensional and initiative policy .³² While this study accepts the latter the former also will be taken into account in some aspects.

Besides understanding of the concept, there are also some similarities and differences in the internal and external factors of the two periods. These include the new opportunities provided for Turkey by the collapse of the Eastern Block and developments in the Middle East and increase in the need for Turkey in search for security after September 11, political and economic stability ensured at home in both periods and lastly the similarity between the leadership characteristics and vision of Özal and Erdoğan. The main difference in foreign policies of these two periods is that AKP period is more organized and developed in the context of policy implementation and institutionalization. Another difference with respect to the regional priorities is that the period of Özal was mainly concerns with the Middle East and Caucasia and Central Asia while in the period of AKP the Balkans took the place of the Caucasia and the Central Asia.

2.2. An Overview of Turkish Foreign Policy

There are four main factors influencing Turkish foreign policy. These may be classified as historical dimension, cultural dimension, strategic dimension and internal structural dimension. Historical dimension implies that the Republic of Turkey is the successor of the Ottoman Empire in several fields, primarily diplomacy and displays similar reflexes. Cultural dimension implies that it holds common traces of Asia, Europe and the Middle East with which it has social and cultural bonds as a result of the historical dimension and expresses the identity search experienced among these three civilizations even though it had faced towards the West for about two centuries. Strategic dimension expresses the opportunities though with risks gained in the perspective of Europe, the Balkans, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Caucasus primarily resulting from

³² Mümtazer Türköne, New Ottomans, see at <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-229969-new-ottomans.html>(Access:07.02.2012)

its geographical position. Social dimension expresses the influence of ethnic, religious and cultural parameters of the society in the foreign policy.³³

According to the common acceptance, Turkish foreign policy, beginning from its establishment until today can be examined in four different periods in context of internal and external developments as follows; 1923-1938 period (Atatürk era), 1938-1947 period, 1947-1989 period (the Cold War period), and 1989-.... (the post-Cold War period).

Atatürk period is an era in which the newly established state had to confront and overcome a number of internal and external problems. In this period, an internal transformation was experienced on one hand while the problems remained from Lausanne tried to be solved on the other hand. In that sense, it would be wrong to evaluate the foreign policy of Atatürk period independent from the domestic policy as it is seen in the Mosul question.³⁴

Atatürk had solved the problems remained from Lausanne with the neighbors until 1930's and then sought for ways of regional collaboration. In this context, he played a critical role in the establishment of Balkan Pact and Sadabad Pact in order to balance expansionist policies of Italy and Germany and to maintain status quo and peace in the region in case of war. Montreux Convention on the Straits and the inclusion of Hatay in Turkey are also foreign policy successes of Atatürk. His principle "Peace at home, Peace in the world" essentially reflects an attitude towards foreign interventions even though it is perceived as a status quo approach when considering his independent foreign policy and the ability of taking initiative in the region.³⁵

The period of 1938-1947 was term in which the World War II and postwar regulations had taken place. Having seen that the war was rapidly getting close, Turkey sought for ways of cooperating with England and France against revisionist Italy and Germany. The main aim of foreign policy was to keep Turkey away from the war even though an

³³ Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Kuramsal Çerçevesi", *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, 15.Baskı,(Ed: Baskın Oran), Cilt I, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2009, pp. 20-28

³⁴ Türel Yılmaz, "Türkiye Alternatif Bir Dış Politika Düşünemez", *Mülakatlarla Türk Dış Politikası*, Cilt 2, (Ed: Habibe Özdal, Osman Bahadır Dinçer, Mehmet Yeğin), Ankara, USAK, 2010, p.319

³⁵ *Ibid.*,pp.319-320

alliance agreement was signed with these two countries upon the increased the Soviet threat. This aim was successfully realized by use of strategic position of Turkey and the balance of powers policy. This foreign policy which was executed far beyond the political, military and economic power of the period is defined as a success of Turkish diplomacy.³⁶ Security problems of Turkey did not come to an end even in the postwar period. Turkey started to search a new foreign policy based on an “anti-Soviet” discourse in parallel to “achieve access to warm waters” policies of Soviet Russia. This search became a crucial factor in leading Turkey to select Western side in the bipolar system which was being formed.³⁷

Increasing pressure of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on Turkey and the threat of communism to Greece which was in a civil war led the US to accept Truman Doctrine that specifies military aid for Turkey and Greece. Truman Doctrine ceased security search and isolation of Turkey after the war while it started the Cold War. Later, Turkey acquired economic aid within the framework of Marshall Plan.³⁸ Following this period, Turkey was rapidly walked into integration with Euro-Atlantic organizations, primarily European Council (EC) and NATO (North Atlantic Organization), and applied for the membership of the EEC (European Economic Community). For a long time, NATO, far beyond its aspect of being a defense organization was seen a major instrument for Turkish policy and the US as a closest ally. Status quo policy which was western oriented continued between the years of 1950-1960 when the multi-party system started. The US and the United Kingdom (UK) were effective in the initiatives in which Turkey has taken a leading part in the Middle East and the Balkans and a security cordon was desired to be created against the USSR during this period. Among these initiatives, Baghdad Pact has seriously injured the prestige of Turkey in the Middle East in terms of its results.³⁹ Similarly, the fact that Turkey opposed to the Non-Aligned Movement and voted against independence

³⁶ Mücahit Özçelik, İkinci Dünya Savaşında Türk Dış Politikası, *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Sayı: 29/2, 2010, pp.253-259

³⁷ Mustafa Türkes, “Dış Politika Sadece Güvenlik Politikalarından İbaret Değildir”, *Mülakatlarla Türk Dış Politikası*, Cilt 2, (Ed: Habibe Özdal, Osman Bahadır Dinçer, Mehmet Yeğin), Ankara, USAK, 2010, pp.250-252

³⁸ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*, London, Franc Cass Publishers, 2002, pp 113-116

³⁹ Graham E.Fuller, *Yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti: Yükselen Aktör*, (Çev: Mustafa Acar), İstanbul, Timaş, 2008, pp.76-78

movements in the United Nations (UN) are also exemplary events of Turkish foreign policy of this period.

Turkey's intervention in Cyprus, when the tension in the island increased towards mid-1960's was harshly suppressed by the warning of the US known as "Johnson Letter". This attitude of the US shocked Turkey who was the most devoted partner of the US. In addition to this, the new atmosphere comes with "détente" and caused "Jupiter missiles" to be removed from Turkey displayed that Turkey lost its importance in the eyes of West while at the same time caused it to review its foreign policy. After that date, Turkey objected to some demands of the USA and tried to improve its relations with the USSR and the Middle East countries.⁴⁰ 1970 and 1980 military interventions and internal events experienced before and after them resulted in insubstantial execution of Turkish foreign policy of this era. 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation made the Cyprus Question the core foreign policy problem of Turkish-Greek relations which has been continued until today as the most significant event of the era. With regard to the study it can be said that Cyprus Peace Operation was a challenge to the international system. It is also the starting point of the claims of neo-Ottomanism since caused concerns and reactions from the Greek side.⁴¹

After the 1980 Military Coupe, Özal's Motherland Party (ANAP) came to power in 1983. In this period the frosty relations with USA which was damaged by Turkish military intervention of Cyprus began to thaw. In fact, Turkey has undergone a great transformation in a number of areas with Özal in the Turkish foreign policy. Being defined as a deviation from Kemalist ideology, this period initiated liberalization and multi-dimensional foreign policy with leadership personality of Özal. Establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) under the leadership of Turkey and active participation in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the intensifying relations with the EEC may be considered as some examples of multifaceted foreign

⁴⁰Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey, Challenges of Continuity and Change*, New York, Routledge Curzon, 2005, pp160-210

⁴¹Yiorgos Leventis, The Syrian Unrest and Broader Repercussions, see at http://www.cceia.unic.ac.cy/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=251&Itemid=251 (Access:08.05.2012)

policy. Özal improved relations with Europe as well as with the Middle East while he tried to reduce dependency to the US and NATO.⁴²

The Post Cold War era forced Turkey to take initiative in the Caucasia, the Central Asia, the Balkans and the Middle East. The collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia led Turkey to discover its sister and relative communities and improve relations with them in the Central Asia while Gulf Crisis led it to enter in the Middle East politics more actively.⁴³ Özal considered these developments around Turkey as favors “which might be granted by the God once in 400 years” and stated that Turkey should make use of these opportunities. Statements of Özal in a speech made in 1992 – “Turkey was established on a great heritage of the Ottoman Empire, Turkic world and Muslim countries were looking for support and assistance of Turkey and 21st century would be the era of Turkey” – are so significant in terms of highlighting a great vision of Özal.⁴⁴ This approach later on, resulted in asserting to Özal as a neo-Ottomanist.

After Özal until early 2000s was the period in which the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) attacks increased on one hand and economic and political instability was dominant on the other hand, inside. The foreign policy area was full of the events like disappointment experienced by the states in the Central Asia and the Caucasia due to the failure in meeting the discourse of “from Adriatic to Great Wall of China”, seek for security due to the tension in the Middle East, increasing crisis with Greece on Aegean Sea and Cyprus and ups and downs with the EU. It cannot be ignored that in some aspects, there was continuity in the foreign policy started by Özal in spite of all these unfavorable developments experienced at home and abroad. For example, arresting of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and delivering him to Turkey in 1999, recognition of Turkey as a candidate country for the EU in the Helsinki Summit are some foreign policy successes of this period. Particularly, the process initiated with the EU has been ongoing as a driving element of the Turkish foreign policy until today.

⁴²Muhittin Ataman, *Özalist Dış Politika: Aktif ve Rasyonel Bir Anlayış*, see at <http://www.bilgidergi.com/uploads/2003Ataman.pdf>

⁴³ F.Staphen Larabee and Ian O.Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, Pittsburgh, Rand, 2003, pp. 3-5

⁴⁴ Çalış, *op.cit*, pp.148-150

In conclusion, it can be said that Turkish foreign policy had been generally western oriented and status quo and regional policies had been executed by means of the organizations like NATO, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), BSEC, and OIC defined as “strategic instruments” beginning from 1923 to 2000’s. Another noteworthy issue in terms of the subject matter of this study is that Turkey did not have a planned and applicable policy towards sister and relative communities as if Turkish minorities, Muslim and relative communities in the Balkans, the Caucasia, the Central Asia and the Middle East had been forgotten since Atatürk Era. The relations with these communities started at the beginning of the post-Cold War period and conducted on a level far from the realities and a strategic mindset therefore, relations in the these regions particularly with Turkic Republics in the Central Asia and Caucasia failed in a short time. Despite all, Turkish foreign policy in the beginning of the post-Cold War period was described as neo-Ottomanist by academicians, observers and columnists as given in detail in the previous chapter due to its initiatives and assertive discourses.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. The Land and Its Habitants

As a Turkish word the meaning of Balkan is a bumpy terrain which is covered by thicket, forest and mountains. The Balkans either as a geographical name or as a political notion was introduced to the international literature by the Ottomans.⁴⁵ As to boundaries of the Balkans, however, there are some different views, according to the common definition; the Balkans is a peninsula which is bounded by Danube and Sava to the north throughout the Carpathian Mountains, Mediterranean Sea to the south, Adriatic Sea to the West and Black Sea to the East.⁴⁶ Being a crossroad between Europe, Asia, and Africa the Balkan Peninsula has had a great significance in the terms of economy, military and defence, and transportation since the ancient Greek. This location of the Balkans, therefore, has been significant as a security shield for these continents, particularly for the Europe, and also explains why it has been a battleground of the powers from the earliest times to the present. Beside the location, another major trait of the Balkans has been its water resources which are recently becoming increasingly important. Considering in general terms, with its location and natural resources the Balkans has been a pivotal region for all three continents' inhabitants.

Moreover, there are also some disagreements among the political scientists on which nations to be counted inside the Balkan states. According to widespread opinion Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and former Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo) are accepted as Balkan countries, while Turkey and Greece excluded. On the other hand, some counts Greece and partially Turkey as part of the Balkans as well. For the purpose of this study while the latter was accepted, the focal countries will be Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia,

⁴⁵Çalış, *op.cit.*, p.123

⁴⁶L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, London, Hurst&Company, 2000, p.2

Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo due to the claims of neo-Ottomanism is particularly associated with these states.

The Balkans is a frontier region where four great civilization; Ancient Greek and Rome, Byzantium, the Ottoman Emperor, and Catholic Europe has been intersected and created a multi-layer regional civilization. The Balkans, however, has been a transition area none of these cultures, on one's own could dominate it.⁴⁷ Wachtel shows the characteristic of multi-layer face of the Balkans in the case of Bosnia with the pretty expression of Ivo Andrić's novel, *Travnik Diary*;

“Passing through the bazaar, stay nearby the Yeni Cami. You see a high wall surrounding all this space. Inside the wall there are a few graves in the shadow of the giant trees. No one knows to whom they belong to. Once upon a time, before the Turks come, people believe that here was the St.Katherina's Church. (...) If you look at the stone on this old wall a little more carefully, you will see that the stone was brought from the Roman ruins and graves. Afterwards, you will recognize the constant and regular Roman letters of a broken inscription above the stone placed on the mosque's wall: “Marco Flavio (...) optimo...” And under this stone, in the deeps, at the unseen ground there are big stones made of red granite and residues of a temple which was devoted to Deity Mitra.”⁴⁸

3.2. A Brief History of the Balkans and pre-Ottoman Period

As mentioned the quotation above, despite the multi-national and multi-cultural feature of the region, it is really hard to put forward a certain historical evidence to identify the people of the Balkans from its early past apart from the archaeological excavations which has still executed. According to the researches, the indigenous people of the peninsula are Illyrians, Thracian and the Iskits.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Dünya Tarihinde Balkanlar*, (Çev:Ali Cevat Akkoyunlu), İstanbul, Doğan Kitap, 2009, pp.18-19

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.15.16

⁴⁹ R. Taylan Yararcan, published PhD's Thesis, *An Examination of the Balkans in the International Politics From Past to Present*, Boğaziçi University, 2009 , p. 25

The importance of the Balkans increased in the period of the Byzantine Empire which had been successor of the Romanians, while the capital transferred to the Constantinople (Istanbul) from the Rome. During this transition period the Slavic people began to flock into the Danube Valley from the Central Europe. By the 6th century particularly, Slavs and partially, the other peoples such as Mongolian Huns and Avars, cross into the Balkans. Later on the newcomers of the Balkans were Bulgarians (9th century) and Turks (13th century)⁵⁰. These alterations, by the 15th century constituted the basis of the modern Balkan nations.

The answer of whether there were antecedents of the today's nation states as the nationalist Balkan writers assert is "no" as Karpat pointed out, when the Ottomans was expanding into the region they found a population which was still at the stage of tribe, had no common ethnic and political consciousness.⁵¹ The main link among these people was the religion which had been weak and dependent to their sovereigns. In short, it wouldn't be incorrect to say that there is no similarity and persistence between those political structures and 19th nation-states, in fact, these Slav groups came from central Europe and invaded the Balkans and took the indigenous inhabitants (Illyrians, Greeks, and Latins) of the Balkans and jumbled with them.⁵²

3.3. The Ottomans and Balkans

The first settlement of the pre-Ottoman Turks in the Balkans, in 1262, is related with taking refugee of Seljuki Sultan, İzzeddin Keykavus II, in the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor Mikhail Palailogos VIII allocated Dobrogeato him and his soldiers. In course of time, with migration of the several nomad Turk groups who were the follower of Keykavus, they constituted a few small towns in the Dobrogea. Afterwards, by the half of the 14th century Aydınoğulları, Saruhanoğulları, and Karesi Beyleri raided towards the Balkans from the Asia Minor.⁵³ The victory in 1352 against Serbs and Greeks under the command of Suleyman Pasha, son of the Orhan Gazi, on the behalf of Kantakuzenos, was a milestone for the Ottoman settlement in the Balkans. During this

⁵⁰ Stavrianos, *op.cit.*, pp.22-29

⁵¹ Kemal H.Karpat, *Balkanlarda Osmanlı Mirası ve Ulusçuluk*, Ankara, İmge Kitabevi, 2004, pp.18-19

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.18-19

⁵³ Halil İnalçık, *Doğu Batı*, "Makaleler II", Ankara, Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2009, p.112

war, Ottoman invaded Tzympe (Cinbi) in the Thrace and later than the Balkans became an open space for the Ottomans.

Except a few losses and triumvirate period (1402-1413), Ottoman expansion in the Balkans steadily continued and with the conquest of Adrianople in 1361, the Rumelia Beylerbeyliği (lord of lords) was established as a separated military and administrative region and Adrianople became its centre. In the course of the time, despite the increase in the number of Beylerbeyliği's Rumelia has always maintained its particular position in the Ottoman administration system. In order to show the geostrategic importance of the region, it is often voiced by historians that if Ottomans had not settled and structured in the Balkans they would probably disintegrated and disappeared which had happened to many other Turk groups in the Asia Minor.⁵⁴

In the term of Murad I (Hüdavendigâr, 1362-1389) most of the major routes and centres up the Maritsa Valley to the central Balkans were controlled and thus a "Balkan Empire" was established. Thereupon, Byzantine became tribute state while the Bulgarian King Sisman gave importance to keep the Ottoman friendship.⁵⁵ The fruitless Varna Crusade against Ottomans (1444) which was leaded by Hungary and Poland confirmed the definite Ottoman settlement in the Balkans. With the conquest of the Constantinople, in 1453, Mohammed II (Fatih Sultan Mehmet) considered himself legitimate varicose vein of the Roman Empire. Afterwards, he dealt with the matters for the Balkan sovereignty. Although his uncompleted state of wars (sefer) he formed the core of an empire in the Rumelia and Anatolia as a "ruler of two seas (Black Sea and Mediterranean) and two lands (Rumelia and Anatolia)".⁵⁶

The period of Suleiman the Magnificent is considered noteworthy for both the Balkan and European history, since it was in his term Belgrade and Rhodes were conquered and Ottoman Empire became a super power while playing an active and interventionist policy, simultaneously in the three continents. To give an example, in Europe

⁵⁴ İnalçık, *op.cit.*, pp. 116-117

⁵⁵ Halil İnalçık, *Devlet-i Aliyye, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar-I (Klasik Dönem 1302-1606)*, İstanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2010, pp. 63-64-65

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113-115

diplomacy, Suleiman took the patronage of the France as weakening the union of the crusaders.⁵⁷

The Ottoman expansion towards the West reached to the farthest point with the conquest of Belgrade. After the second half of the 16th century Ottoman Empire standstill period had begun and the second Siege of Vienna, 1683 was the starting year of the Ottoman decline. The treaty of the Karlowitz, 1699, was a turning point for both the Ottoman and the European history. As a result of this treaty, Ottoman Empire lost not only a significant territory but also prestige.⁵⁸ After the Treaty of Karlowitz, Austria and Russia's influence in the Balkans and Black Sea began to increase as rivals of the Ottoman Empire, and thus this trend caused a lot of corrosive wars with the Ottoman Empire.

The French Revolution was a milestone for the Balkan history as it was for the world history. The Napoleon's occupation of the Ionian Islands in 1798 and attack upon Egypt brought out new players in the Balkans such as France and England. Although this period which was resulted by the Bucharest Treaty 1815 did not much change the Ottoman territory, in fact, the French Revolution had great psychological and ideological impact on the Balkans and therefore called forth the nationalist movements in the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁹ The period of 1815 and 1878 can be expressed as an interaction of rapid Ottoman decline, revival of the nationalist movements, and competition of the great powers in the Balkans.⁶⁰ Within this period, Greeks, after the 1828-1829 Turkish-Russian war; Serbs and Romanians, after the 1877 Turkish Russian war became independent states while others persisted still semi-autonomous, with the exception of Albanians, until Balkan Wars 1912-13.

The period of 1878-1914 was proved to be an age of imperialism and capitalism while the period of 1815-1878 was revolutionary age of nationalism. Although its decline and much of losses the Ottoman Empire was still predominant in the Balkans during this period. From the terms which are used to determine the region, in the 1878 Congress of

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-151

⁵⁸ Stavrianos, *op.cit.*, pp.175-176

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.198-211

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 215

Berlin, such as “European Turkey”, “Turkey in Europe” clearly shows this reality.⁶¹ But the interventionist movements in the Balkans, which started in early 19th century, triggered other great powers’ such as Russia, England, France, Austria-Hungarian Empire’s imperialist desire. On account of this aspiration, they tried to use nationalism as a tool of first, to take apart the Balkan nations from the Ottoman Empire and then made an appropriate space for their imperialist and capitalist purposes. With the dissolution of the Balkans, the region became a competition area of leading European powers where they sold their products and search for new markets. It is known that Britain, France, and later Germany have made vast amounts of investment in the Balkans by the 1914.⁶²

The Congress of Berlin 1878 neither pleased the great powers nor brought a peace and stability in the region while causing conflicts among the new states and ethnic groups. This dissatisfaction gave rise to the Balkan Wars 1912-13. With the direct support of Russia and incitement of the Britain, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro constituted the Balkan Alliance and assaulted on the Ottoman Empire in 1912, in order to wipe away the Turks from the Balkans. At the end of the first war Ottoman Empire lost almost all its territory in the region. The second war particularly, was a quarrel for participation of those obtained territories among themselves. Balkan Wars and its outcomes has been one of the most miserable events in the long Turkish history while caused a five-hundred glorious presence to come an end in a very short time against irregular garrisons and banishment and massacre of the Turks and Muslims.

In addition to the, increase in the imperialist and colonialist desires which was triggered by rapid industrialization, the turmoil in the Balkans can be seen one of the causes of the World War I while the first spark was let off in the region. The war which was the consequence of the 19th century’s political, economic, and military developments started off by the alliance of Austria-Germany’s bombing Belgrade. In a short time, it spread around the world. At the end of the war, Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungarian Empire, and Russia disappeared from the stage of the history. Especially, dissolution of the first two empires caused a big backlash in the Balkans while gave Serbs the chance of

⁶¹ Maria Todorava, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, p.27

⁶² Stavrianos, *op.cit.*, pp.413-415

bringing together all South Slavs and declared the Kingdom of Serbs-Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. In addition to the new chaotic situation, wars since 1912 also had caused a disaster in the Balkans while caused death of hundreds of thousands of people, a large number of refugees, social, political and economic deterioration, and additional dissatisfactions against the new status-quo.⁶³

As mentioned before, the Siege of Vienna in 1683 was the final Ottoman threat to the Europe. After the treaty of Karlowitz the Ottomans took the position of defence in the Balkans and Black Sea regions. From this time, the passive position allowed Habsburgs, Russia, and later France, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy to fill the gap left from the Ottoman and they became influential in the region. During the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the territorial acquisitions of Russia and Austria from the Ottoman Empire provoked them to step in this course. In the 19th century the Ottoman territories particularly in the Europe became a competition area for the great powers in order for what to do with them; keep as they were or share after dividing? The future of the Ottoman Empire became prominent issue of the international politics which is called “The Eastern Question” and continued until the end of the World War I.⁶⁴ In fact, the major question of The Eastern Question was what should happen to the Balkans if Ottoman Empire collapse and withdraw from the south-eastern Europe? Despite different individual interests and conflicts the Great Powers, especially Russia, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain agreed on throwing of the Turks from the Balkans and Europe. In order to reach to this goal, one by one, they first encouraged Christian communities to revolt, then provided them to obtain the status of autonomy, and finally ensured their independence from the Ottoman Empire. Some of the objectives, considered within the scope of Eastern Question, realized at the end of the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian Wars and Balkan Wars.⁶⁵

Turkish settlement in the Balkans was a turning point in the Ottoman history. The geopolitical trait of the region was not only important for expansion of the Ottoman

⁶³*Ibid*, p.107

⁶⁴ Donal Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*(Sec. Edt), 2005, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.6

⁶⁵Hikmet Öksüz, published PhD's Thesis: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Atatürk Dönemindeki Balkan Politikası (1923-1938)*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 1996, pp.9-10

state but also for the security of it. In addition, fertile soils and rich natural resources of the region can be counted essential for the growing state. Another important thing in the Ottoman Balkan Policy was ideology of Gaza⁶⁶ (holy war) which might be considered on top of these factors or altogether. For all these factors, Ottomans had some particular systems and policies in the Balkans such as settlement policy (iskan politikası), conciliatory policy (istimalet politikası), ghulam system (kul sistemi)

Since the early conquests, the Ottomans had established a well-organized and proper settlement policy in the region. In parallel to the rapid conquest in the Balkans, Ottomans encouraged the people of Asia Minor particularly the Turkmen groups to migrate to the region.⁶⁷ By virtue of this system, towns were reconstructed and on the other hand, the land of countryside was culminated. This Ottoman contribution especially pleased the peasants and made them easier to become a subject of Ottoman system and thereafter Muslim.

Another important factor for the Ottoman fair administration and therefore its expansion in the Balkans was Ottoman conciliatory policy. Conciliatory policy means being verging, compromising, and inclusive towards the people of the region. In the Ottoman rapid and steady settlement in the Balkans the conciliatory policy was more efficient than sword.⁶⁸ According to the 1520-1555 Ottoman tahrir records, %82 of the population of Rumelia was Christian while the population of Muslim was %12. Considering the Ottoman power and dominance in this period it has to be noted that the acceptance of the Islam was not by force rather by will in time.⁶⁹

Ghulam system was the practice of raising staff from the young slaves to work for the palace and the state. Rumelia was the main region for the Ottoman Ghulam System. The people from the ghulam were employed almost in all services and stages, particularly in the military.⁷⁰ The Janissary which was the yield of the devshirme system⁷¹ who played a

⁶⁶ See İnalçık, *Gaza ve Gazilik, Devlet-i Aliyye*, p.24

⁶⁷ Mehmet İnbaşı, *Tarihsel Perspektif: Türklerin Balkanlara Yerleşmesi*, (Der: Erhan Türbedar), Ankara, ASAM, 2003, pp.9-11

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p.14

⁶⁹ İnalçık, *Doğu Batı, "Makaleler II"*, p.201

⁷⁰ İnalçık, *Devlet-i Aliyye*, pp.205-206

⁷¹ The Ghulam System was inherited from Seljuks to the Ottomans and transformed into the Devshirme System with some changes.

crucial role in the Ottoman victories. Moreover, a lot of vizier, pasha, and beg whose origin was Rum, Serb, or Albanian took office in the Ottoman administration

Besides these primary parameters, religious freedom and cultural tolerance in the social life and, local and regional autonomy⁷² to some territories were effective policy instruments for the Ottoman long sovereignty in the Balkans. On the other hand, this religious freedom and cultural tolerance which was the main element of Millet System⁷³ ensured all millets to maintain their own entity without assimilation, and later provided them to search for identity and finally obtain their independence.

In conclusion, the Balkans was important for the Ottoman Empire in terms of the settlement, expansion and security. Moreover, it was the main region for the Gaza. Similarly, the Ottoman period had remarkable place in the history of the Balkans since brought peace and stability into the region as introduced “pax-Ottomana” by Western historians.⁷⁴ With regard to the concept of the neo-Ottomanism, history of the Balkans can be handled in four period as follows. The conquest of the Constantinople is the first period in which the identity of the Ottomanness came into existence with the practices of “millet system”. This implicit identity cannotes to all ethnic components had an Ottoman belonging as a supra-identity. This period fall on the Treaty of Karlowitz since it caused not only lost of land but also prestige at home and abroad.⁷⁵ The identity of the Ottomanness was suffered after the Treaty of Karlowitz. The third period which started with the effects of the French Revolution and had continued until 1878. In this period, in order to cease the rapid decline and restore the identity of Ottomanness, Ottoman intelligentsia and politicians put forward the idea of Ottomanism. The last period was the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 in which Ottoman state lost all its territories in the Balkans. At the end of this period it is understood that none of the Ottomanist movements had chance to be sustained anymore.

⁷²Stavrianos, *op.cit.*, pp.101-102

⁷³The system which determines non-Muslim’s relations with the state based on the ties of religion and sect of the communities under the Muslim hegemony. For further information see at <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/19/1270/14615.pdf>

⁷⁴Todorava, *op.cit.*, p.50

⁷⁵Somel, *op.cit.*, p.104

3.4. Turkey's Balkan Policy from Atatürk to AKP

Turkey's Balkan policy can be examined in three periods in parallel to the general Turkish foreign policy periods as follows, interwar period, the cold war period, and the post-Cold War period.

3.4.1. Interwar Period (1923-1947)

Turkish foreign policy in the period of 1923-1930 was limited due to the issues of Treaty of Lausanne. Initially, Turkey aimed to solve the problems left from the First World War and therefore, launch good relations with its new neighbours. After establishing fair relations with its neighbours Turkey began to pursue foreign policy initiatives both in the region and in the world in the period of 1923-1938. In this context, Turkey played an effective and important role in the process of establishment of Balkan Pact which was signed in 1934.⁷⁶ During 1938-1947, Turkey tried to maintain current relations with the members of the Balkan Pact while on the other hand tried to develop fair relations with those who are not in this pact.

In the Turkish-Greek relations, the matter of Patriarchate in 1925 and subsequently, the population exchange with Ankara Agreement in 1930 were solved. In parallel to the solution of population exchange Turkey and Greece signed the Treaty of Amity in 1930 and Sincere Agreement Pact in 1933 as leaving hostilities of the past while together strive to establish Balkan Pact to ensure the stability of the region.⁷⁷ From this time to the Cyprus dispute in the 1954 the relations between Turkey and Greek has continued friendly with contribution of mutual high-level visits.

Having been in the same alliance in the First World War, the relationship between Turkey and Bulgaria started in a good way without any serious problem. This relationship thrived in a short time and the two countries signed the Treaty of Amity in the 1925. Afterwards, in 1929 Turkey and Bulgaria signed the treaty of neutrality, arbitration and conciliation in parallel to the development of the relations⁷⁸. Towards

⁷⁶ Öksüz, *op.cit.*, p.91

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.95

⁷⁸ Barış Ertem, Atatürk'ün Balkan Politikası ve Atatürk Döneminde Türkiye'nin Balkan Devletleri İle İlişkileri, *Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, Sayı 21 Temmuz, Ağustos, Eylül, 2010, pp.10-11

mid 1930s Turkish-Bulgarian relations strained in parallel to the developments in Turkish-Greek relationship and it lasted up to 1940s.⁷⁹

Coming out with the large-territorial gains from the First World War, Romania was on the side of the status quo while had not any minority and boundary problems with Turkey. Due to the stance of Romania the relationship between two countries which started in 1924 developed on the basis of goodwill and collaboration and continued. Atatürk attached a particular importance to the relations with Romania as seen in his statement was made in 1937 "...Turkish-Romanian friendship is so deep and reliable that makes us think the way if Romania is strong we are also strong."⁸⁰

By the 1925 the state of war continued with the Kingdom of Serb, Croat and Slovene, founded in 1921 and later on became as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, due to not signing the Treaty of Lausanne. The Treaty of Amity signed in 1925, put an end to state of war while brought to solutions to the diplomatic, commercial and judicial issues. In 1933 Turkey and Yugoslavia signed the Treaty of Amity, Nonaggression, Judicial Solutions, Arbitration and Conciliation.⁸¹ As a result of flourishing relations Yugoslavia became the supporter of Turkey's efforts of stability and eventually signed the Balkan Pact in 1934. After the cooperation in the Balkan Pact, relations between Turkey and Yugoslavia continued within the framework of collaboration, mutual goodwill, and high-level visits until communist rule.⁸²

Due to the fact that for ages living together, Turks and Albanians easily became closer after the war and thus they signed the Treaty of Amity, Residence and Citizenship in 1923. Actually, the relations between two countries go back to 1920 when Atatürk sent 25 Turkish officers to train and organize the Albanian army.⁸³ The growing relationship between two countries had continued by the time when Ahmet Zogo declared his kingdom in 1928. From this time on, despite Turkey's effort it was not possible to fix relationship with Albania while it was getting closer to the Berlin-Rome Axis.

⁷⁹ Öksüz, *op.cit.*, pp. 97-98

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.101

⁸¹ Ertem, *op.cit.*, p.13

⁸² Öksüz, *op.cit.*, p.105

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.106

Solution of the problems with all Balkan countries particularly with Greece, development of the relationship with Turkey and among themselves was significant step to the Balkan Pact. Besides the regional cooperation, there were some encouraging peaceful initiatives such as Locarno agreements, Kellogg Pact, and Litvinov Protocol. The stance and efforts of Turkey and Greece against revisionists was officially supported by International Peace Bureau in 1929.⁸⁴ As a yield of efforts of Atatürk and Venizelos, First Balkan Conference was held in October 5, 1930, in Athens. Subsequently Second Balkan Conference in October 20, 1931 in Istanbul, Third Balkan Conference October 23, 1932 in Bucharest and Fourth Balkan Conference November 4, 1933 in Athens were also held with the support and enthusiastic contributions of Turkey. As a consequence of these conferences the Balkan Pact was signed in February 9, 1934 with participation of Turkey, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia.

In conclusion, Turkish Balkan policy in this term can be determined by the Atatürk's principle of "peace at home, peace in the world". Although this principle refers to status quo, Turkish Balkan policy, particularly in the period of Atatürk was active and initiative when considering the environment inside and outside and taking into account of his leading role in the establishment of Balkan Pact.

3.4.2. The Cold War Period (1947-1989)

Yet the Second World War was going on the destiny of the Balkans was determined by the leaders of the "Big Three", Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Josef Stalin, in 1945 in Yalta. According to the Yalta Conference Greece would be given under the influence of United States and Great Britain; Bulgaria and Romania would be given under the control of USSR while adopted Yugoslavia to be divided.⁸⁵

Immediately after the war, USSR took action to rein the Bulgaria and Romania as it was decided in Yalta. Within a short period of time, with its new regime USSR succeeded to control the two countries while on the one hand eliminating the oppositions and on the other hand promising to raise the living standards and putting an end to the all kind

⁸⁴ Osman Akandere, "20-26 Ekim 1931 Tarihlerinde İstanbul'da Toplanan II. Balkan Konferansı ve Sonuçları", *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Güz 2004, Sayı: 14, pp.250-297

⁸⁵ Wachtel, *op.cit.*, p.123

of inequalities. Despite disappointment of the public of the both countries communist governments carried on up to 1989.

The common threat perceived from USSR and the situation of Greece which was unstable and fragile after the war made Turkish-Greek collaboration essential. Moreover, the encouragement and support of the United States with the financial and military aids (Truman Doctrine, 1947) made Turkey and Greece ally and later, become the member of NATO in 1952. By the Cyprus Problem, in 1954 economic, political, and cultural relations between two countries significantly thrived with the fortification of mutual high level visits.

Just before the Cyprus Problem, 25 October 1953 second Balkan Pact, supported by the West, was signed among Turkey, Greece and Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and later, the signatories of the pact established the Balkan Alliance on 9 August 1954. However, the life of the alliance did not hold over due to the Cyprus problem and normalization in the relations of USSR-SFRY. Turkish-Greek tension began in 1954 continued over the decades even though Cyprus became an independent country with Treaty of Guarantee, in 1960. Because, Greece attempted to change the structure of the new country to the disadvantage of Turkish society and furthermore to eliminate the Turks in the island until and even after 1974. Towards second half of the 1960-1980 period some other problems such as territorial waters and continental shelf emerged and has continued up to present.

In the years following the Second World War, Bulgaria fell under the control of USSR since Turkey came close to the West, particularly the US. In this environment, in 1950 Bulgaria forced 250.000 Turks to migrate to Turkey. Tensed relations between the two countries, up to mid of the 1989s, continued at the centre of forced migration and assimilation against Turks. In this period, there had been three big migration flaws from Bulgaria to Turkey; 1950-1951 migration, 1969-1978 close-relative migration and mass migration of 1989. Sum of the all these migrations was about 600.000 excluded 220.000 which had migrated between 1923 and 1949. In this context, with its two dimensional policy Turkey tried to protect the rights of Turkish minorities at the bilateral and

international level in order to ensure their entity in Bulgaria, while on the other hand had to indispensably adopt the migrations according to the Bulgaria's dictation.

In conclusion, Turkey as a loyal member of NATO, could not pursue independent policies towards the Balkans in the Cold War period. As seen in the courses of second Balkan Pact and Balkan Alliance with the support and suggestions of the US and the UK Turkey's Balkan policy was limited with standing against communism and trying to keep away itself from the state of war. Another important policy of Turkey in this period was to hinder Greece not to take advantage against it.⁸⁶ In this context, the only exception was the Cyprus intervention which caused Turkey to be isolated by its allies. For example, Turkey was not successful to protect the rights of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and impede their forced-migration. Similarly, Turkey was not effective enough to prevent human rights violations against Turkish minority in Greece who were subjected to the same conditions by Greece. As the Turks and Muslims in the Yugoslavia, as if they were forgotten by Turkish governments.

3.4.3. The Post-Cold War Period (1989-2002)

The reforms under the name of Glasnost and Perestroika which introduced by Gorbachev in the late 1980's caused, first dissolution and later collapse of the Soviet Union. The collapse of USSR had an impact on the Balkan states, except Greece, where communism had prevailed almost four decades.

Romania was the first place where the communist system was crumpled by civil uprising against Nicolae Ceausescu's rule. This trend in successively, continued with Bulgaria in 1990, Albania in 1991 and Yugoslavia in 1991-1992.⁸⁷ The changes in the systems and governments caused serious social and economic problems in these states. Among them the situation of former Yugoslavia was very different from the others due to its multinational structure.

⁸⁶Tayyar Arı Ege Sorunu ve Türk-Yunan İlişkileri see atdergiler.ankara.edu.tr/detail.php?id=42&sayi_id=468 (Access: 14.04.2012)

⁸⁷ Misha Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999, Nationalism, War and the Great Powers*, London, Granta Publications, 1999, p.635

The dissolution of former Yugoslavia started with the Slovenia's declaration of independence in June 1991. In spite of its military intervention on Slovenia, Belgrade failed to stop Slovenia's independence. Croatia, declared independence in 1991, and became an independent state at the end of a tough and bloody war which lasted four years. Following, Slovenia and Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence with a referendum held in March 1992.⁸⁸ The reaction of Belgrade to the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was neither look like Slovenia nor Croatia while it provoked and militarily supported Bosnian Serbs against Bosnian Muslims. Despite the EU and the US recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgrade continued not to accept the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1994, when Croats and Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) founded the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the period between 1992 and 1995 the world witnessed one of the bloodiest war and genocide against Muslims which caused more than 120 thousands death and 2 million homeless people. The dissolution of former Yugoslavia continued with Republic of Macedonia in 1993, Montenegro in 2006 and Kosovo in 2008.

At the beginning of the Yugoslavian crisis Turkey stood by unity of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia because of some probable results which might affect either Turkish foreign policy or domestic policy. Afterwards, Turkey changed its policy in favour of recognizing the independence of those states upon the EU's recognition of independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1992. On 6 February 1992, Turkey, simultaneously recognized Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in order not stay out of the process in the region. During the conflict in Bosnia, the relations between two countries ceased in spite of Turkey's participation to the UN's sanction against Yugoslavia. Although Turkey's effort to fix the relations with Yugoslavia after the Dayton Peace Agreement signed in 1995, before long the relations between two countries broke up again when Turkey took part in the NATO's Kosovo intervention in 1999. The poor relations between Turkey and Serbia began to develop after 2000's.⁸⁹

⁸⁸Christopher Cviiv, *Remaking the Balkans*, London, Pinter Publishers, 1995, p.74

⁸⁹İlhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler," *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*(Ed: Baskın Oran, Cilt II . 12. Baskı. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), pp. 490-493

Having long historical ties Turkey was not indifferent to the developments in the region and took a liking to the independence movements of the former republics and nations of Yugoslavia, especially to the places where Turks and Muslims exist.⁹⁰ Notwithstanding, Turkey made a point of acting with international society during and after the collapse of former Yugoslavia.

In the process of dissolution of Yugoslavia, Bosnian Muslims and Croats declared independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 1 March 1992, with a referendum which was boycotted by Bosnian Serbs. From this time to the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) Bosnia in 1995, and Herzegovina witnessed one of the bloodiest wars of the history under Europe's nose.

Besides historical and cultural ties the kinship between Turks and Bosniaks had made Turkey to evaluate the developments and act carefully and attentively since crisis broke out in the early 1992. In the same year when Serbs with the support of the Federal Army invaded most of the territories of the Bosnia, Turkey had to fall under the on-going process and began to play active policy in order to move the Bosnian war to the international arena. In this context; first, Turkey stimulated the all international organizations in which have membership such as UN Security Council, OSCE, the Council of Europe, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and, especially, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Second, Turkey preferred to apply to the sanctions and military intervention via UN and NATO instead of acting individually as seen in the participation of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in 1993. Third, took an active role with the US in the establishment of Bosniak-Croat Federation in 1994. Finally, provided military equipment to the Bosniaks who had to defence themselves against full-equipped federal army.⁹¹

The establishment of the Bosnian-Croat Federation led by Turkey was a significant development in favour of Bosnian Muslims. Thanks to this Turkey and Croatia became closer and paved way to break the arms embargo in order to back up Bosniaks and

⁹⁰ Barry Buzan and Ole Waver, *Regions and Powers; The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp-392-393

⁹¹Uzgel,*op.cit*, pp. 495-496

Croats. Srebrenica Massacre in 1995 was the turning point in the Bosnian war in which more than 8300 Bosniaks were killed by heavily armed Serbs. Following the Srebrenica massacre, NATO air forces stroke the Serbian military attacks. Having defused Serbia was forced to sign Dayton Peace Agreement on 21 November 1995.⁹² During the Bosnian war Turkey implemented active foreign policy at both international level and bilateral level. After the Dayton, Turkey opened the first embassy of the Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. On the other hand Turkey kept its peace keeping forces in the Stabilization Force (SFOR) and took part in the Steering Board of Bosnia's Peace Implementation Council as a representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

Besides peace keeping policy, Turkey provided military training to the Bosnian army and tried develop economic and commercial relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the economic and commercial relations remained far behind the political and military relations.⁹³ Looking at the whole process during and after the war it is clear that Turkish foreign policy towards Bosnia was fairly active. Comparing the period of the war (1990-1995) with post war period (1996-2002) it can be said that the former was more successful than the latter.

In the first period, in spite of internal problems (PKK terror) and mainly sensual and humanist oriented attitude towards the Balkans, Turkey pursued active foreign policy during particularly in the Bosnia case while attracting attention of international community to the region and took all precautions to halt the war. In this period Turkey attained the sympathy of Muslims in the region while on the other hand increased its popularity and recognition.

In the post-war period, Turkey could not sustain the momentum gained in the first period because of its political and economic instability. This situation rebounded to the Turkish-Bosnian economic and political relations. To give a case in point, although there had founded Turkish- Bosnian Business Council under the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) trade capacity between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina could not exceed 50 million dollar in 1999. Turkey, one way or another, was not able to

⁹² Hale, *op.cit.*, pp.262-263

⁹³ Uzgel, *op.cit.*, p502

evaluate the environment after Dayton and thus became disadvantageous against Greece and other European countries in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁹⁴

In this period, mutual visits at the level of president, prime minister and foreign minister were very busy. Number of visits from Turkey was 17 while from Bosnia Herzegovina was 36.⁹⁵ Similarly between 1990 and 1996, Bosnia Herzegovina was the main issue of Turkish politicians from ruling parties to the opposition parties. In addition to these, more than 15 agreements in the fields of economical, education, culture and military cooperation and lots of protocols were signed with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) Sarajevo Coordination Office was opened in 1995 as TIKA's first office in the Balkans.

Macedonia as a result of the plebiscite held in September 1991, declared of independence. Unlike other cases, Macedonia did not encounter any resistance from Beograd while Yugoslavian army withdrew without any clash. After independence, having a significant number of Albanians and other ethnical groups, Macedonia experienced some internal problems while on the hand faced some difficulties and opposition against its recognition, particularly by Greece due to the name of Macedonia.⁹⁶ However, later Macedonia was recognized by most of the countries under the name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Turkey (in 1992) and some other countries recognized Macedonia as a "Republic of Macedonia" which is stated in its constitution.

Turkey took advantage of the Greek embargo against Macedonia for developing close relations with this country. Having circled by Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, Macedonia developed close relations with Turkey. As a result of this convergence Turkey was to open the first embassy in Skopje in 1993. Afterwards, the two countries signed several agreements and protocols in the areas of economy, politics, education, culture, defence and military. From Turkey's point of view, besides regional policy, Macedonian Turks was also important factor in the relations with Macedonia. In parallel to the flourishing relations, high level visits to Skopje were realized from

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.502

⁹⁵ The information was derived from the yearbooks of Anadolu Ajans and BYEGM.

⁹⁶ Cviic, *op.cit.*, p.77

Turkish side; first, Turgut Özal in 1993 and later, Süleyman Demirel in 1995 visited Skopje.⁹⁷ Despite developments in the relations, trade capacity remained at a low-level.

The trend, in the relations started in 1992 and continued at the end of 1995, could not be maintained. From 1995 Macedonian-Greek relations stabilised and thereby, economic relations flourished while Turkish-Macedonian relationship diminished.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Turkey's support to Macedonia continued at the regional and international level.

It is estimated that today, in Macedonia there are about 70.000 Turks of Ottoman residue besides other ethnic groups. This entity, thus bring a particular dimension into the Turkish-Macedonian relations. The fact is that Turkish minority living in Macedonia could not benefit enough from the sound relations between the two countries as they are given a minority status according to the new constitution. Comparing with 1974 Constitution, it is seen that the latest constitution gave secondary citizenship to the people whose origin were Albanian, Turk or Vlach. This obvious discrimination called forth the dissatisfaction among these ethnic groups who had voted for an independence Macedonia with ethnic Macedonians. In conclusion, this secondary status, even today, affects Turkish minority lives almost in all areas from politics to policies of employment especially in major public institutions such as military and foreign affairs.⁹⁹

Parallel to the good relations and high level mutual visits, between Turkey and Macedonia a lot of agreements and protocols in the field of economy, education, culture and military which forms the basis of current cooperation were signed in this period.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro in 1992, set up a new-brand state named Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This new name which gave impression of former Yugoslavia raised objections of the other former republics of Yugoslavia. (Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina). As a result, in 2002 Federal

⁹⁷ Uzgel, *op.cit.*,pp.505-506

⁹⁸ Feyzullah Sarı, unpublished Master Thesis, *Türkiye'nin Makedonya ve Bosna Hersek Siyaseti (1990-2000)*, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Ana Bilim Dalı, Ankara, 2007, pp. 130-137

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp.141-142

Government ratified an accord abolishing Federal Republic of Yugoslavia while constituting a new federal state under the name of Serbia and Montenegro.¹⁰⁰

At the beginning of the Yugoslavian crisis, Turkey lined up with territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. In 1992, Turkey recognized the independence of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina shortly after the EU's recognition of these two countries. From now on, the relations with Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke down. Despite Turkey's efforts to rectify the relations with Belgrade, the Kosovo Problem which starts in 1998 hindered this process until 2000's, when Milosevic government lost in the elections. In response to Turkey stance against freedoms, it was asserted that Belgrade financially and military supported PKK which was another problem in front of recovery in the relations while looking at Turkish side.

Consisted of mostly Albanians, the province of Kosovo had upgraded of constitutional and administrative rights by 1989 when Yugoslavia took all those rights back just before the dissolution which met the 600th anniversary of Kosovo War. Actually, the problem between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs goes back to early 1980s when nationalist movements started among Albanians. Towards the end of 1980s, this movement has caused Serbs to feel themselves as minority in their country, and thus the relations of the two ethnic communities strained.¹⁰¹ As a response against Belgrade's abolishment of Kosovo's autonomy in 1999, Kosovar Albanians declared themselves as 7th republic within Yugoslavia in 1990 and independence in 1991. Afterwards, they boycotted major institutions of Belgrade and while establishing a parallel system in major areas such as education and health sector. While this passive resistance did not work, Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) started armed struggle against Serbian army and police. Serbian army's response was so harsh which was defined as an ethnic cleansing by international community and called forth the NATO's intervention in 1999.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Michael A.Schuman, *Nations in Transition Serbia and Montenegro*, New York, Facts on File, 2004, pp. 69-70

¹⁰¹ Lazar Nikolic, *Ethnic Prejudices and Discrimination; The Case of Kosovo*, (Ed. F. Bieber, Z. Daskalovski), *Understanding the War in Kosovo*, London, Franc-Cass Publisher, 2003, pp. 53-76

¹⁰² Dusan T. Batakovic, *Kosovo and Metohija; Serbia's Troublesome Province*, Belgrade, Balcanica 39, 2008, pp.260-263

At the beginning of crisis, Turkey, considering the PKK problem in the context of territorial integrity, was cautious about Kosovar Albanians' independence attempts while closely watching conditions and safety of Kosovar Turks. Later on, with the rise in the armed conflict and therefore Serbs' ethnic cleansing operation Turkey began to support Albanians against Yugoslavia.¹⁰³ This stance of Turkey was mainly affected by the US policy further than its bilateral negotiations. Consequently, Turkey imposed economic sanctions on Yugoslavia with other Western states and later joined the NATO interventions.¹⁰⁴

In Kosovo, Turkey played an active policy during the crises particularly, with US while on the other hand, tried to sustain negotiations with Belgrade and Russia. After the NATO intervention Turkey took part in the group of "Friends of Kosovo" and later in KFOR (Kosovo Force) with a 1000-troop.¹⁰⁵ Although Turkey's active policy in the crisis, the social and political status of Kosovar Turks could not improve while it still was far behind the rights of 1974 constitution. For example, Turkish language was hardly recognized as a semi-official language through Turkish pressure.¹⁰⁶ With the fall of socialist system in 1991, Albania experienced series social, economic and political problems inside, and had to cope with some external issues such as Kosovo crisis and North Epirus problem with Greece.¹⁰⁷

In this situation, Albania having long historical ties and common religious, considered Turkey as a reliable friend. In return, Turkey tried to develop better relationship with Albania while supporting its membership for NATO, OIC and other international organizations. In parallel to the political relations, military cooperation with Albania developed rapidly.¹⁰⁸ In this period, despite Turkey's anxiety to enhance the economic relations with Albania, it could not realize it because of its weak economy.

¹⁰³ Nazif Mandacı, "Balkanlar İle İlişkiler", *Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-2008*, (Ed. Haydar Çakmak), Ankara, Platin Yayınları, 2008 , pp.826-828

¹⁰⁴ Florian Bieber and Zidas Daskalovski, *Claims to Kosovo: Nationalism and Self-Determination Understanding the War in Kosovo*, London, Frank Cass, 2003, p.78

¹⁰⁵ Uzgel, *op.cit.*, pp.508-513

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.513

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.502

¹⁰⁸ *İbid.*, p.503

Comparing with the former Yugoslavian states it is seen that the high level visits were not busy despite long and deep historical and cultural ties. Another remarkable point in the budget talks there are not any discussion about Albania. Nevertheless, Coordination Office of TİKA was opened in 1996 in Tiran as one of the first practices in the Balkans.

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To put it briefly, today's Turks living in Bulgaria are the people of Asia Minor who were housed to Balkans by the Ottomans in the 14th century. From 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian war to today there has been a continuous influx of immigration, which is estimated around 1.000.000, to Turkey.¹¹⁰

During the Cold War, Turks living in Bulgaria were exposed to assimilation policies of communist Bulgarian regime, and were forced to migration to Turkey. After the fall of the communism and withdrawal of Jivkov, the new Bulgarian government in 1989, announced officially that the assimilation policies against Turks was arbitrary and illegal while accepting to give their social, cultural and religious rights back. Although this process did not back up by legal regulations and practice there were some improvements on some issues such as allowance to use Turkish names and being represented in the politics. With regard to the latter Turks in Bulgaria created the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) which would become a political party after 1991.¹¹¹

In this period, Bulgarian government, by some symbolic arrangements including MRF's presentation in the assembly, tried to give an impression that it was remedying the mentioned issues. But in reality, the problems in such as learning Turkish, fairness in employment, Turkish TV broadcasting, and etc. have continued so far. It cannot be said that the policies of MRF were successful to over come these problems. Similarly, Turkish governments could not compose robust and persistent policies towards Bulgaria to heal the conditions of Turks living in Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁹TİKA Faaliyet Raporu 2005 see at <http://store.tika.gov.tr/yayinlar/faaliyet-raporlari/faaliyet-raporu-2005.pdf> (Access: 17.04.2012)

¹¹⁰ Bilal N. Şimşir, Türkiye ve Balkanlar, *Balkan Türkleri, Balkanlardaki Türk Varlığı*. (Ed. Erhan Türbedar), Ankara, Asam, 2003, p.333

¹¹¹ Ömer E. Lüttem, "Tarihsel Süreç İçinde Balkan Türkleri'nin Hakları", *Balkan Türkleri, Balkanlardaki Türk Varlığı*, (Ed. Erhan Türbedar), Ankara, Asam, 2003, pp.56-58

The judicial status of Turks of Western Thrace is mainly determined by Lausanne Treaty of 1923. Besides this, there are several treaties and adoptions that put Greece under obligation to protect the minority rights of the Muslim Turks such as London Protocol of 1820, Treaty of Istanbul of 1881 and Peace Treaty of Athens of 1913. Furthermore, there are also various settlements and declarations which asserts protection of Turkish Minority of Western Thrace.¹¹² Among all these settlements, Lausanne Treaty (Article 45) on its own provides Turkey as a party, to take into account social, cultural and political rights of the Turkish minority according to the reciprocity principle.¹¹³

Today, the problems that Turks of the Western Thrace face, basically are restrictions on political rights, current problems of expatriation of 1955-1998, freedom of religion and nomination of muftis, and other problems in education and living standards. Despite these existing problems, at the beginning of 1990s Greece displayed a slightly different approach against Turkish minority as not denying the poor situation of Turkish minority. Towards mid-1990s discrimination and human rights violations in the Western Thrace came to for of the EU and other international organizations' agenda. Thanks to this and start of Turkish-Greek dialogue, Greek government revised the Nationality Law in 1998 and admitted that Turkish minority should be allowed to call themselves Turks if they feel so.¹¹⁴ Despite on-going problems which was stated above, Turkey welcomed Greece's new approach while on the other hand put pressure on Greece to take serious measures to improve social, political and economic conditions of Turkish minority.¹¹⁵

To put it briefly, in this period Turkish-Greek relations was strained related with the developments and crises of the region and Turkey's stance. Turkey's Balkan policy was perceived as neo-Ottomanist and Turkist in some respects. These problematic issues mainly was Turkish minorities of Western Thrace and issues of the Macedonia besides other chronicle problems. The insistence of Turkish claims that Western Thrace Turks

¹¹² Turgay Cin, "The Current Problems of Turks of Western Thrace in Greece as a Member of the European Union", *Ege Academic Review*, Cilt: 9 Sayı: 4, 2009, pp.15-28

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.29

¹¹⁴ F. Stephen Larrabee, Ian O. Leseer, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, Pittsburgh, Rand, 2003, p.83

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83

are subject to unfair restrictions disturbed Greece while blamed Turkey to create new Northern Cyprus tragedy in Greece itself.¹¹⁶

3.5. Neo-Ottomanism Discussions in 1990s

The process of disintegration of Yugoslavia caused crises in the region. Turkey had to get involved with the developments when the war spread to the Bosnia. Although, it was a requisite involvement, Turkish foreign policy towards Bosnia was active and assertive as can be seen in its initiative role in the declarations of OIC and the UN. Bosnia case was the first step to Turkey's "Balkan Opening". In the light of the information given previously, in order to understand Balkans policies or "Balkans Opening" of Turkey and see to what extent these claims are relevant in the period when the Cold War came to an end and neo-Ottomanist debates started with Özal, political and economic policies, discourses of this period, mutual high level visits held between Turkey and countries of the region, reflections in the domestic and foreign press should be examined.

Political discourses may be analysed in three categories as propagated by the assembly, government party administrators and the president; Budget discussions held in TGNA consist of a process in which state budget of following year is negotiated and voted as well as government policies are also discussed. Therefore, it would be useful to overlook budget discussion between the years of 1990-2002 in order to see foreign policy agenda of the period being analysed and their weight in the negotiations. Instant and superficial talks and reactionary discourses of politicians against foreign events are the general characteristic feature of the period. It is seen that speeches about Balkans became intensive between 1993 and 1994 but declined after that period. As an example, there was no speech about Bosnia Herzegovina in the budget talks held in 1991-1993 while there had been an increase in this issue during 1993-1998. The question of Bosnia Herzegovina completely fell of the agenda after 1999.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey Facing a New Millenium and Coping with Interwined Conflicts, Manchester*, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp.182-185

¹¹⁷ M.Cüneyt Yenigün, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika, Belgeler ve Yorumlar*, İstanbul, Nobel Yayın, 2004, p.490

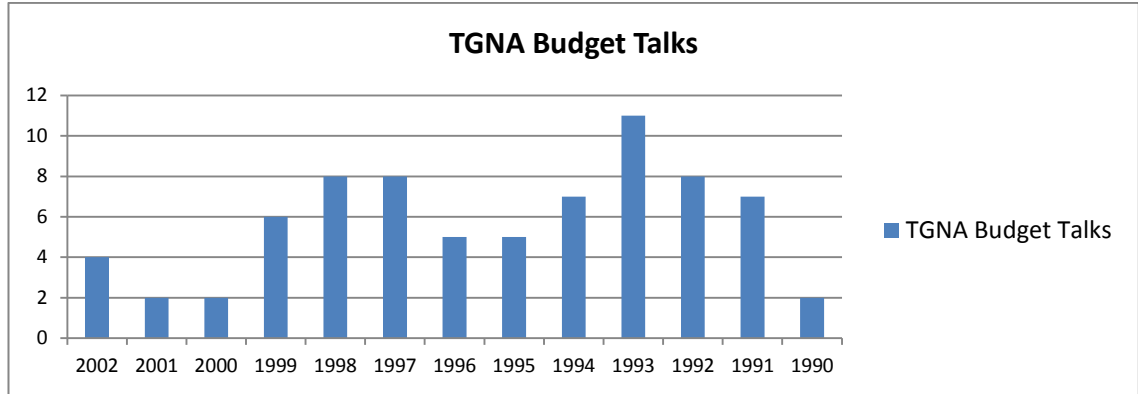


Figure 1: The number of deputy talks in TGNA during the Budget Talks regarding the issues of the Balkans (1990-2002)¹¹⁸

To take some examples from political party representatives of the period, having talked on behalf of Republican People's Party (CHP) in 1992, İsmail Cem stated that Balkan nations have great expectations from Turkey and expressed that Turkey should generate a more planned and active policy.¹¹⁹ Abdullah Gül having talked on behalf of RP (Welfare Party) in 1993 asserted that Turkey does not have a Balkan policy while stressing Turkey's failure in the face of Serb massacre of Bosniacs.¹²⁰ Having talked on behalf of the government against these and similar blames, the foreign minister Hikmet Çetin emphasized the importance of the Balkans for Turkey, advocated that government policies were not passive as being first country to recognize Macedonia while admitted that they had to act together with the international society in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina.¹²¹

When looking at the government party administrators and the discourses of the president, it is seen that as the presidents Özal and Demirel were influential rather than party leaders in the discourses regarding to the region in this period. In this context, the environment emerged during the post-Cold War period made Özal excited and led him to actively participate in the foreign policy process as it is seen below quotations. Following speeches made by Özal in two consecutive years have an emotional Ottoman aspiration and affection while politically make a more active foreign policy call.

¹¹⁸ Figure 1 was created through the information obtained from the book of M.Cüneyt Yenigün called "Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika, Belgeler ve Yorumlar"

¹¹⁹ Yenigün, *op.cit.*, p. 506

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.506

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.506

“ ... I believe that 21st century would be our-Turkish people’s era. I saw this while visiting Soviet Union. ... All (Turkic Republics) have an eye on Turkey. There are also 56 millions of Muslim or Turkish population looking at us ... in Balkans. Similarly, we have a population of 140 million if also considered Caucasia and China... If we take right decisions in the Republic of Turkey and follow the route we made without changing the direction, 21st century would be the era of Turkey and Turkic people. ...”¹²² (Bursa, in 1991)

“...Turkey was established on heritage of the Ottoman which was a great empire. ... I do not believe that we are still not so acquainted with this empire. We cannot avoid from this”¹²³ ... (by stating that the environment in the Balkans and the Central Asia provide new opportunities for Turkey), (İstanbul, 1992)

Ottomanist and Islamist discourse which started with Özal continued similarly with the subsequent secular politicians such as Süleyman Demirel, Mesut Yılmaz and Tansu Çiller. Namely, Özal’s Ottomanist and Islamist initiative became the new fact of Turkish domestic and foreign policy. In 1995 the rise of Erbakan’s Welfare Party was a clear indication of this new trend.¹²⁴

When talking about the practices, Özal desired the existence of Turkish people from Turkey in the Balkans. For this reason, he encouraged businessmen to invest in the region on one hand and recommended religious nongovernmental organizations to go there and carry out their activities on the other hand. By this way, he aimed to balance Slav-Orthodox block with Ottoman-Islam component. Carrying out significant activities in a very wide geography today, Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA) was established during Özal period and the “Great Student Project” orienting to ensure admission of fellow students from Turkic republics and relative communities was also initiated in this period.¹²⁵ In addition, the organization of BSEC (Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation) including the membership of Balkan countries is also an organization established by the initiative of Özal. These policies of Özal defined

¹²² Çalış, *op.cit*, p.149

¹²³ Ibid., p.149

¹²⁴ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity; A Constructivist Approach*, New York, Routledge, 2003, pp.131-133

¹²⁵ Ataman, *op.cit*, pp.49-64

as an opening were welcomed with excitement in the Balkans while encountered some resistance from then ministry of foreign affairs and the government. This resistance slowed down President Özal. The acceleration achieved in the Balkans has already ceased upon his unexpected death.

As stated before Turkey came across with the Balkans as the results of the crises and conflicts. As seen below table, high level visits started in 1991 and continued during the Bosnian conflict. After the conflict there is a decline in the number of the mutual visits until the Kosovo Crisis in 1998.

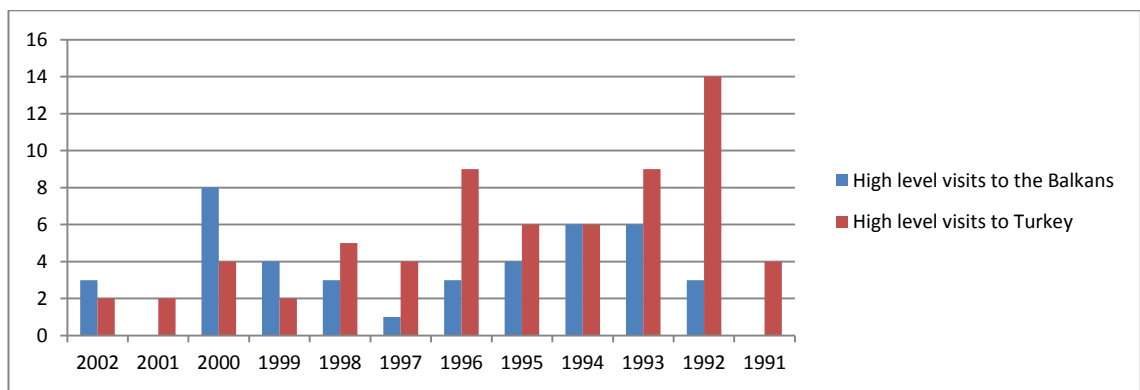


Figure 2: Mutual high level visits at the regional level (1991-2002)¹²⁶

In terms of economic relations, foreign trade between Turkey and the countries of the Balkans was weak just because of the then Turkish private sector and investors primarily were interested in Central Asia and Caucasia instead the Balkans. Despite this there was a steady increase in the time as seen below table.

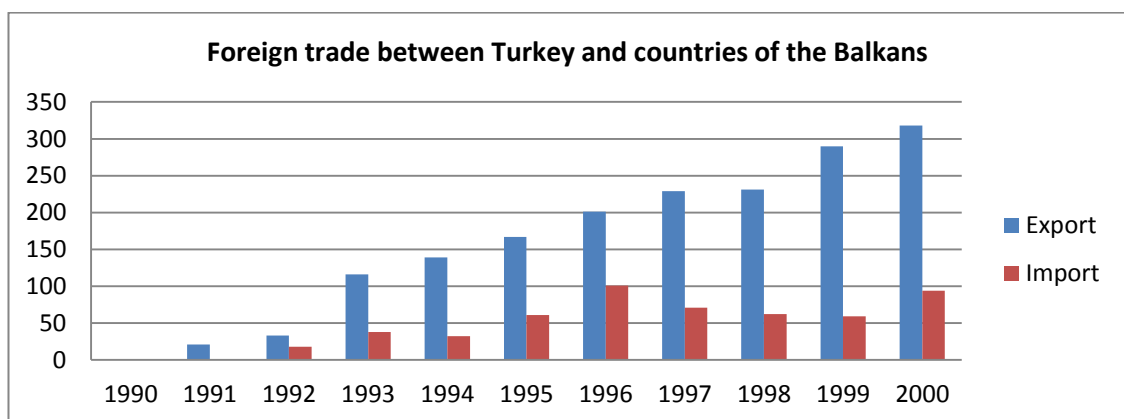


Figure 3: Foreign trade between Turkey and countries of the Balkans (Thousand dollars)¹²⁷

¹²⁶Figure 2 was created via scanning of the archive of BYEGM and AA. Visits with Bulgaria, Romania and Greece were excluded in this figure.

When looking at newspapers of this period, the majority of the columnists and authors considered Özal's foreign policy opening as an empty, adventurous and dangerous so criticized them except some, such as Cengiz Çandar, Hadi Uluengin, Zeynep Göğüş, Nur Vergin and some others with conservative newspapers, Zaman and Turkey.

The group led by Cengiz Çandar thought that the post-Cold War period provided new opportunities and responsibilities and Turkey should make peace with its history and appreciate these opportunities and so supported Özal.¹²⁸ Columnist of Cumhuriyet, Ali Sirmen, by referring to a speech of Özal, criticized his policies which stress to Ottoman while asserting that Özal did not know the history in his article named "Özal's School". Having also criticized the groups identified as Neo Ottomanist in the same article, Sirmen defined the approach of Özal as "Texas Tommix School".¹²⁹ (Milliyet, 13.01.1993)

Discourses and policies of Özal towards the Balkans were received positively particularly by the American press due to both his personal relations and the attitude in the Gulf Crisis. Negative and critical reactions came from Greece and Serbia. Journal of "Pondiki" published in Greece referred to the statement of Serbian leader Radovan Karadžić regarding that Turkey desires to enter in Bosnia by passing through Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Sancak by the dream of "from Adriatic to the Great Wall of China and mentioned that this desire of Turkey would constitute a great danger for Europe."¹³⁰

Serbian press also claimed that Turkey's intention of establishing an Islamic state under its own hegemony in Bosnia Herzegovina has underlain the demand of Özal as "the crisis should be solved with military intervention" he stated during his visits in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Croatia through based on the official declaration of

¹²⁷Ekonomi Bakanlığı, Dış Ticaret Verileri, see at <http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=index&CFID=7476556&CFTOKEN=22302470> / (Access: 20.04.2012) Figures of Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania are not included.

¹²⁸Cengiz Çandar, "Türkiye, Bosna ve Tarihle Barışmak," *Yeni Türkiye Dergisi*, 1/3, Mart-Nisan 1995, p.282

¹²⁹Cengiz Çandar, Türkiye Tarihi İle Barışmalı, Gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr(Access: 24.05.2012)

¹³⁰ Ayın Dergisi, Basın Yayın Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü, 24.12.1992

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia during the period when the Bosnian crisis was ongoing.¹³¹

In conclusion, it is seen that the discourses were dominant and policies were far from strategy and rationality during this period being analyzed on initiative Balkan policies of Özal. It is possible to see that in speeches of deputies in the budget talks and the discourse used by the leaders at home and abroad. Absence of strategic planning and limited economic situation as well as classical status quo attitude of the ministry of foreign affairs inhibited the realization of desired policies. On the other hand, these extreme discourses exposed to Neo Ottomanist or expansionist accusations damaged policies towards the region in respect of its reflections. As an example, Turkey was tried to be sent away from the Dayton peace process by reason that it was not neutral. Despite all, Turkey returned to the Balkans with its discourses and policies in this period. However, initiative policies towards the region could not be sustained and the Balkans was left to be forgotten again after a short time, especially after the end of wars and conflicts. Degree of commercial and economic relations with Balkan countries and the decline in the number of official visits mutually held during this period also support this view.

¹³¹ Ayın Dergisi, Basın Yayın Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü, 24.02.1993

CHAPTER 4

AKP and TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

4.1. New Era: AKP in Power

Established in 2001, AKP came to power in the general elections of 2002. Although being a new party in the Turkish politics it is not a formation with no past and substructure. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that AKP emerged as a result of evolution of right-wing political parties and Islamic movements in the 30-40 year-Turkish politics. However, in the first stage AKP was founded manpower who left Wirtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) and originally came up with National Outlook (Milli Görüş) later the party was shaped and expanded with the participation of politicians, academicians and representatives of people who has the background of conservative, moderate İslam, democrat, nationalist, leftist and liberal.¹³² On account of this, the roots of AKP may be taken back to the Motherland Party (ANAP), National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi) and Democrat Party (Demokrat Party).

In order to understand AKP's rise to power and afterwards its foreign policy we need to consider both internal and external factors of the period. Looking at the domestic aspect, neo-liberal policies which started with Özal pushed the rise of middle class and created a new stratum called "Anatolian bourgeoisie". After Özal period, Turkey experienced a long term of coalition governments which caused some serious economic and political instability. In this 10 year period (1991-2001) Turkey encountered three economic crises, February 28 (1997) postmodern coup and plus these increase in the terrorist attacks of PKK in the South Eastern Turkey. With regard to international arena and foreign policy, as if as a reflection of domestic atmosphere Turkey's foreign policy was not clean-cut. By the Helsinki Summit 1999 the relations with EU was full of disappointments and problematic relationships with neighbors. On the other hand world witnessed September 11 attacks which was said to be biggest terror attack America and world had witnessed.

¹³² Fulya Ereker, published PhD's Thesis, *Dış Politika ve Kimli; İnşacı Perspektift Türk Dış Politikası Analizi*, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara, 2010, pp.216-218

Concisely, the situation at home and world allowed AKP to come out a new prospect in the Turkish politics. In a very short time period-one year- the party with help of charismatic leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan managed this chance and come to power. AKP's rise to power was a dramatic shift in Turkish political history. Being in power in its second term this party trying to harmonize the traditional and Islamic elements of Turkish culture.¹³³

4.2. AKP's Foreign Policy and Davutoğlu's Factor; Strategic Depth

In the AKP's program there are some basic objectives that AKP government shall give importance and declare to pursue. Underlining and remarking the Turkey's geopolitical situation and potential and the post cold environment which brought many opportunities, AKP first shall develop a multidimensional foreign policy, second, AKP shall follow a realistic foreign policy which is respectful for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of others and free from prejudices in cooperation with regional and international organizations, third, being an element of stability in the region Turkey shall take initiative in the neighbouring regions to prevent and make contribution to the solution of crisis, and finally, in connection with this study Turkey shall reshape Balkan policy take cognizance of historical, cultural ties with the region.

In order to comprehend the main principles on which the foreign policy of AKP is based, it would help to begin with the evaluations made by Prof Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu who conducted a duty as the foreign policy advisor of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the leader of the AKP and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, between the years of 2002 and 2009 and who was appointed to the post of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the AKP Government in March 1, 2009, in his book entitled Strategic Depth.

In the chapter named "Lack of Strategic Theory" of the aforementioned book, Davutoglu claims that the real potential of Turkey in terms of foreign affairs is not completely understood and draws a link between this situation and the status-quo foreign policy which was particularly in question during the period of coalition governments in 1990s. Nonetheless, he also evaluates the assertion within the discourse of "From the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" and the silence which followed and

¹³³ Fuller, *op.cit*, p.29

the sentimental tides in the relations with USA from the point of view of lack of strategic theory.¹³⁴

Analysing the lack of strategic theory in the foreign policy of Turkey under three titles- Institutional and structural background, historical background and psychological background- Davutoglu makes evaluations and suggestions as well.

Institutional and structural background is the process of establishing foreign policy where primarily Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TGNA, National Security Council, Turkish General Staff and relevant ministries and other governmental institutions, political parties, academic and research institutions and governmental and non-governmental political actors take part.¹³⁵ These bodies which stand as the most significant agents in establishing strategic theory are to get involved in this process as a whole along with an analysis which is far from being uniform and limiting. However, considering the current situation, we see that the institutions, agencies and structures in question cannot create an efficient and integrated effect due to the deficiencies in terms of financial and institutional infrastructure.

In respect of historical background, the foreign policy of Turkey has shown reflexes which are identical to that of the final stage of Ottoman Empire. This dimension has an aspect which increases the weakness within the institutional bodies in the Republic period with the concrete effect of historical experiences. Inspired by a static approach particularly in its last century, Ottoman Empire, which did not adopt a colonist and imperial foreign policy, followed “the policy of either autarchy or absolute abandonment”. The Balkans, Caucasia and Middle East policy of Ottoman Empire in the 20th Century stands as a typical example of a vicious circle stuck in the middle of “either autarchy or absolute abandonment” and of a lack of strategy.¹³⁶ A similar lack of strategy example can be the fact that no sufficient policy was established for the Ottoman remainders on the Balkans during the Republic Period following the abandonment of the region. The very same indifference can be observed in the case of the lack of strategy for the cognate and relative communities on the regions of Balkans

¹³⁴ Ahmet Davutoglu, “*Stratejik Derinlik*” *Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Konumu*, İstanbul, Küre, 2009, pp.45-47

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.52-53

and Central Asia during the cold war. Turkey should get through the sad memories of Balkan War and the fears of the cold war period and get ready for tactic formations at the regional and global level in psychological respect any more.¹³⁷

In respect of psychological background, the contradictions which are undergone in terms of identity and history consciousness negatively affect the development of the strategic mind-set and the creation of strategic theory.¹³⁸ Turkey has denied and marginalized the Ottoman Empire, which is its predecessor and Ottoman culture for long. This identity conflict manifests itself in many national and international issues of modern Turkey. While Turkey regards Sevres as an experience from which we are to take lessons in its foreign policy, it must also consider the glorious time of Ottomans as a horizon.¹³⁹ Taking the similar historical experiences of the UK, France and Germany and their current state into consideration, Turkey should get rid of its decomposed identity making peace with its history.

Turkey is a country with a historical and geographical profoundness and a highly dynamic capacity. In the world politics of the period of post-cold war Turkey is to solve its institutional and structural problems, analyse the historical and psychological factors well, get rid of the vicious cycle and the complexes caused by these issues and create a common strategic mind-set which will activate the human resource in order to leave its passive position and become an active actor.¹⁴⁰

Turkey has a unique position in respect of its historical accumulation. Turkey is not a nation state having occurred with the conjectural motives; on the contrary, it is the manifestation of a historical heritage coming to the existence as a result of an intense and long lasting revenge with the dominant civilisation which forms the international system. This historical heritage comes from the Ottoman Empire who was the sole state over European civilisation for centuries.¹⁴¹

However, during the cold war, Turkey could not activate this power in necessary factors and focussed on continuing its existence within a narrow frame with the political and

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.58

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.59

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.61

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.65-66

military strategies for the perspective of the borderlines security. This perspective continued during the first years of the post-cold war period in a large scale. In addition to its psychologically unprepared state, Turkey was far from having the economic and military elements of financial capacity. The fact that Turkish Air Forces did not have the capacity to carry out an operation even in Balkans during the Bosnia crisis stands as the best example of this situation.¹⁴²

Having the character of a regional state within the international system because of its location, Turkey needs to get rid of its position stuck between the poles of the post-cold war period. In this new period manifesting a character of power balance, Turkey can strengthen its international position by creating its own sphere of influence combining its rich historical accumulation, geopolitical and geo-economic potential with an effective and consistent.¹⁴³

In conclusion, Turkey has undergone a change similar to that of the developments experienced after the cold war in the international field. During this period a swift transformation was seen in the politics and all the layers of the society. As a result of this transformation the peripheral role which had been casted to Turkey by the dominant political elite was proven to be in inconformity with the social facts, historical accumulation and future visions. This uniaxial and shallow point of view fails to correspond the realities of Turkey, which is both a European, Caucasian, Middle Eastern and a Mediterranean country. Being a fundamental and inseparable element of these regions, Turkey should get through its passive position as a superficial bridge between regions in this new era.¹⁴⁴ In fact, considering Turkey as a “bridge country” is not always a quite well determination. Turkey, situated at the heart of Eurasia, is in fact a central country. Yet, it is a “bridge country” as it is found on the north-south, east-west passage-ways at the same time.¹⁴⁵ The advantage coming from its unique location, rich historical accumulation and the strong identity may render Turkey an active player and a problem solver in the world politics breaking away static parameter policy and single parameter policy and realizing a transformation in strategic mind-set.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.75

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.78

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92-93

¹⁴⁵ Ahmet Davutoglu, *Küresel Bunalım, “11 Eylül Konuşmaları”* (Ed: Faruk Deniz), İstanbul, Küre, 2011, p.191

In order to comprehend the foreign policy of AKP it would be beneficial to study, over the major subjects and regions, how these evaluations and analysis made by Davutoglu regarding the foreign policy of Turkey affected the Turkish foreign policy of AKP period and how they manifested themselves on the practices.

As it was discussed before, the time when the AKP came into power coincided a period of significant developments observed both in Turkey and abroad. This aspect of AKP period bears a similarity with the domestic and foreign developments of Ozal period. During this epoch in question, the traces of a multi-dimensional foreign policy can be observed just like in the case of Ozal period. AKP Government not only took the vision drawn by Ozal a few steps further and developed it but also it implemented a multi-dimensional policy from the East to the West, from the North to the South, primarily with the regions having historical, social and cultural bonds with Turkey.

It is possible to find the core of this multi-dimensional foreign policy pursued by AKP starting from the very first years of its power within an approach far from conflicts, supporting the cooperation and consensus the focus of which is zero problem with the neighbours and win-win principles. In many foreign policy incidents of the period the traces of this approach can be observed.¹⁴⁶ Some of these are as following: the rigorous integration process with EU, its stance in the USA's intervention to Iraq, supporting the resolution proposals based on the dialogue carried out with the Secretary General of UN in the issue of Cyprus and equally developing a close relationship with Greece, its foreign policy aiming at preventing and solving the crisis in the Middle East and good neighbourhood relations developed with Syria, trilateral summit launched with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia in order for the stability and peace in Balkans, protocol talks launched with Armenia and its co-presidency of the Alliance of Civilisations against the conflict of civilisations.

During the first years of AKP, EU had become the primary subject in the domain of foreign policy. This was important for AKP to have its legitimacy approved in the international arena and to continue to its existence at home.¹⁴⁷ Nearly half century old

¹⁴⁶ Kemal İnat and Burhanettin Duran, "AKP Dış Politikası: Teori ve Uygulama", *Doğudan Batıya Dış Politika; AK Partili Yıllar*, (Ed: Zeynep Dağı), Ankara, Orion, 2006, p.15

¹⁴⁷ F.Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership; US-Turkish Relations in Era of Global Geopolitical Change*, Santa Monica, Rand, 2010, p-97

up-and-down relations between Turkey and EU continued on the same course in 1990s. Turkey-EU relations, once more, entered into a stationary period with the coup d'état of 1997 which is qualified as a post-modern military coup. This situation was caused by the attitude of military and political authorities of that period against the democratic and liberalist EU rather than the reaction of EU to those undemocratic interventions. Consequently, this attitude of Turkey was reflected on the report of EU Commission. In the report issued on July 16, the fact that Turkey was far from meeting the Copenhagen criteria was underlined and the political and economic problems and instabilities of Turkey was stated to be eliminated necessarily. Nevertheless, the majority of the society proved to have views different from those of the army and to embrace the EU and EU values during the process following the February 28. The fact that the relations with the EU became normal again within a considerably short time elapsed and that Turkey's recognition as a candidate country at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 is important reasons of this consequence. This case where EU opened the door slightly for Turkey in this fragile period is evaluated to be done with influence of EU's policy of preventing the possibility of Turkey's other orientations and choices. As a matter of fact Turkey's position and importance on its region were still highly significant for both EU and US and Israel.¹⁴⁸ In such an atmosphere, having entered to the Turkish political life as the injured party of the process of February 28, AKP set EU membership as its primary target after receiving the support of the public and the wind of EU which had started with the Helsinki Summit, developing a liberal and democratic discourse. In one of his speeches, Erdogan defined EU as the most significant democratization project of Turkey after the foundation of the republic.

After a short while when AKP came to power, various reform packages and constitutional amendments were carried out in order to launch the negotiations with EU. Furthermore, new bodies were formed primarily within the Prime Ministry, TGNA and other ministries with the aim of preventing the violence of human rights. As a consequence of a keen desire and intense lobbying, EU decided to commence accession negotiations with Turkey on October 4, 2005. However, after a little while, the relations became tensed with the decision dated December 10, 2005 of European Court of Human

¹⁴⁸ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Dynamics, Bridge Across Troubled Lands*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 186-188

rights (ECHR) on Leyla Sahin regarding the headscarf. Erdogan harshly criticized decision stating “ECHR has no right to make such a decision... This is a type of decision which is to be made by *Ulema*”. This decision of ECHR caused serious discomfort on the grassroots of the AKP. On December 11, 2006, one year after this decision, EU declared that 8 chapters of the 35 phrases of the negotiations had been frozen on the grounds that Turkey had not fulfilled its obligations regarding the Customs Union. This developments and the decision of ECHR caused Turkey to lose its faith in EU; thus AKP slowed its pace in this respect. Hence, a public opinion survey conducted in 2006 showed that the rate of those who had supported Turkey’s EU membership declined by 25%.¹⁴⁹ Nicholas Sarkozy’s election as the president of France in 2007 rendered the Turkey-EU relations even worse. Some chapters of the negotiation which had already been launched were closed at that time. On March 2007, the proceedings instituted by the Constitutional Court regarding the closure of AKP did not only cause reactions in Turkey but also in EU. Adopting a manner to support the government within this process, EU agreed to open talks on two more chapters. AKP, in return, carried out certain amendments on Turkish Penal Code and founded the channel of TRT 6 which broadcasting in Kurdish. Moreover, the launching of the talks between two parties in Cyprus after the election of Dimitris Christofias as the president of Greek Cypriot in 2008 reflected a positive effect on the Turkey-EU relations.¹⁵⁰

However, in the following years AKP continued to fulfill the reform packages noted down on its agenda. While AKP was doing this, as it was stated by the politicians of AKP, the idea of that, whether the membership of EU is realized or not, Turkey must carry out the reforms required which were not less valuable than EU membership dominated.¹⁵¹

One of the most difficult developments faced by AKP in terms of foreign policy was the occupation of Iraq by USA and the decision which Turkey had to make. The September 11 attacks paved the way of new elements in respect of new threat perceptions and

¹⁴⁹ Gareth Jankins, *Political Islam in Turkey “Running West Heading East”*, New York, Pallgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp.177-178

¹⁵⁰ William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey “The Case of the AKP”*, New York, Routledge, 2010, pp.126-128

¹⁵¹ Ali Resul Usul, *The Justice and Development Party and European Union, “Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey; The Making of the Justice and Development Party”* (Ed; Ümit Cizre), New York, Routledge, 2008, pp.180-183

preventive measures in the foreign policy of USA. Contrary to previous practices, this new approach announced, in a way, that, if necessary, USA would not take the international cooperation into consideration in the fight against international terrorism. As a consequence of this attitude, USA declared a war against Iraq with the support of a few countries disregarding worldwide public opinion, EU and UN General Assembly.¹⁵² Turkey's Iraq policy at the pre-occupation phase was the peaceful resolution of the problem. This attitude continued during the post-occupation phase with the Motion of March 1 in spite of the different views within the AKP and all the pressure from USA. The fact that the motions enabling USA to use Turkish lands and air bases within the frame of Iraq operation were not approved by the Parliament made Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the leader of AKP annoyed with the concern that this would leave Turkey out of the process. However, this decision corresponded the expectations of AKP's grassroots being the result desired by Abdullah Gul, the then Prime Minister of Turkey, and Ahmet Davutoglu, the then Foreign Policy Advisor.

Not only did this decision of TGNA cause a shock in Washington but also Turkey was exposed to harsh criticism accusing Turkey with treachery.¹⁵³ Upon these reactions, in order to mend its tense relationship with the US, Turkey opened its air space for those aircrafts which were assigned within the operations. The tension and the issue of confidence between Turkey and the US which had become its neighbor beginning with the occupation of Iraq continued for a while. Certain events such as the detention of 11 Turkish commanders in Suleymaniye on July, 2003 and then Turkey's reluctance to take necessary measures for the dissolution of certain components of PKK deployed in Northern Iraq are some of them.¹⁵⁴ Since the beginning of 2005, the relationship has improved with the keen and intense initiatives of both sides. Ongoing conflict and instability in Iraq, the reactions against Iraq war in American public opinion, the need for Turkey in the region and Turkey's allocating the Incirlik air base to USA for logistic use were effective in this normalization process. Later on, USA continued to support Turkey's EU membership concretely and took a couple of steps for the isolation imposed to Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to be abolished. In the period

¹⁵² Tayyar Arı, Türkiye'nin Orta Doğu Politikası ve ABD İle İlişkiler, *Doğudan Batıya Dış Politika; AK Partili Yıllar*, (Ed: Zeynep Dağı), Ankara, Orion, 2006, p.133

¹⁵³ Larrabee, *op.cit.*, p-13

¹⁵⁴ Arı.*op.cit.*, p.137

which followed these, the high-level visits paid by USA and Erdogan's visit to Washington on November 2007 reanimated the relations.¹⁵⁵

The rejection of motion of March 1 by TGNA brought notable results in terms of both Turkey-USA relations and the general foreign policy of Turkey. Looking at the issue from the aspect of USA, first of all, Turkey declared that it was not a State carrying out every wish of USA unconditionally as it has been in the past anymore. This meant that the demands of USA the legitimacy of which was proven to be insufficient could be questioned and rejected if necessary. Second of all, USA started to pay more attention to Turkey regarding the politics in this region after the attitude of turkey in the Iraq war. Touching upon the subject from the aspect of general foreign policy, the case of March 1 bears similarities with the "one minute" case in Davos. According to the analysts, the case of March 1 increased the reputation of Turkey in the world. Turkey, thus, became an actor deserving attention in the eyes of the EU, Russia, and Middle East and even democrats of USA.¹⁵⁶

Apart from the Iraq issue, three main topics are seen to be in question in the relations between USA and the "New Turkey" which has a deeper self-confidence and is more assertive. These are as following: Iran policy of USA, the sanctions enforced to Iran by USA and Turkey's attitude which is different from that of USA; secondly, Turkey-Israel relations; and finally Turkey-Armenia relations. For a long time, Turkey has preferred the diplomatic solutions rather than the sanction and conflict based policies of USA against the nuclear works of Iran despite all the pressure of USA. Turkey holds its attitude towards USA both in international arena and within UN in this direction. On one hand, Turkey asserts that it understands the concerns of USA; on the other hand it tries to convince Iran to use other methods for nuclear enrichment. Because of the Jewish Lobby, the ups and downs in the relations between Turkey and Israel have the power to directly affect the relations between USA and Turkey. The negative course of relations having started with the "one minute" case in Davos and still ongoing with the incident of "Mavi Marmara" worries Washington. Even if it is done indirectly, AKP government criticizes the silence of Washington regarding the unlawful actions of Israel. Yet, this criticism is limited at a certain point and cannot be advanced. At this

¹⁵⁵Larrabee.*Op.cit*, p-19

¹⁵⁶Gurkan Zengin, Hoca " *Türk Dış Politikasında Davutoğlu Etkisi*" İstanbul, İnkılap, 2010, pp.149-151

point the influence of the certain realities on the security policies of Turkey can be seen. The effect which is similar to that of Turkey-Israel relations is live through each year on the anniversary of so-called Armenian Genocide which is the main theme of the Turkey-Armenia relation because of the strong Armenian Diaspora.¹⁵⁷ Even though the two countries which have been allies for a half century have gone through some breaking points, deeply-rooted relations and interests of both sides enables them to overcome these breaking points swiftly. However, it seems to take long time for the US to understand the reflexes of Turkey in the period of AKP. In conclusion, despite all its breaking points and strategic choices, AKP keeps regarding USA, its rooted ally in the foreign policy, as a critical tool in its foreign policy.¹⁵⁸

With the fall of the Soviets, a new era started with regards to the political and economic relations between the two countries. The roots of this era go back to the “Treaty on the Principles of Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation” which was signed on 25th May 1992. This treaty enabled the two countries to acknowledge the principles based on not interfering in one another’s internal affairs on a reciprocal basis, respecting the territorial integrity and the method of diplomatic relations regarding the solutions of problems. A profound cooperation period commenced in the economic relations despite the power conflicts and tension centred on Caucasia and Central Asia in the relations between Turkey and Russia between 1992 and 1999.

In 2000s, the relations between Turkey and Russia entered into an era of friendship and mutual trust on all fields from the bilateral cooperation to the regional cooperation. The relations, which could not advance on a healthy surface due to threat perceptions of the past, developed and reached to a level of a multidimensional partnership thanks to the rapprochement between the nations, and since they had complementary economic structures and shared the common fate of the same geography.

The rejection of the motion of March 1 in TGNA and the policy pursued by Turkey afterwards may be counted as the beginning of a new era in the relations between

¹⁵⁷ F.Stephen Larrabee, “*The New Turkey and American-Turkish Relations*”, Insight Turkey, Vol.13, No:1, Winter 2011, pp-6-9

¹⁵⁸ Fuller, *op.cit*,p.307

Turkey and Russia. The fact that Turkey, who had been a close ally of the US, adopted an attitude against the invasion of Iraq was welcomed by the Russia. This independent stance of Turkey changed the image of Turkey in the eyes of Russia and contributes to establish an environment of confidence.¹⁵⁹

In the process afterwards, the relations between Russia and Turkey gained a momentum and the number of the high-level visits augmented. The visit paid by Putin in the year of 2004 is important to show the progress in the relations of two countries mainly because it was the first visit of a head of state from Russia after 32 years of break. The Joint Declaration on Further Deepening of the Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership between Republic of Turkey and Russian Federation which was signed in the course of the visit of Putin brought a new depth to relations between the two countries. After the visit of Putin, the Prime Minister Erdogan went to Russia along with a crowded delegation composed of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen in order to make the opening of a Turkish Centre of Trade in Moscow and to conduct a series of meetings. During the meetings, consultations were made primarily on energy and on regional and global issues.¹⁶⁰

A concrete result of the cooperation between two countries on the field of economy is the completion of the project of the Blue Stream. The opening of the Blue Stream natural gas pipeline was made on 17th November 2005 in Samsun with the attendance of Putin. With the realization of Blue Stream Project, “Turkey has become the second important partner of Russia after Germany.”¹⁶¹

Taking the sensitivity of Russia into consideration as well, Turkey is pursuing policies to develop relations with Caucasian and Central Asian countries with which it has historical and cultural ties on all fields. In this period, a high consideration has been paid to open and develop energy and transportation corridors such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline, and Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway.

¹⁵⁹ Bülent Aras, *Türkiye ve Rusya Federasyonu: Çok Boyutlu Ortaklık*, SETA Analiz, Ağustos 2009, p.7

¹⁶⁰ Erdoğan İşadamlarıyla Rusya Zirevesi Yaptı, see at <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/01/11/eko.101.html> (Access: 09.06.2012)

¹⁶¹ Türkiye Rusya İlişkileri, see at <http://moscow.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission.aspx> (Access:09.06.2012)

Beginning from the second half of the 1990s, Turkey has rearranged its relations with the republics of Central Asia and Caucasia on a basis of the principle of mutual interest and sovereign equality. After 2000s, Turkey worked to further develop the relations with these countries in question. In this sense, while Turkey has been revising the agreements concluded on the fields of economy, commerce, education, science, culture, sports etc. on one hand, it has concluded strategic partnership agreements with these countries on the other. In the international arena, Turkey has always stood by the countries of this region and supported their integration with the European and Atlantic institutions.¹⁶²

AKP government has always looked for the new formations at institutional level in order to strengthen the social and cultural cooperation with the republics of Central Asia and Caucasia. In this period, in addition to TIKA and other institutions and foundations, Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (YTB), Yunus Emre Institute (YEI) took the stage as important actors for the integration of Turkey with Turkic Republics. From a general perspective, a perceivable increase can be observed in the cultural and social relations between Turkey and the countries of the region. Yet, considering the trend in 1990s, political and economic relations are proven to be not yet well settled.

After long years, Turkey started to pursue an active and assertive policy for Middle East and Africa in the time of AKP. Its policy supporting Palestine in the conflict between Israel and Palestine which constitutes a major issue of the Middle East policy was particularly qualified as an Islamization in the foreign policy of Turkey.¹⁶³ However when the core of the issue is considered, we can see that this initiative in the foreign policy of Turkey is not too simple to be degraded merely to Israel-Palestine conflict. For instance, even on the very first months of its accession to power, in the face of Depression of Iraq and then the invasion by USA, AKP didn't meet the expectations of USA, even though it was in a way by accident. In other words it did not become a party of the war. Besides, this period became both an inspiration and an indicator of AKP's

¹⁶² M.Benli Altınışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey in World Affairs, "Challenges of Continuity and Change"*, New York, Routledge, 2005, pp.129-131

¹⁶³ Angel Rabasa and F.Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political İslam in Turkey*, Santa Monica, Rand, 2008, p.86

foreign policy from then on. AKP not only continued its close relationships with Iran in spite of USA's decision of sanction, but also proposed a period of negotiations based on diplomatic solution with Iran to the third parties. At the same time, Turkey concluded a memorandum with Iran on the transfer of Iranian and Turkmenian gas to Europe in June 2007 Memorandum of Understanding to transport 30 billion cubic meters of Iranian and Turkmen gas to Europe. With this memorandum, Turkey wanted to diversify its providers in order to remove the risk of being dependent to one single provider.

The fact that Turkey joined to the Lebanon UN Peace Keeping Force with a troop composed of 1000 soldiers is particular striking. As it is known, Turkey had always tried not to get directly involved in the crisis of the Middle East.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore the close cooperation developed between Turkey and Syria in the power of AKP is an unusual progress in the Middle East policy of Turkey. Despite the reservation and discomfort of USA and the EU, upon the proposal of Council of High Level Cooperation between Turkey and Syria, the joint council of ministers met two times, once in Gaziantep and once in Aleppo in 2009. During these meetings many significant decisions were made and implemented following the signature of various agreements. Discourse and policies of Erdogan for Israel have been on a level and tone which has never been adopted by any other Prime Minister of Turkey up to now. In spite of the cooperation between the two countries on the fields of military and intelligence, Erdogan harshly criticizes Israel's Westbank and Gaza operations.

Despite some prejudices dating back to the recent history, the Erdogan's government has started new initiatives in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and also in the other countries of the region primarily on political and economic fields. Along with the Middle East region, AKP has launched an African opening based on humanitarian aid and opened more than 20 embassies in the region. From a general perspective, in the period of AKP, Turkey desires to have a more active role both in Middle East and in Africa via some organizations such as Arab League and OIC. In this context, Turkey has launched some studies on judicial legislation which are to provide a basis for the cooperation and accordingly signed visa exemption agreements with many countries.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p.87-88

To summarize, bringing a new vision to the initiative policies starting with Özal, AKP has started to pursue a multidimensional and active policy based on two important concepts such as strategic depth and rhythmic diplomacy in the world politics.¹⁶⁵ Even though its effect and results are open to debate, it can be said that Turkey's relations with the EU, the US, Russia, the Middle East and Africa, the Central Asia and the Caucasia have gained a momentum, changed and had a transformation. In this period, Turkey launched relations and opened embassies in regions where it had not been before. The 15 embassies opened in Sub-Saharan Africa are the clear indications of this. This multidimensional policy of AKP has attracted attention particularly in Balkans and Middle East and caused claims that AKP left the West and the EU aside and is pursuing Neo-Ottomanist policies. However when AKP's policies, which are based on reconciliatory and diplomatic solution and on win-win, the zero problems and the crisis solution, are considered it can be seen that these accusations are not so legitimate.

Described to be Neo- Ottomanist since it is multidimensional, the foreign policy of Davutoglu is not anti-western. In fact what Davutoglu has been trying to do is to complement the ties and integration of Turkey with the West with the Middle East and Balkans.¹⁶⁶ In conclusion, for the foreign policy of AKP, it can be asserted that it is compatible with the approach drawn by Ataturk briefly as "peace at home, peace in the world". In other words, as it is frequently pronounced recently, despite its constructivist approach, the classical stance maintained in Armenian Protocols and the stance of taking back steps after Cyprus referendum proves the allegations of axis shift or deviation from realist policies to be wrong.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Laura Batalla Adam, Turkey's Foreign Polic in the AKP Era: Has There Been a Shift in the Axis?, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol:11, No:3, Fall 2012, pp.140-146

¹⁶⁶ Larrabee, *ibid.*, pp-91-94

¹⁶⁷ Ramazan Gözen, Türk Dış Politikasında Vizyon ve Revizyon, *Doğudan Batıya Dış Politika; AK Partili Yıllar*, (Ed: Zeynep Dağı), Ankara, Orion, 2006, p.95

CHAPTER 5

TURKEY'S BALKAN POLICY UNDER AKP

The Balkans, with its generally accepted description in the literature acknowledged as Ottoman legacy, is important in terms of Turkey's foreign policy and domestic stability for both its historical and geographical position.¹⁶⁸

Turkish minorities and Muslim communities in the Balkans constitute important spheres of influence for Turkey's policy. When the issue is evaluated in this sense, compared to other countries, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania, has a rather privileged place in the Turkey's Balkan policy. Hence, Turkey pays attention to the stabilization primarily of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of other countries in the region in political and economic terms. In parallel, Turkey maintains its close relations with all minority communities of the region with which it has historical and cultural bonds and enables to form an international judicial base which would ensure their presence.¹⁶⁹

5.1. The Principals of Turkey's Balkan Policy

According to Davutoğlu, Turkey's Balkan policy should be based on four main principals. The first principal is that Turkey should create policies in the Balkans which can be flexible and re-adjustable periodically depends on regional and global preferences as the post-Cold War period set off flexible and dynamic structure in the Balkans. The second principal is that Turkey should maintain its relations with all actors, even with those who are on the opposite side, in order for the flexibility in the policies as dynamic international conditions necessitate an uninterrupted contact with all international actors. The third principal is that Turkey should closely watch those influential powers that have historical bonds with the region and co-operate with the exterritorial influential actors against these actors if necessary. The fourth principal is that Turkey should establish real and diplomatic tools to remove the anti-Ottoman and anti-Turk image-making and propandas which are Serb and Greek based and which

¹⁶⁸Davutoğlu, "Stratejik Derinlik" Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, *op.cit.*, p.119

¹⁶⁹*Ibid*, pp-122-123

were formed against Turkey in the region and to enable Turkey to get involved in the domestic issues of the region.¹⁷⁰

The success of the Balkan policy which would be established in accordance with these principals depends on effective use of certain instruments. The first is to enable the Muslim communities in the region, particularly the Bosnians and the Albanians, to have a place in power structure. Secondly, being a Balkan, Caucasian and Middle Eastern country at the same time, Turkey should use regional and global powers with regards to the interregional dependency relationship. Thirdly, Turkey should use intraregional balances on the basis of countries in the Balkans. Fourth is to pursue a policy encompassing all countries of the region beside Bosnia and Albania. The final instrument is the use of NATO and OIC, where Turkey has a certain power, in the politics of the region as global tools efficiently.¹⁷¹

From the perspective within the context of above-mentioned principals and instruments, four factors, which make essential, influence and direct the Turkey's Balkan policy, are observed. The first one of them is, as frequently cited, common history with the region. This long association of more than six centuries caused a close interaction on various fields such as language, religion and culture, and therefore created a familiarity. The second is the human factor in which is associated with the former. This means the existence of Turkish minority in the region in spite of the migrations, which began in the 19th century and has continued until today on one hand, and the existence of the diaspora of Balkan origins came into existence in Turkey with these migrations on the other hand. As a result of this reality, Turkey has to consider both its citizens of Balkan origins at home and the Turkish minority in the region in its Balkan policy. The final is the geographical relation of Turkey with the region. All kinds of political and economic stability or instability which may emerge in the region have a potential to affect Turkey directly.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp.314-315

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp.320-321

¹⁷² Erhan Türbedar, Turkey's New Activism in Western Balkans; Ambitions and Obstacles, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No:12, 2011, pp. 140-142

5.2. Turkey's Political and Economic Relations with the Balkans

It would not be wrong to state that the period of AKP's Balkan policy was shaped in the direction of the principals laid down in the book of Strategic Depth by Davutoglu presented above. Considering the practices implemented up to now, first of all it is seen that Turkey confers with every country and each actor in the Balkans for peace and stability and attempts to improve political, economic and cultural relations. In order to reach this target, particular attention has been paid to establish councils of strategic cooperation and economic cooperation, to negotiate and communicate through high level visits and to the shuttle diplomacy in addition to classical diplomacy activities. The most concrete result of this practice is the environment of dialogue and trust established with Serbia with which Turkey had quite poor relations in 1990s. The new period in the relations manifested itself in the relations between Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with the tripartite advisory meetings launched by Davutoglu in 2009.

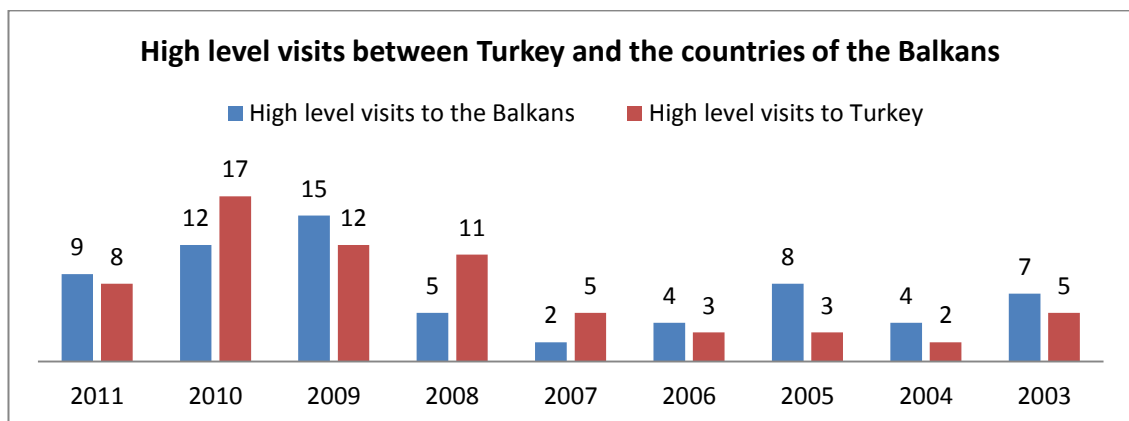


Figure 4: High level mutual visits between Turkey and the countries of the Balkans (2003-2011)¹⁷³

The second practice seen in the Turkey's Balkan policy is to contribute the integration of the countries of the region with the institutions of Europe and Atlantic. In this context Turkey pays particular attention to and supports the membership of Balkan countries to EU and NATO with the idea that it would contribute to the peace and stability of the region. Turkey played pioneering role in the membership of Albania to NATO in 2009

¹⁷³Figure 4 was created via the information scanning online archive of BYEGM and AA.

and the invitation for Bosnia and Herzegovina to Membership Action Plan of NATO in 2010.

Third practice is to cooperate with the extra regional actors against the regional powers when needed. One good example is the cooperation carried out with USA in the relations maintained with Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the independence process of Kosovo are the clear indicators of this fact. The OIC with the practices of Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina is also one of those significant tools used by Turkey in its Balkan policy in addition to NATO. Finally, Turkey pays particular importance to use the instruments of public diplomacy for the better communication and interaction. The public diplomacy activities and tools of Turkey shall be given in details in the end of this chapter.

5.2.1. Turkey and Bosnia Herzegovina

After 1990s, Turkey said “Hello, Rumelia!” once more and confronted with its history.¹⁷⁴ After the AKP came to power, the relations have been tried to move beyond a “hello”. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey’s Balkan policy can be said to have mainly centered on Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁷⁵ Thus, on one hand, Turkey has been providing persisting support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, Turkey helps Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop normal relations primarily with Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro and with other countries of the region and for its integration to Euro-Atlantic institutions.

2009 was a turning point for both Turkey’s opening to the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the minister of Davutoğlu. From now on, both the number of high level visits and the multi-dimensional and multi-vectored policy pursued are remarkable.

The period of negotiation and cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighbors constitutes the first step of the Balkan opening. Tripartite meetings were launched between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia in October 2009 with the initiative of Ahmet Davutoglu. “Meetings of Tripartite Balkan Summit” which were

¹⁷⁴ Zengin, *op.cit*,p. 301

¹⁷⁵ Davutoğlu,*op.cit*,p.435

held on November, 2009 in Istanbul, on December, 2009 in Sarajevo, in January, 2010 in Belgrade and in February, 2010 in Ankara brought important results. Firstly, Bosnia and Herzegovina started diplomatic relations with Serbia. Second, the Serbian Parliament condemned the Srebrenitsa Massacre; and Boris Tadić, the Head of State, attended the memorial ceremony of Srebrenica. Third, Ivo Josipović, the Head of State of Croatia, apologized from Bosnia and Herzegovina for the destruction which was committed by its country during the war of 1990s. Moreover, during the ongoing period the presidents of Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia have started to meet three times a year. This diplomatic success was watched by the EU, USA, Russia and the rest of the world with a keen interest.

Through high level visits to the region, on one hand Turkey made efforts to solution of the problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina via the multilateral talks as seen in the tripartite advisory meetings between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia. In addition to multilateral meetings, Turkey has made a great effort for the membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the international organizations. In this respect, the Contact Group of OIC and Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted two meetings, one held in Ankara and the other held in Istanbul, in 2009. During these meetings the importance paid to the territorial integration and political stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina was emphasized.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, Turkey launched South Eastern Europe-Balkans Meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations where Turkey stands as a co-chairman to be held in Sarajevo in 2009.

As a result of Turkey's request and great effort, Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to the Action Plan for NATO Membership in the Unofficial Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs which was held in Talin on 20 April 2010.¹⁷⁷ The support of Turkey in this process was welcomed by the Bosnia and Herzegovinian newspapers with the headlines such as "The great success of Turkey", "Ahmet Davutoglu, and the Inexhaustible Diplomat".¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, Turkey has played an active role in the bilateral and multilateral meetings which were held to discuss the territorial integration

¹⁷⁶ News from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, see at <http://sarajevo.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowAnnouncement.aspx?ID=116821> (Access: 07.06.2012)

¹⁷⁷ Ziyaretler, see at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/nisan_tr.mfa (Access:08.06.2012)

¹⁷⁸ Davutoğlu Yorulmaz Diplomat, see at <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=14519367> (Access:08.06.2012)

and political stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These are as follows: Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (SP), South East European Cooperation Process (SECP), Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), and Union for the Mediterranean. Moreover, the Sarajevo Embassy of the Republic of Turkey has been acting as the NATO Contact Point of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2011.

During AKP period, with the aim of strengthening the judicial grounds of the cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, not only were many agreements concluded in 1990s renewed but also more than 20 new protocols and agreements in many fields were signed.¹⁷⁹

In addition to these, there is an increase in the number of institutions and foundations that carry out activities in the region such as TİKA, Sarajevo Yunus Emre Cultural Centre opened in 2009 as the first cultural center abroad, and YTB established in 2010. In addition to these, Anadolu Ajansı (AA) reorganized its Sarajevo Office under the name of Regional Directorate of the Balkans which became to a very strategic instrument for the Turkey's Balkan Policy as being direct source for both providing and having prompt and true news between Turkey and the region. Beside these public institutions there two Turkish universities and many other educational organizations which also contribute to the relations between the two countries.

Besides, AKP has paid significant attention to the further development of its commercial and economic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreements and protocols concluded in the 1990s in all fields were renewed and new agreements were signed on the subjects such as preventing the double taxation and on the areas such as tourism. In addition to these, Turkish-Bosnian Business Council which was formed within the body of DEİK in 1995 carries out significant activities in order to improve the mutual economic relations reciprocally in a more active manner by being restructured.¹⁸⁰ In addition, the number of Turkish investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been on the rise. Ziraat Bank, Hayat, Sisecam Lukavac, the partnership of Turkish Airlines (THY) and Bosnia Herzegovina Airlines can be listed as some of those Turkish

¹⁷⁹ Uluslararası Anlaşmalar, see at <http://ua.mfa.gov.tr/> (Access: 10.12.2011)

¹⁸⁰ DEİK İş Konseyleri, see at http://www.deik.org.tr/Konsey/94/T%C3%BCrk_Bosna_Hersek.html (Access: 10.12.2011)

investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the information presented by Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FIPA), the direct investment by Turkey in Bosnia and Herzegovina had reached to 130 million Euros by the end of the 2009. The Turkish direct investments, which were ranked as the 9th among the other foreign investors, have exceeded 170 million dollars by the end of 2010.¹⁸¹

Even though the foreign trade volume between the two countries grew until the 2008 global economic crisis, both the size of this volume and the Turkish investments which are still around 170 million dollars show that the economic and commercial relations are far behind the desired level. Although the instability in the political and economic structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina has a partial effect in this situation, it can be said that there has been no noticeable increase in the Turkish investments in parallel with Turkey's discourse and policies.

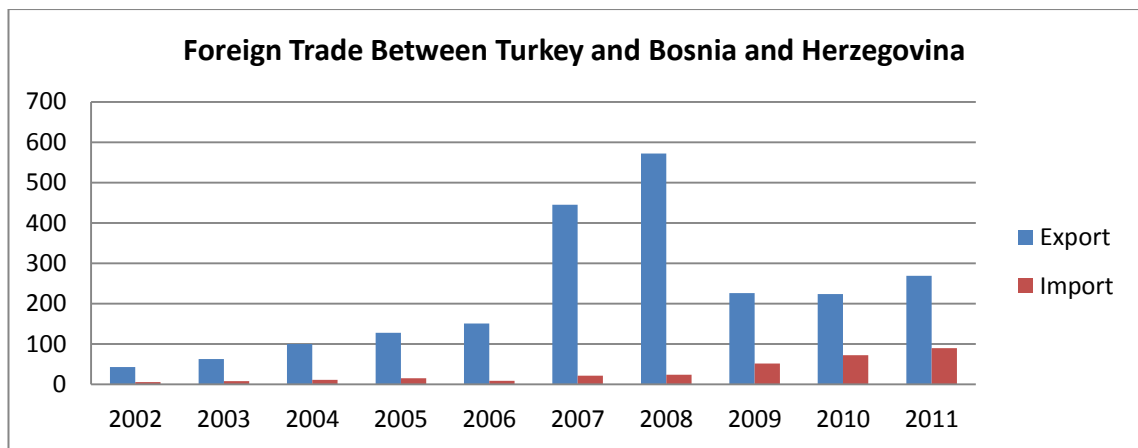


Figure 5: Foreign Trade between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Thousand Dollars)¹⁸²

With regard to the direct contacts, a great numbers of high level visits were carried out mutually between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina between the years of 2003 and 2011.¹⁸³ While the number of visits paid by the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey to Bosnia and Herzegovina is 25, the number of

¹⁸¹ T.C Saray Bosna Büyükelçliği Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği, Bosna Hersek Bülteni 2011

¹⁸² T.C Saray Bosna Büyükelçliği Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği, Bosna Hersek Bülteni 2011

¹⁸³ The high-level visits comprised only the visits paid by the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

visits at the same level paid by Bosnia and Herzegovina to Turkey is 20.¹⁸⁴ The visit paid by Erdogan along with the Serbian President in the year of 2010, at the memorial ceremonies of the 15th Anniversary of Srebrenica Massacre the visit paid by İlker Başbuğ, the Chief of General Staff, same year are the most remarkable ones. In this period, it is essential to look at the discourses used by leaders since they provide further understanding of the perception at the top-level as quoted below;

The Prime Minister Erdogan, in his traditional balcony talk that took place in the foreign media following the success in the 3rd general elections on 12 June 2011, put forth his party's interest and attention for Turkey's neighboring regions, "Today my Turkish brothers, Kurdish brothers, ... have won. Today, the hope of those who are oppressed and those who are aggrieved has won. Believe me, Sarajevo has won as much as Istanbul has... Today, the Middle East, the Caucasia, the Balkans, and Europe have won."¹⁸⁵

The speech addressed by Davutoglu at his visit to Sarajevo on 16 October 2009 where he said; "... "Like in the 16th century, which saw the rise of the Ottoman Balkans as the center of world politics, we will make the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East, together with Turkey, the center of world politics in the future. This is the objective of Turkish foreign policy, and we will achieve this. We will reintegrate the Balkan region, the Middle East and the Caucasus, based on the principle of regional and global peace, for the future, not only for all of us but for all of humanity"...¹⁸⁶ was favorably welcomed by the Bosnian; however in Serbia and Italy it received negative reactions and some media alleged this address as "neo-Ottomanist", "The Empire on Standby".

The President Abdullah Gül responded to the statements claiming Turkey to have neo-Ottomanist intentions which rose because of the similar discourse of prime minister and Davutoglu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his visit to Sarajevo in 2010 as follows: "From time to time we read contradictory news and articles on what Turkey wants to do

¹⁸⁴ The information regarding the high-level visits are obtained by scanning the archives of BYEGM and AA.

¹⁸⁵ Yeni Osmanlı Balkanları, see at <http://www.euractiv.com.tr/yazici-sayfasi/article/yeni-osmanli-balkanlari-beklemede-bir-imparatorluk-011745> (Access:19.08.2011)

¹⁸⁶ Multi Kulti and the Future of Turkish Balkan Policy, see at <http://www.esiweb.org/rumeliobserver/2010/12/04/multikulti-and-the-future-of-turkish-balkan-policy/> (Access:19.08.2011)

in the Balkans... What do we want to do? First of all, we would like an environment of permanent peace, security and stability to be provided and to take roots... We would like to see the Balkans to be identified with friendship, harmony and cooperation concepts, not with conflicts and hostility... I would like to point out frankly that we do not have a further agenda regarding Balkans.”¹⁸⁷

At the time when Turkey has already started the Balkan opening with Davutoğlu, Bakir Izzetbegovic, who paid his first visit to Turkey after being elected as head of the Presidential Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁸⁸, expressed his support for Turkey’s Balkan policy during his speech in Ankara, as: “In order to show my gratitude for your invariable help and support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am paying my first visit to Turkey. Turkey has taken a step in order to accelerate the relations in Balkans in a serious and wise manner... (together) we are carrying out a highly successful policy.”¹⁸⁹

The perception of Turkey in Bosnia and Herzegovina is varied in terms of both the divided ethnic structure of the country and the Bosnian Muslims regarded by Turkey as the remnants of Ottomans. From the perspective of the Bosnians, the perception Turkey and the Turk which are the successors of the Ottomans is largely positive because of the common history, culture and fate. However this perception is negative a small part of them, with the idea that the policies of Ottoman Empire in its final epoch caused the Bosnia and Herzegovina to fall behind era. As it can be understood from the figure below, while the Bosnians find Turkey’s foreign policy for the region to be effective, they expect it to prove further efficiency at the same time.

The perception of the Serbians and the Croatians which are the other ethnic groups is negative as a consequence of the negative propaganda resulted from the anti-Ottoman and anti-Turk curriculum of the primary and secondary education which is prepared based on the deficient or wrong information but on true information coming from historical facts.

¹⁸⁷ Ziyaretler, see at <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/sayfa/ziyaretler/bosnahersek-ozel/> (Access: 20.12.2011)

¹⁸⁸ Before the elections, even though he was offended by stance of Turkey for the elections, Bakir İzzetbegoviç paid his first visit to Turkey. The speech presented above was adressedin such atmosphere.

¹⁸⁹ Basın Açıklamaları, see at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bakanimizin-bosna-hersek-cumhurbaskanligi-konsey-uyesi-bakir-izzetbegovic-ile-yaptigi-ortak-basin-toplantisi-metni.tr.mfa> (Access:21.01.2012)

From the general perception of Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian ethnicities as a whole, it can be said that within the last decade, the image of Turkey has seen an increasingly positive trend because of the familiarization as a result of the rapprochement in terms of the relations, the growth in the Turkish economy, the development of trend on the human rights and freedoms, the practices of the institutions such as TIKA, Yunus Emre Institute, Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities, activities conducted on the region by the Turkish educational foundations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the contributions of Bosnian diaspora in Turkey and Turkish series which have received a high demand in the recent years.¹⁹⁰

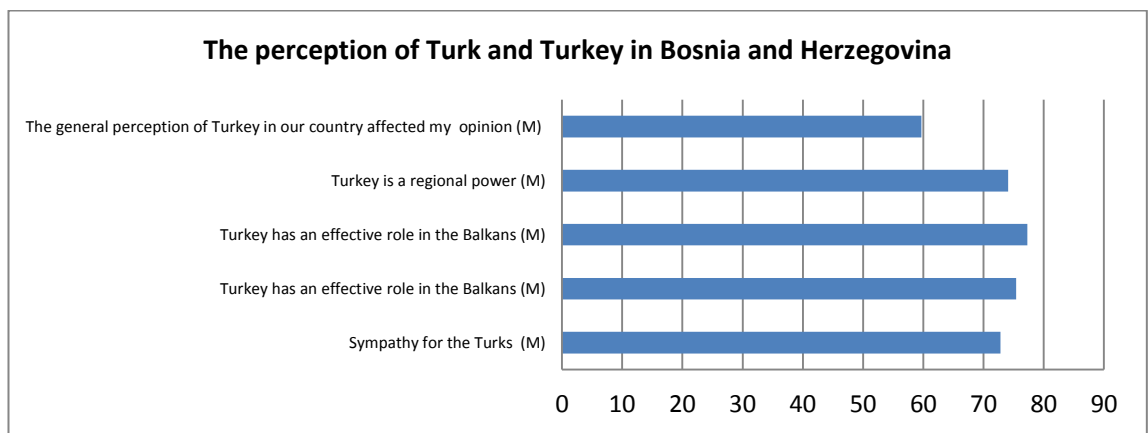


Figure 6: The Perception Turk and Turkey in Bosnia and Herzegovina (M: Muslim- C: Christian)¹⁹¹

5.2.2. Turkey and Serbia

After the separation of Serbia and Montenegro in the year of 2006, Turkey recognized Serbia as the successor of the previous state and since then the bilateral relations have continued without any interruption between Turkey and Serbia. The two country, mutually consider each other as important partner from various perspectives. Therefore, two countries regard and describe each other as neighbors. In the Turkish foreign

¹⁹⁰ Erhan Türbedar, Türk Dış Politikası Balkanlarda Nasıl Algılanıyor? See at http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1335363622-9.Turk_Dis_Politikasi_Balkanlar_da_Nasil_Algilaniyor.pdf (Access:17.06.2012)

¹⁹¹ M.Sadi Bilgiç and Salih Akyürek, Balkanlarda Türkiye ve Türk Algısı, Bilgesam, Report: 49, 2012
This report consists of the survey results conducted in Bulgaria, Albania, Croatia, Bosnai and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo. 2,127 participants, of whom 51% are women and 49% of the sample. Distribution of these participants according to profession is %75 univeristy students, %9 academicians, and %16 other university employees.

policy, Serbia has a crucial place since it is the primary country in terms for the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and holds the Bosnian and Muslim-Albanian population who has kinship bonds with the Turkish citizens of Bosnian and Albanian origins, lives in the Sandzak region, and as it is situated on the shortest road between Turkey and Western Europe because of its geographical position.

For the reasons mentioned above, Turkey supports the integration of Serbia to Euro-Atlantic institutions in parallel with its general policy for the region. The disruption in the bilateral relations due to the fact that Turkey recognized Kosovo in 2008 was overcome in a short time. And the relations with Serbia resumed in 2009 within the scope of tripartite advisory meetings and high level meetings. The high level meetings and contacts fastened the development of relations between the two countries. Many agreements such as Free Trade Agreement, Cultural Cooperation Protocol, Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement, Exemption of Visa were concluded in 2009. In 2010, exemption of visa was adopted reciprocally. Bilateral relations have been further advanced in line with the target of “strategic partnership”. High level visits and tripartite meetings manifested its effect on the normalization of the Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina relations.

Aware of the fact that it is the key country for the peace and stability in the Balkans, Turkey pays particular attention to diversify cooperation channels with Serbia at multilateral and international level. The tripartite advisory meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, the then President of EU in Belgrade, which was a meeting held on 20 April 2009 with the initiative of Turkey, is an example of this attention.

With respect to Sandzak region, Turkey started to watch closely, the social and economic situation of the Bosnian and Muslim-Albanian communities in the region after Davutoglu became minister of Foreign Affairs. Turkey tried to mediate for the resolution of some problems faced within the Muslim Community under the roof of Messiah. This initiative of Turkey regarded as positive and even necessary by the local community because of the perception coming from the past and cultural bonds.¹⁹²

¹⁹²In Sandzak the Muslim community is divided into two groups. Therefore, there are two different Messiah (head of the religious affairs). One of this is associated with Grand Mufti in Bosnia and

Turkey pays attention to the trend which has been developed in the political cooperation with Serbia to be represented in the economic and trade relations as well. In 2009, a considerable number of agreements and protocols were concluded in order to form the basis of the economic and commercial relations. As a result, in 2011, the foreign trade volume between two countries increased by a rate of 37,5% compared to the previous year. The introductory meetings increasingly conducted and the fairs organized each year by the Turkish-Serbian Business Council within the body of DEİK which was founded in 2002 and which commenced its activities in 2003 play a significant role in this increase.¹⁹³ It is striking that the foreign trade volume of Turkey and Serbia is bigger than that of Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Because of its geographical position, Serbia is an important country in terms of Turkey's trade with the EU. Therefore, the land transport realized passing over the Serbia is highly busy. In addition to land transport, air transport is being developed with the flights which were started in 2010 by Turkish Airlines.

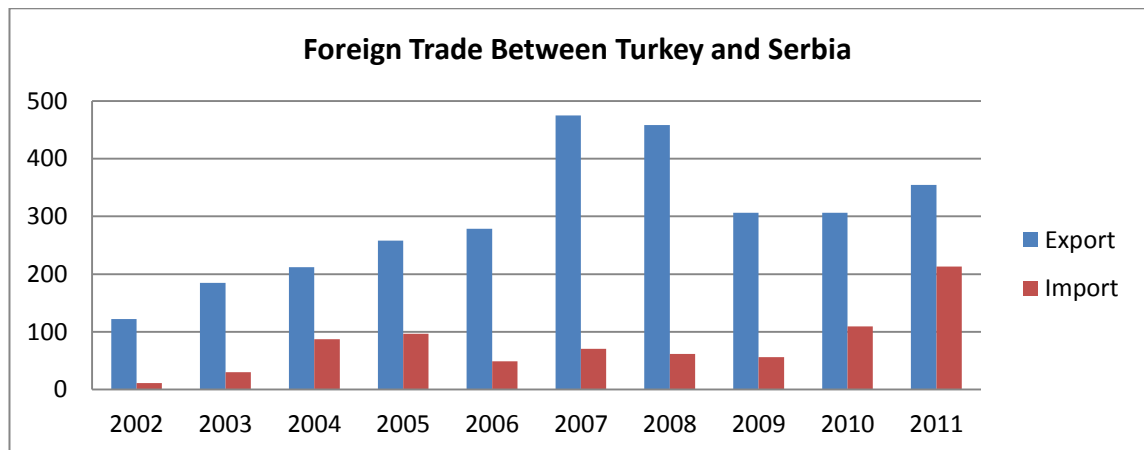


Figure 7: Foreign Trade between Turkey and Serbia (Thousand Dollars)¹⁹⁴

In addition to the trade relations, despite in small numbers, there are direct Turkish investments, particularly Efes Weifert Brewert and Hyatt Regency, in Serbia.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, Turkish companies receive invitations from Serbia for the investments in

Herzegovina while the other is to the Serbia. This separation in the Muslim community of Sandzak have negative effects on the mentioned community.

¹⁹³ DEİK, see at http://www.deik.org.tr/Konse/97/T%C3%BCrk_S%C4%B1rp.html (Access: 26.10.2012)

¹⁹⁴ T.C. Belgrad Büyükelçiliği Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği Ülke Bülteni 2011

¹⁹⁵ T.C. Belgrad Büyükelçiliği Ticaret Müşavirliği, Sırbistan Ülke Raporu 2010

hydro electrical power stations to be installed on the River of Danube and in wind power.

Increase in the political and economic relation reflected positively on mutual high level visits and discourse of the leaders. In his visit to Ankara in February 2010, Vuk Jeremić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, praised the contributions of tripartite advisory meetings between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia launched by Davutoglu for peace and stability in the region. His ideas regarding Turkey's policy in the region draws attention: "...As Turkey is a country of high effectiveness and importance, we also pay particular attention to this. Davutoglu, contributes to all these subjects with his fast, hardworking and efficient practices. I would like to assure you that these shall trigger positive developments in Balkans in the future. I can frankly remark that until now in the Balkans, he has accomplished things that could not be succeeded by others. I hope that in the other regions of the world, he shall be as successful as he was there and shall make a new history..."¹⁹⁶

During President Abdullah Gül's visit to Serbia, Boris Tadić, the President of Serbia, delivered a speech emphasizing the importance of the political relations developed between Serbia and Turkey. Expressing his satisfaction for the policies pursued by Turkey in order for the peace and stability in the Balkans, the words of Mr. Tadić is important mainly because it shows how Turkey is perceived by Serbia: "Turkey is a great state. Today, peace cannot be made without the peace with Turkey at any place or and spot of the world." At the same meeting, the hosting President remarked that he expected the Turkish investors to make more investments in Serbia, also stating that they had been trying to forget the incidents of 1990s.¹⁹⁷

The visit paid by Davutoglu to Sandzak region on 24 July 2009 after the meetings in Belgrade is a first because of its symbolic meaning in addition to the fact that it is the first official high level visit paid to the Sandzak Region of Serbia after the Balkan War of 1912. In his speech given in Sandzak, Davutoglu said "... We shall do everything for their (Sandzak) well-being and happiness... Sandzak is one of the last lands what we

¹⁹⁶ Basın Açıklamaları, see at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sayin-bakanimizin-sirbistan-disisleri-bakani-vuk-jeremic-ile-ortak-basin-toplantisi.tr.mfa> (Access: 20.10.2012)

¹⁹⁷ Cumhurbaşkanı Abdullah Gül Sırbistan'da, see at <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=12795880&tarih=2009-10-28> (Access 20.10.2012)

abandoned in this region... and today a community which is still attached to Turkey with a grand sense of belonging and whose relatives are in Turkey does still live here. As their Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, I was also considerably excited to see the Turkish Public next to them after all these long years...” During the rest of his speech, he explained that they took some initiatives and they were going to maintain these in order to solve the separation resulted from the competition between Rasim Laic and Suleiman Uglanin, the leaders of the two Bosnian parties in Sandzak.¹⁹⁸

From the general perspective in Serbia, the perception of and the attitude for Turkey has been fiercely negative due to the false transpose of the historical facts, Bosnian War and the discourses and policies of Serbian politicians. However, with the Balkan initiative of Turkey, which was launched in 2009, this perception started to change in parallel with the rapprochement in the relations. In addition to the increasing economic and political effect of Turkey in the region, media and communication channels played a significant role in this change. Turkish TV series are known to have contributed considerably in this respect. As it can be seen in the below-presented survey which was conducted in 2012, Serbs express that Turkey is a regional power with a rate of 52,6%, that it should have a more active role in Balkans with a rate of 48.8% and that it pursues an active policy in Balkans with a rate of 50,4%.

With regard to the Muslim community in Sandzak, the perception rate before the below-mentioned questions is between 70% and 80%. This high rate of perception is considered to be mainly resulted from the relationships by affinity with the opinion that we have a considerable number of citizens of Sandzak origins in Turkey.

¹⁹⁸Balkanlara Karşı Tarihi Sorumluluğumuz Var, see at <http://yenisafak.com.tr/politika/?t=26.07.2009&i=200658> (Access:26.11.2012)

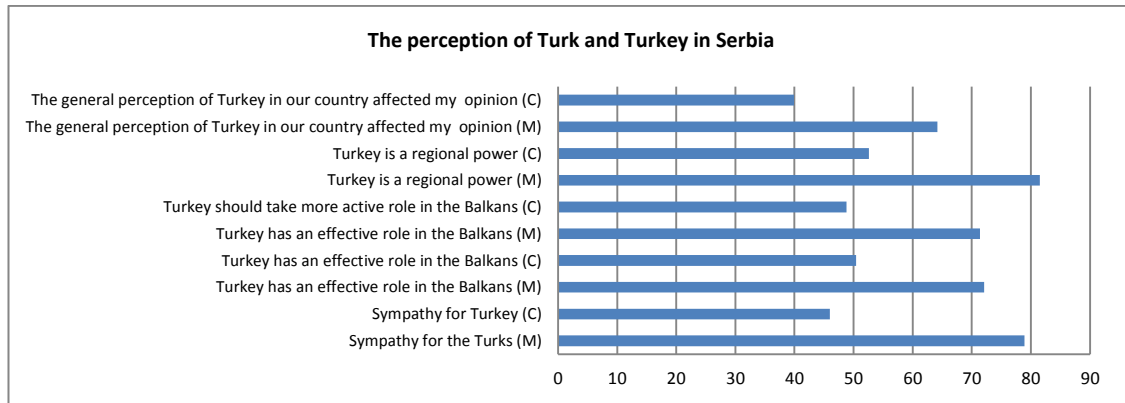


Figure 8: The Perception of Turk and Turkey in Serbia (M: Muslim-C: Christian)¹⁹⁹

5.2.3. Turkey and Montenegro

After its declaration of independence in 2006, Turkey became one of those first countries who recognized Montenegro. Within the scope of its Balkans policy pursued on the course of peace and stability, Turkey did also establish close relations with Montenegro. While the relations between Turkey and Montenegro, seeing each other as friendly nations, have been developed on political and economic areas, the number of high level visits has increased. Moreover, within the framework of its Balkan policy, Turkey pays particular importance to the integration of Montenegro to the Euro-Atlantic institutions and supports its related activities in this respect.

With separation of Serbia and Montenegro, Sandzak was also divided into two. For this reason, there is a Muslim Community composed of the Bosnian, Albanian and Montenegrin people in Montenegro. This community constituting 19% of the population in Montenegro is a significant element between the two countries in question.²⁰⁰ This reality, stemming both from the historical bonds and from the Diaspora of Sandzak origin in Turkey, brings an important aspect to the relation between the two countries. Therefore, Turkey, just like in the case of Serbian Sandzak, maintains its relations with the Muslim Community in the Montenegrin Sandzak. Furthermore, while providing its support for the country in general on all kinds of areas via its governmental agencies and institutions, Turkey emphasizes the importance that it pays for Sandzak.

¹⁹⁹ Bilgiç and Akyürek, *op.cit.*, Rapor

²⁰⁰ Türkiye-Karadağ İlişkileri, see at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-karadag-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa> (Access: 25.10.2011)

In addition Turkey has created an overwhelming impression with its activities conducted via TIKA both on the Sandzak region and on the other parts of Montenegro. TIKA has become one of the leading actors in the relations of the country with its support of more than 10 million dollar via its Podgorica office since the day it opened in 2007.

As it can be seen on the table presented below, the commercial and economic relations with Montenegro are considerably low. Yet, the foreign trade, which is small in volume, increased by 100% in the year of 2008 compared to the previous year and declined again due to the economic crisis in the oncoming years. In terms of foreign investments, Turkish investors are known to be unwilling to enter into the Montenegro market with grand capitals despite the fact that Montenegro Republic encourages them to make more investments. The fact that judicial framework has not yet completed plays a role in this situation. Nonetheless, even if the figures in question are so few, Turkish investors have made investments particularly on the food and tourism sector. DEIK carries out various introductory activities and fairs via Turkish-Montenegrin Business Council in order to increase the bilateral commercial relations and investments. To summarize, on one hand Turkey attempts for fulfilling of the necessary legal arrangements, on the other hand it makes an effort to develop transportation and communication channels with Montenegro to lay the appropriate foundation. The flights on the line between Istanbul and Podgorica launched by Turkish Airlines within this scope not only have a political importance but also have an economical significance.

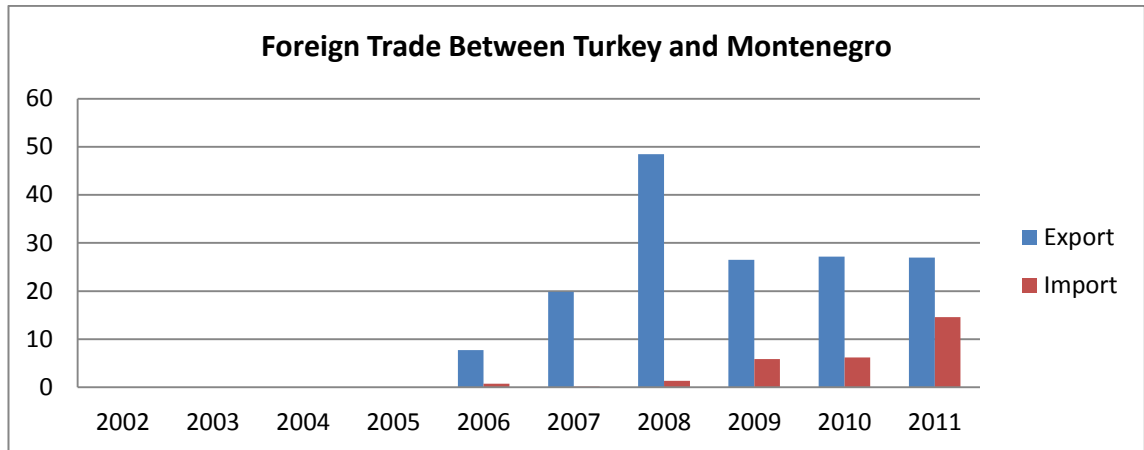


Figure 9: Foreign Trade between Turkey and Montenegro (Thousand Dollars)²⁰¹

As Montenegro is a recently-founded state, the mutual high level visits between the two countries are limited. The visits, the first one of which was paid by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro in 2008, reached to the high level with the visits paid by Davutoglu and the President Abdullah Gul in 2009. The President of Montenegro also carried out a visit to Turkey in 2011.

In an interview, Milo Djukonovich, the former President of Montenegro and the leader of the Socialist Party in power, describes the policy pursued by Turkey in Balkans using the following words: “I find the role of Ankara to be highly constructive. I have no prejudice in this respect. I know that there were some prejudices in the past as the Turkey expanded its role in Balkans; but we have no such concerns... The tripartite initiative between Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia serves for stabilization of the Balkans and helps the good cooperation between Turkey and Western Balkans.”²⁰²

In his visit to Montenegro in July 2009, touching on the historical relations between Montenegro and Turkey, Davutoğlu, expressed that the relations established with Montenegro would be further developed and the development aids of TİKA would increase stating, “We had been the first country to recognize Montenegro in 1878 and

²⁰¹ T.C. Podgorica Büyükelçiliği, *Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği Bülteni 2011*

²⁰² Milo Djukonovich’s address see at

http://zaman.com.tr/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?haberno=1258402&title=eski-karadag-cumhurbaskani-milo-djukanovicten-turkiye-mesaji-balkanlardaki-girisimleriniz-istikrar-ve-barisa-hizmet-ediyor (Access 14.11.2012)

were one of the first countries to recognize it in 2006. Yet, I was the first Minister of Foreign Affairs who ever paid a visit throughout our 130 years of past. This is a great honor for me (For Montenegro) This was a visit late in the date; yet it shall not be the last. For the next time, we shall not wait for another 130 years and not even for 130 days to pay these visits.”²⁰³

Turkey and Montenegro recognizes each other as friendly nations. This is a factor which was expressed at the highest level both by Abdullah Gul, the President of the Republic of Turkey, in its visit to Montenegro in 2009 and by Filip Vujanović, the President of Montenegro in his visit to Turkey in 2011. The fact that even the 52.6% of the Christian Community in Montenegro supports Turkey to pursue a more active policy in the Balkans according to the data presented on the graphic below seem to be in compliance with the discourses of the two presidents. As for the Muslim Montenegrins composed of the Bosnian and Albanian people in the region, the rate of those who have sympathy for Turks is 77.5% while the rate of those who think that Turkey should pursue a more active policy is 79.5%.

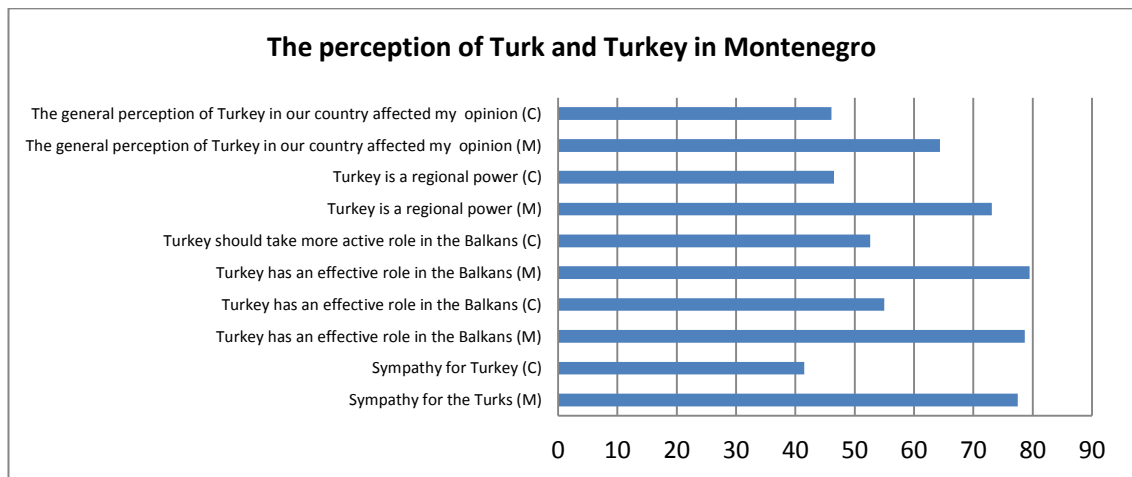


Figure 10: The perception of Turk and Turkey in Montenegro (M: Muslim-C: Christian)²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Ahmet Davutoğlu's address see at <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/?hn=71290> (Access:14.11.2012)

²⁰⁴ Bilgiç and Akyürek, *op.cit.*, Rapor

5.2.4. Turkey and Kosovo

For Turkey, Kosovo stands as an important country both because of its geographical position and its historical and cultural bound with Turkey. Beyond the cultural ties with Kosovo which is composed of Albanians by a rate of 90%, Turkey has kinship bonds with Kosovo. Turkish minority, whose population is nearly 20 thousand, in the country is another important factor. Being one of those first countries to recognize Kosovo after the declaration of its independence in 2008, Turkey, in fact, had always been in contact with Kosovo since 1999 via the Coordination Bureau of Pristina. Since 2008, Turkey has supported Kosovo not only for its territorial integrity, stability and international recognition but also in its relations with European Union and NATO. Kosovo pays particular attention to the issue of cooperation with Turkey in its institutional restructuring.

Placing an emphasis on the friendship of Turkey, Kosovo welcomes Turkey's existence in its lands via its agents within The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Turkey provides support to Kosovo on areas such as technical aid and cultural cooperation via TIKA, Yunus Emre Institution and other organizations in addition to the political relations. Furthermore, a large number of educational organizations of Turkish origin and NGOs carry out their activities in the country actively.

The economic and trade relations between Kosovo has been on the rise. As it can be seen on the table below, despite the economic crisis in 2008, its foreign trade volume continued to grow. Similarly, the foreign investment from Turkey to Kosovo continued. Today a large number of Turkish investors on a variety of sectors are present in Kosovo with a more than 1 billion dollar of investment. DEIK Turkish-Kosovo Business Council organizes presentations, briefings and fairs in order to increase the economic figures.

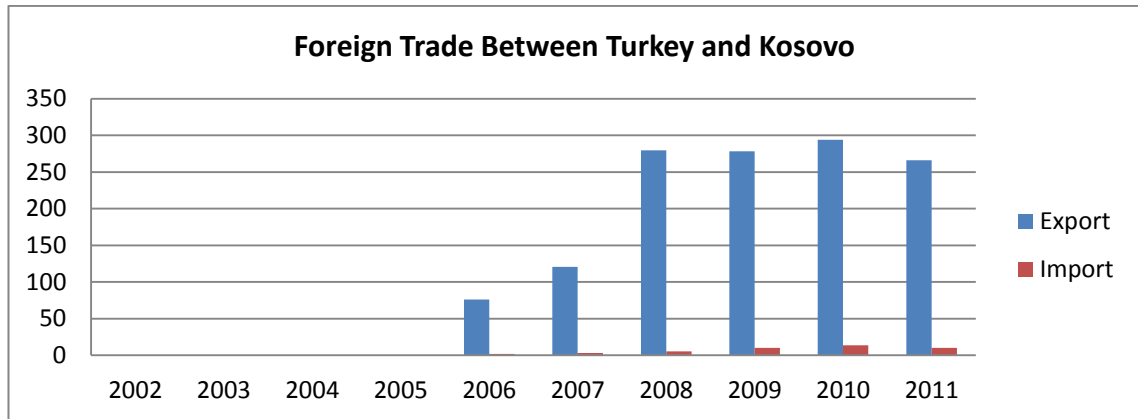


Figure 11: Foreign Trade between Kosovo and Turkey (million dollars)²⁰⁵

Apart from the routine official visits of the other relevant institutions high level visits are proven to be limited between Kosovo and Turkey. Since 2008, while the number of visits paid by Turkey to Kosovo has been 3, the number of visits paid by Kosovo to Turkey has been 7.

Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi, who paid an official visit to Turkey in May 2010, expressed his gratitude to Turkey for its support for the independence of Kosovo by calling “my brother” to Erdogan. During the rest of his speech Thaçi stated that they expected Turkey to become more active in the Balkans.²⁰⁶

The Prime Minister Erdogan was welcomed with a great enthusiasm in his visit to Kosovo in November 2010. Opening a primary school, a hospital and a mosque in Mamusha within the scope of his visit, Erdogan gave a speech before a public composed of thousands of people. “Kosovo has always been the eyes and the ears of Turkey... We have never left Kosovo alone and we never will” the Prime Minister said. As for his visit to the Tomb of Sultan Murat which was renovated, he conveyed a message stating that the grudge and hatred policies pursued by certain parts of the Balkans based on the hostility against Turks was not suitable to Sultan Murat’s character and philosophy of life.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ T.C. Priştina Büyükelçiliği, Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği Bülteni 2011

²⁰⁶ Bamir Thaçi’s address see at

http://www.zaman.com.tr/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?haberno=986607&title=taci-turkiyeden-balkanlarda-daha-aktif-rol-bekliyorum (Access: 17.11.2012)

²⁰⁷ Erdoğan’a Fahri Doktora, http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2010/11/04/erdogana_fahri_doktora (Access: 17.11.2012)

Kosovian officials express their gratitude to Turkey for its attitude supporting Kosovo since 1999 and its contributions in the institutional structure of Kosovo. This point of view belonging to those who are on the top of the country is largely shared by the public as well. However, the curriculum which is prepared with the old information cause the Ottoman and Turk phobias to persist in a certain part of the society. In conclusion, the Kosovar and Balkan policies of Turkey are welcomed positively and Turkey is expected to be more active in the region as it is pointed out by the figure presented below.

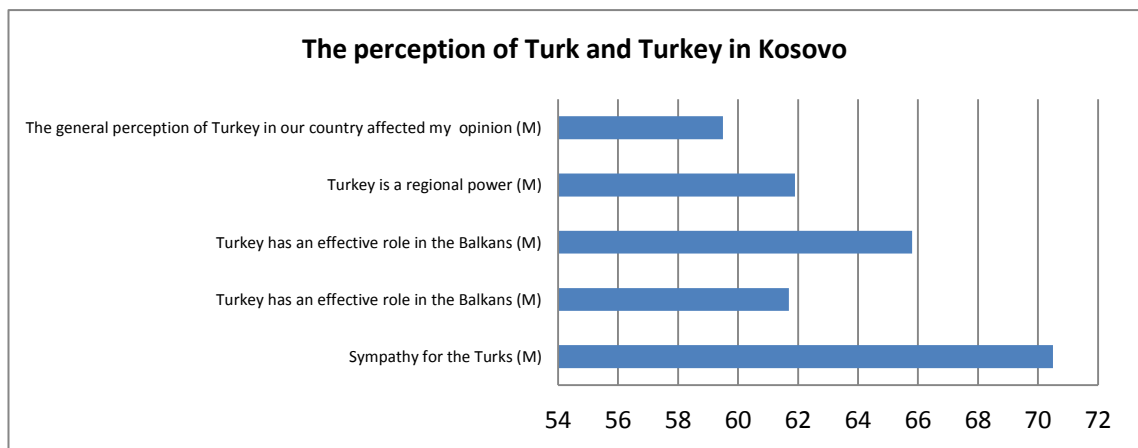


Figure 12: The Perception of Turk and Turkey in Kosovo (M: Muslim)²⁰⁸

5.2.5. Turkey and Macedonia

Turkey was the first country to recognize Macedonia under its constitutional name as Macedonian Republic and to send an ambassador to Skopje. After that time, Turkey continued to support Macedonia politically in every platform. The rapprochement in the relations continued increasingly and the opportunities for cooperation were improved in the AKP period. In this period, the two countries concluded many agreements which established the judicial basis of the relations between two countries. In addition, a high number of high level visits by Presidents and Prime Ministers were conducted between the two countries. A “Document for Strengthening the Bilateral Relations” was signed in 2008 in order to increase the existing cooperation opportunities.

Furthermore, Turkey did strongly support the integration of Macedonia into the Euro-Atlantic institutions and did always stand by Macedonia for its membership to NATO.

²⁰⁸ Bilgiç and Akyürek, *op.cit*, Rapor

Turkey supported the membership of Macedonia along with those of Albania and Croatia in the NATO Summit held in Bucharest in April 2008.

Turkish minority living in Macedonia is another important element for Turkey in its politics with this country. In Macedonia, TİKA office, in 2005, and Yunus Emre Cultural Centre (YECC), in 2010, opened and started their activities. In addition to governmental institutions and agencies, many Turkish educational and non-governmental organizations continued to increase their activities in the country.

According to the Free Trade Agreement signed with Macedonia in 1999, Macedonia rounded off the customs duty which it used to pose to the goods coming from Turkey on 1 January 2008. As it can be seen on the figure below, foreign trade volume which had a tendency to grow after the year of 2008 went into a recession period due to economic crises in the following years. However, Turkish investments are known to have continue their business without being affected by the crisis. By 2011, the number of Turkish companies making investments in Macedonia had reached 100 and the investments of large companies such as Ziraat Bank, Cavalier Holding, TAV, Sisecam and SÜTAŞ in Macedonia had exceeded 500 million dollar.²⁰⁹

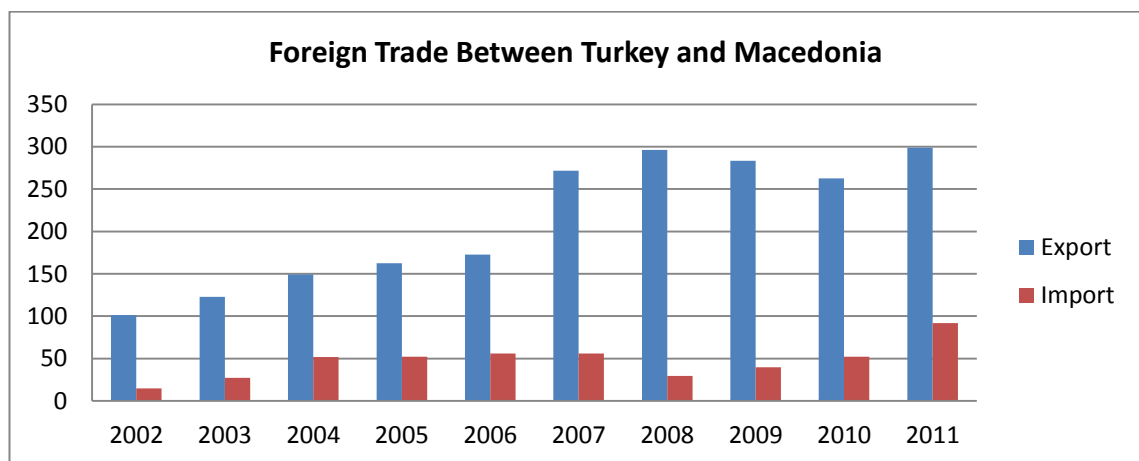


Figure 13: Trade between Turkey and Macedonia (Million Dollars)²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ T.C. Üsküp Büyükelçiliği, Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği, Makedonya Bülteni 2011

²¹⁰ Türkiye-Makedonya İş Konseyi, see at

http://www.deik.org.tr/Konseylcerik/2837/Makedonya_%C3%9Cİke_B%C3%BCİteni_A%C4%9Fustos_2011.html (Access: 27.11.2012)

Macedonia has been the the second country following Bosnia and Herzegovina where Turkey pays high level visits at most. Between 2003 and 2011 fourteen high level visits were paid to Macedonia by Turkey. Three of them were at presidential level. Similarly, Macedonia paid 10 high level visits during this period and four of them were at the presidential level.²¹¹

During the Prime Minister Erdogan visit to Macedonia in September 2011, the posters of Erdogan had been hung and people had written “Welcome, Erdogan” in Macedonian in the squares and streets of Skopje. In an atmosphere similar to the election meetings in Turkey, Erdogan addressed to a crowded public composed mostly of Turks and Albanians and expressed his opinions and sentiments before the interest shown to him: “We are always with you and we will continue to be. You form one of the most important links of the chains which are becoming stronger day by day between Macedonia and Turkey. You constitute a Turkish community who lives in Macedonia and who proved its loyalty. Today you are the children of the Conquerors in our eyes as you were centuries ago. The equivalent of the expression of children of the Conquerors is a unique treasure in our spiritual world. Be sure that as Turkey, as the Turkish Public, we shall always regard you as august. You, our brothers and sisters living here are the continuation of Turkish nation in Macedonia for us...”²¹²

During this visit, at the press conference, expressing the high importance of the visit of Erdogan, the Macedonian President Nikola Gruevski said “Turkish community is an inseparable part of Macedonia. We take close interest in the problems of the Turkish community and we shall continue to take from now on.”²¹³

The speech which was addressed by Macedonian President George Ivanov in his speech at the 4th International Congress of Islamic Civilization in Balkans organized in his charge in 2010 and supported by the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) is highly important to show the ideas of Macedonia at the highest level regarding the Ottomans and Turkey: “...These lands had seen the fights among the

²¹¹ Data is collected via scanning online archives of BYEGM and AA.

²¹² Erdoğan’s adress in Skopje see at <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2011/09/30/erdoganin-makedonya-mitingi> (Access: 24.11.2012)

²¹³ Makedonya AB’ye Bizden Önce Girer, <http://www.haberturk.com/dunya/haber/674350-makedonya-abye-bizden-once-girer>(Access:24.11.2012)

heads of Greece, Slovenia and Venice. In such an atmosphere the Ottomans came to the Balkans. Along with this, they started to show the domination and existence of the Islamic Civilization. Within this period dominated by the war and misery, the Balkans found the real peace with the arrival of the Ottomans and entered into an era of ease...²¹⁴

Strong historical ties and the development in the economic and political relations between Turkey and Macedonia could not still be transferred to the desired social and cultural level. For instance, Turkey's relation with the Muslim communities and Turkish minorities in the region remains to be at a limited level.

Despite this situation, the perception of Turk and Turkey is considerably positive both among the Macedonians (the Christians) and among the Muslim communities. In addition to the historical and cultural bonds, the facts that Turkey has been the supporter of Macedonia's independence from the very beginning and that Turkey recognized it under its constitutional name play an important role.

In the light of the survey below, the perception of Turk in Macedonia with its Christians and Muslims is seen to be largely positive. Furthermore, both of these two groups regard the Turkey's policy in the region as positive and expect Turkey to take a more active role.

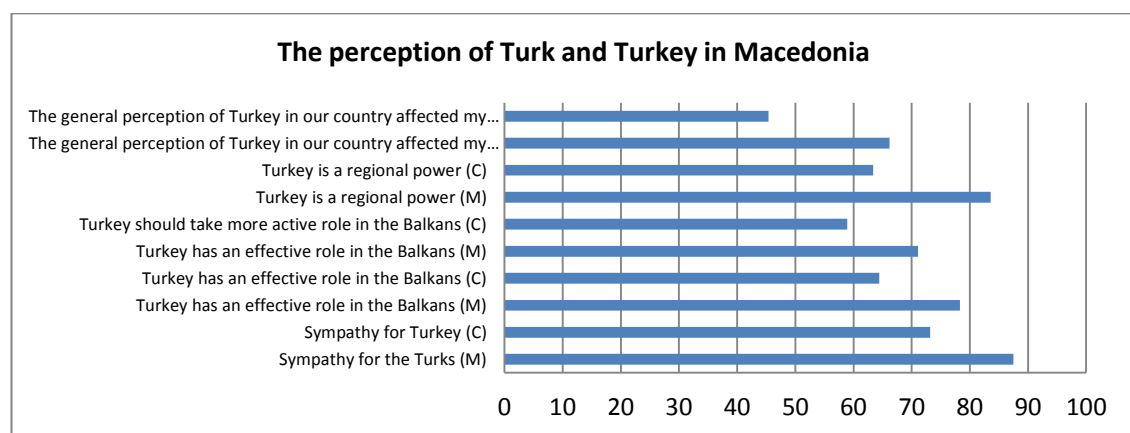


Figure 14: The perception of Turk and Turkey in Macedonia (M: Muslim-C: Christian)²¹⁵

²¹⁴Gruevski's address see at <http://www.haberler.gen.al/2010-10-16/makedonya-cumhurbaskani-ivanov-balkanlar-osmanlinin-gelisiyle-huzura-kavustu/> (Access: 24.11.2012)

²¹⁵Bilgiç and Akyürek, *op.cit*, Rapor.

5.2.6. Turkey and Albania

The strong historical and cultural ties form the basis of the relations between Turkey and Albania. With the proclamation of the Republic in Albania in 1991, the friendship and cooperation between the two countries became intense. The relations between these two countries which have the same regional and cultural policies were further improved in 2000s. Not only did the mutual high level visits start to give concrete results but also many cooperation protocols and agreements in many areas were concluded. In 2009, within the cultural cooperation protocol signed during the visit paid by Abdullah Gul, the President of the Republic of Turkey to Tirana Yunus Emre Cultural Centre opened and the agreement on visa exemption was signed in the same year.

Turkey regards Albania as a key country in the provision of peace and stability in the Balkans because of its diaspora in the neighboring countries. Therefore, it both supports the integration of Albania to the Euro-Atlantic bodies and pays particular attention to the cooperation in the international platforms. The support, provided by Turkey in the process of Albania's membership to NATO in 2009, and the fact that the Albanian soldiers under the NATO force in the Afghanistan serve within the Turkish troops are important to show this cooperation.²¹⁶

In parallel with the acceleration in the relations between Turkey and Albania, the activities of TIKA and YECC have increased as well. Moreover, the number and the activities of educational and non-governmental organizations which continue their service and cultural activities in the region increase day by day.

Turkey is among those important commercial partners of Albania. However, when looking at the foreign trade volume presented on the table below, it can be seen that the figures are under the desired figures. Yet, despite this, an increasing trend in the figures of foreign trade can be seen except from the decline stemming from the crisis in 2008. The effects of the Free Trade Agreement which entered into force in 2008 are expected to be seen in the upcoming years. In addition, mutual foreign investments continue increasingly. By 2011, the total sum of the Turkish investments on different fields in the

²¹⁶ Türkiye-Arnavutluk İlişkileri, see at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/_turkiye-arnavutluk-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa (Access: 23.12.2012)

region exceeded 1,5 billion dollar. Mixed Economic Commission which is collected regularly each year and Turkish-Macedonian Business Board have considerable contributions in these investments.

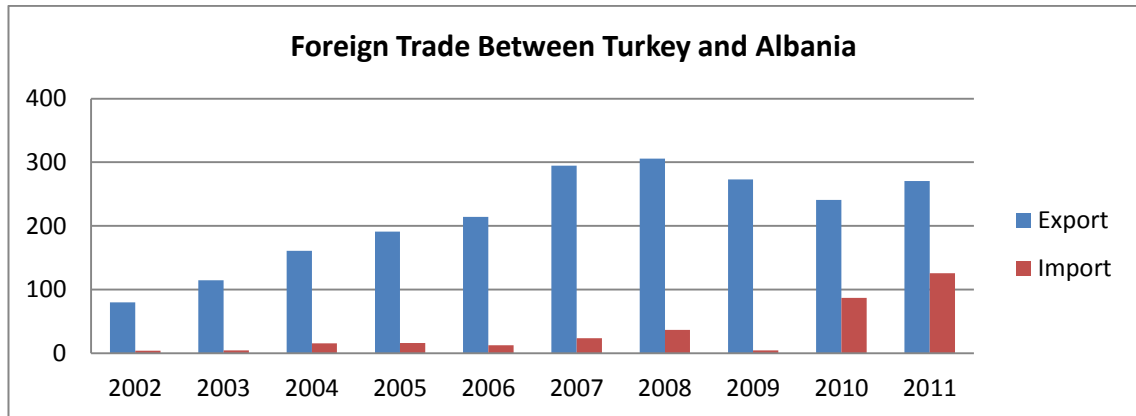


Figure 15: Foreign Trade between Albania and Turkey (Thousand Dollars)²¹⁷

The number of high level visits between Turkey and Albania which are not only the two big countries of the region but also strategically partners are seven which is a considerably low. However, between 2003 and 2011, there have been 12 visits 4 of which were paid by the President from Albania to Turkey.²¹⁸

Despite low profile in the number of visits, in the messages conveyed reciprocally, the sincerity and friendship have always been emphasized. In October 2011, in the visit paid by Bamir Topi, the President of the Republic of Albania to Ankara upon the invitation by the President Abdullah Gul, he expressed that he desired to see the cooperation to be advanced stating that the strong historical and cultural bonds existing between the two countries rendered Turkey and Albania strategic partners. Adding that he supported the economic and cultural activities of Turkey in the Balkans, Topi pointed out that the swift rise in the economic welfare and standards of Turkey recently had been realized by everyone. In his address, Topi states “Turkey has taken big steps and today it has a strong economic potential. In parallel with this, in the Balkans there is an atmosphere appropriate for investment. These are also the case for Kosovo and

²¹⁷ T.C. Tiran Büyükelçiliği Ticaret ve Ekonomi Müşavirliği Ülke Bülteni 2011

²¹⁸ The data was collected via scanning of online archives of BYEGM and AA.

Macedonia. The markets of Macedonia and Kosovo are hungry to receive investments.”²¹⁹

On the visit paid by Topi, the president of Albania, the President Abdullah Gul expressed his contentment for the fact that the relations between the two countries were being developed on every field. Stating that there were important investments for the future of the students studying in universities, staff colleges and police academies in Turkey and in the educational organizations of Turkish origins founded in Albania for years. “The hearts and arms of Turkish Nation are always open for the nation of Albania” said the President Gül.

In addition to their long historical and strong cultural bonds, the two countries also have kinship. Therefore, there is a mutually positive perception between them. As it can be seen on the following graphic, Muslim Albanians which compose the main element of Albania regard Turkey and Turkey’s Balkans policy positively with a rate of more than 70%. In addition to this, Turkey is expected to be more active in the Balkans.

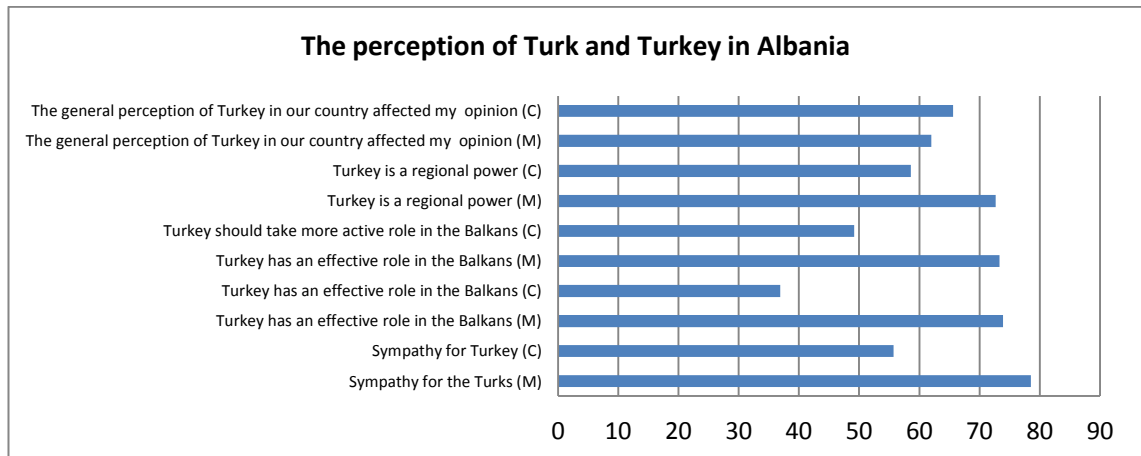


Figure 16: The Perception of Turk and Turkey in Albania (M: Muslim-C: Christian)²²⁰

²¹⁹Bamir Topi’s address see at <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2011/10/12/turkiye-bizim-stratejik-ortagimiz> (Access: 23.12.2012)

²²⁰Bilgiç and Akyürek, *op.cit*, Rapor

5.2.7. Turkey's Policy for The Turkish Minority in Greece and Bulgaria

Problems such as restrictions on social, cultural and political rights, the problems of expatriation of 1955-1998, freedom of religion and nomination of muftis, and other problems in education and living standards stated for the period between 1989 and 2002 were still existing in 2011. To eliminate these problems, on the period of AKP, Turkey continued its initiatives for the Turkish Minority to gain its social, cultural and political rights both via bilateral relations and on the platforms such as EU and ECHR. However, as Greece did not implement the decisions of ECHR, no serious results have been accomplished until now except from little symbolic developments. Yet, Turkey has always tried to make its cognates living in Western Thrace to feel that it stands by them. During the time of AKP, many high level visits were paid to Western Thrace within the scope of the official visits paid to Greece. Until 2011, the Prime Minister Erdogan had visited the Western Thrace for two times. The first visit paid in 2004 has an importance and a meaning as it was the first visit paid to this region by a Prime Minister. The Prime Minister paid his second visit in May 2010 following the first joint council of ministers' meeting.

To summarize, like the previous governments, AKP makes a considerable effort for the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace to gain their rights. However, due to the resistance of Greece no serious results could be obtained in this respect. Despite this, AKP supports the recently-formed organizations and activities carried out for the Turkish minority to maintain their identities.

In parallel with the rapprochement with Greece, Turkey has lowered the tone of its discourse regarding the Turkish Minority living in the Western Thrace. During Prime Minister Erdoğan's talk which was addressed to the representatives of the Turkish Minority in Komotini within the scope of his visit to Greece in 2004, this attitude was apprehensible. After listening the problems of the Turkish minority, the words he used are clear indications of this : "We have laid the foundations of a new era with Greece. We should look at the bright side but at the dark side. We know the dark side; but we

shall brighten it; we shall solve your problems”²²¹ . However this moderate approach in his discourses became severe from time to time when he pointed out the violations of human rights in the Western Thrace in the face of the policies pursued by Greece for the opening of Halki Seminary in the EU and other international platforms.

When the Prime Minister Erdogan stated that within reciprocity, the opening of the Halki Seminary directly depended on the acknowledgment of the rights of the Turkish Minority in the Western Thrace during an interview conducted with him in 2009, Dora Bokayanni the then Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Greece made a statement. In his statement, Boyakanni pointed out that Greece had taken necessary steps and would continue to take within the framework of international law and EU legislation while emphasizing the fact that the “Muslim Minority” in the Western Europe is a domestic affair of Greece. Expressing his discomfort for Turkey to have been interested in this subject, he also added: “The Muslims of Thrace are Greek citizens and they are proud of this.”²²²

Almost every time, the high-level visits paid by Turkey in the Western Thrace causes discussions in the Greece Press claiming that Turkey pursues Neo-Ottomanist policies. Last time when Davutoglu paid a visit to the Western Thrace and then to Kavala in March 2011, the Greek Newspaper Ethos claimed that Turkey legalized its minority policy for the region and promoted the Ottoman identity.²²³

Concerning the Turkey’s policy towards Bulgarian Turkish minority, the conditions of the Turkish minority in the Bulgaria have reached at a better level following the reforms of the 1990s compared to the Turkish minority in the Greece. However, both the effects of the assimilation policies before 1990 and the problems in learning their own language remain today. On one hand Bulgaria still insists on not using the word “Turk” at the constitutional level while describing the Turkish minority. On the other hand it continues to pose restrictions on the edition used in the curriculum in the education in

²²¹ Erdoğan’s adress see at <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2004/05/09/siy109.html> (Access 13.11.2011)

²²² Dora Bokayanni’s adress see at http://www.bttdbursa.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=118:dora-bakoyanniden-erdoann-soezlerine-cevap&catid=1:haberler (Access 13.11.2011)

²²³ Dış Basında Türkiye, see at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/disbasindaturkiye.aspx?d=08.03.2011&ygid=33&pg=2&ahid=14468&ygid=&act=1#1> (Access: 13.11.2011)

the mother language.²²⁴ While Turkey welcomes the steps taken by Bulgaria, it continues the bilateral meetings for the solution of the problems in question. Turkey's initiatives with Bulgaria regarding the social arrangements which are to be carried out by Bulgaria for the retirements of our citizens having migrated from Bulgaria by force in 1989 are still in course. Approximately 300 foundation works (vakıf eseri) belonging to the Islamic community have been detected in Bulgaria within the index study aimed at the Ottoman foundations in the Balkans and carried out by the IRCICA and which was supported and considered important by Davutoglu. Turkey shall launch the necessary legal action based on the law of foundations of Bulgaria for the ownership of the identified works.²²⁵ Moreover, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Turkey had more than 30 works of Turkish literature translated into Bulgarian and put them at the disposal of Bulgarian readers which a study highly praised by the community of culture and art in Bulgaria and which can be counted within the scope of cultural diplomacy.

While continuing its initiatives in order to improve the conditions of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, Turkey has been respectful to the sensibility of Bulgaria at the same time. In parallel with this understanding, Turkish politicians try to use a rather moderate style in their speeches about the Turkish minorities. In his visit to Bulgaria in September 2010, the Prime Minister Erdogan stated that Bulgaria had taken important steps regarding the issue of Turkish minorities since 1990 and that the relations between Turkey and Bulgaria were advanced emphasizing the fact that the role of Turks living in Bulgaria was considerable in this respect. In the same address, Erdogan said: "Of course Bulgarian Turks are to learn and speak Bulgarian; but they also are to protect their mother language, culture and religion. They are to transmit these to the next generations... Our goal is to keep the heads of both our citizens and our cognates up always."²²⁶

²²⁴ Kader Özlem, Bulgaristan Türklerinin Taihsel Süreç İçerisinde Dönüşümü, AB Üyelik Süreci ve Türk Azınlığa Etkileri, *Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Vol:1, No:2, Winter 2008, pp-350-370

²²⁵ See at <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2012/08/12/balkanlar-daki-islam-eserleri-muslumanlara-devrediliyor.html> (Access:15.11.2011)

²²⁶ Erdoğan's address see at <http://www.cnnurk.com/2008/dunya/03/28/erdogan.kircaalide.turklere.seslendi/442754.0/index.html> (Access:15.11.2011)

Even though Turkey uses a moderate tone in its statements regarding the Turkish minorities and is sensitive in this respect, Bulgaria maintains its approach claiming that Turkey interferes in the domestic affairs of Bulgaria in relation to the issue of Turkish minorities in the country. Moreover, from time to time, Bulgaria expresses its discomfort for the increasing effect of Turkey in the Balkans. Interpreting the fact that the leaders of all Balkan countries but that of Serbia were attending to the above mentioned meeting as Turkey's show of economic and political force, the Prime Minister of the Bulgaria didn't attend to the Balkan Leaders' Summit organized by two Turkish NGOs in USA (Manhattan) in September 2010 stating that he found the "night to be too colorful" and that he "had more important things to do"²²⁷. While this behavior of Borisov was applauded by the Bulgarian Media, Turkish Media disapproved this action on the grounds that this was against the diplomatic protocol. Yet, after a short while following this incident, Borisov took a step back by the messages which he conveyed during his visit to Turkey.

To sum up, in the period of AKP rule within the framework of political and economic relations, solution of the existing problems and development of relations has been taken on the agenda with the principle of zero problems with neighbors. Then, free trade agreements were signed to remove barriers on economic interdependence, and visa requirement was lifted.²²⁸ Besides, "Bilateral Cooperation Councils" within the body of DEİK and "Regional Cooperation Council" within the body of SEECP are tried to be worked. Secondly, Turkey leads the SEECP to ensure stability and peace in the Balkans within the context of rhythmic diplomacy, aiming at playing an active role in the international area. Similarly, Turkey makes efforts to integration of all regional states to Euro-Atlantic institutions by means of rhythmic diplomacy. Invitation of Bosnia Herzegovina to NATO Membership Action Plan can be seen good result of this. Thirdly, Turkey has taken an active role in prevention and solution of the regional crisis within the context of proactive and peace diplomacy.²²⁹ Led by Turkey in 2009, tripartite advisory meetings between Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia were

²²⁷ Bulgar Liderden Gül'e Tavrı İddiası, see at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/15871630.asp>(Access 15.11.2011)

²²⁸ Mehmet Babacan, Whither Axis Shift: A Perspective from Turkey's Foreign Trade, *Seta Report* No. 4 November, 2010 ,pp.1-35

²²⁹ Alexander Murinson, Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 6, November 2009 ,pp.946-962

successful examples of the peace diplomacy. Finally, Turkey has used the leader visits as an efficient tool for its Balkan policy. Via direct and onsite high level visits the cooperation and partnership between Turkey and the countries of the region has made more progress. The mutual visits with Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro contributes both to bilateral relations and peace establishment. In parallel to these, it can be observed that there has been a positive tendency for Turkey and Turks from in the Balkans.²³⁰

In conclusion, the AKP government initiated the procedure of intense political and economic cooperation with the Balkan countries knowing that Turkey has the advantage of historical and cultural ties and the region plays a key role in joining the European union. Howbeit, indicators especially in economy shows that it is lower than expected. To set an example, the foreign trade between Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo is approximately 300.000 dollars in numbers, which shows that economic relations between the two countries fell behind political relations.

5.3. Turkey's Social and Cultural Relations with Balkans; Public Diplomacy

Traditional diplomacy, which has been defined as “Old Diplomacy” by some researchers, is defined as the relationship which a government establishes with another one at a governmental level. It has been told that this kind of diplomacy lasted from the Renaissance to the end of the World War I. Proliferation of media tools and the developments in communication caused formation of a new diplomacy method by adding new elements to the traditional one.²³¹ This diplomacy, which has later been redefined as “public diplomacy”, has started to be used widely by governments through institutional instruments particularly in the USA after the September 11 attacks.

As to Turkey, the concept of public diplomacy has started to be discussed after the establishment Coordination Office of Public Diplomacy (COPD) in 2009 within the structure of Prime Ministry. The public diplomacy is defined as a tool of imposing and orientating the international community” and a respond the change and development in

²³⁰Bilgiç and Akyürek, *Op.cit*, Rapor

²³¹RoyceAmmon, *Global Television and the Shaping of World Politic*, London, Jefferson, London,2001, p.6

international relations as a result of globalization in the memorandum which has been published by the COPD in 2010.²³² The mentioned memorandum considers it necessary to coordinate the institutions and organizations in a strategic manner so as to improve the reputability and effectiveness of Turkey in the presence of international public opinion.

Along with the foreign missions of Turkey, the institutions and organizations which are associated with the Prime Ministry, the foreign missions of ministries and the relevant departments at the center, municipal corporations, non-governmental organizations and several countries in the world, particularly in Central Asia, the Balkans and Middle East has started to carry out the public diplomacy activities after the collapse of USSR and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. But the elapsed time of 20 years has shown that these activities have not been imposed effectively. An increase has been observed both in terms of quality and quantity of the public diplomacy tools in parallel with the economic growth in Turkey and the change and development in its foreign policy after 2000's. The principal public diplomacy tools of Turkish foreign policy, which will be examined with its transactions are as follows; TİKA, Kızılay (The Turkish Red Crescent), the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Radio and Television Cooperation (TRT), YEI, YTB and Directorate General of Press and Information (BYEGM).²³³

Along with these governmental agencies, private educational foundations and non-governmental organizations that are in the countries where the history and cultural bonds of Turkey are available are also considered as basic tools of public diplomacy.

5.3.1. Coordination Office of Public Diplomacy

Coordination Office of Public Diplomacy (COPD), whose foundation and objectives are abovementioned shortly, was founded on the purpose of forming Turkey's reputability, efficiency and effectiveness at abroad. The most important activities that COPD carried out are Journalist Programs, Country Programs, and Activities of Informing Foreign

²³²Kamu Diplomasisi Koordinatörlüğü, See at <http://kdk.gov.tr/kurumsal/kdk-genelgesi/5> (Access: 05.12.2012)

²³³ İbrahim Kalın, Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey, *Perceptions*, Autumn 2011, Vol.16, No: 13, pp-5-12

Press. Editorial directors, foreign news editors and columnists of leading press associations who monitor Turkey are invited as the part of Journalist Programs. Within this scope, the visitors are to be met with authorities from the Presidency, Prime Ministry and Foreign Ministry and they are being informed about the position and vision of Turkey international aspect. Besides, meetings with the prominent think tanks, press foundations and journalists in Turkey are arranged and they are also informed about the country's agenda.

Introducing and conveying Turkey in a correct way is aimed within the framework of "Country Programs" which have been aspiring to get in touch with researches and think tanks that take a major part in molding public opinion in recent years. In this context, the foreign researchers and experts which are studying about Turkey and the Turkish ones are put together.²³⁴

The other activities that COPD has done are the activities of informing the foreign press and the meetings which are held with the resident foreign press representatives in Turkey. The objective of these meetings is to make the foreign press representatives get in touch with decision makers and mechanisms and to get right information about the subjects in Turkey's agenda. Similar meetings are also held abroad for the foreign press representatives operating out of the country.²³⁵

5.3.2. Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency

Found in 1992, with its 33 Program Coordination Offices recently, TİKA has been carrying out activities in spheres of technical infrastructure, development of institutional capacity and social and cultural.²³⁶ TİKA, who has focused on technical help and project-based works after the foundation of Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities has been, institutionalized itself as an internationally respected foundation just like United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Founded by the order of Turgut Özal, the 8th president of Turkey, TİKA has started carrying out projects particularly in Middle East, Caucasia and the Balkans after the

²³⁴ *Ibid*, pp-5-12

²³⁵ *Ibid*, pp.5-12

²³⁶ TİKA, see at <http://www.tika.gov.tr/tika-hakkinda/1> (Access:27.11.2012)

breakup of the Soviet Unions. The main purpose is to help the friendly and allied nations in the mentioned regions develop in political and economic way by forming their organizational structure after the communist system and to assist them to be an equal actor in the international relations during this period. Besides, Turkey both wanted to function as a bridge in integrating with the West and to be a model for friendly and allied nations with its Muslim population, secular and democratic state formation and market economy.²³⁷ In this setting TİKA opened its first Program Coordination Office in Turkmenistan and it kept on getting into the other countries. In spite of the instability in Turkey's political and economic structure in 1990's, it was one of the priorities of Turkish Foreign Policy that the budget for TİKA would not be reduced.

The political and economic stability that Turkey caught and the new vision in foreign policy in AKP period has been reflected to both TİKA's activities and reconstruction. The number of Program Coordination Offices has been moved up to 33 (in 2012) from 12 (in 2002). Today, TİKA development aids in almost 100 countries, with the 33 countries their offices in it, has reached approximately 1,3billion dollars.²³⁸ The increase in development assistance has been reflected on the projects held in 2003 – 2011. The number of projects held in this period quadruplicated the number held between 1992-2011.²³⁹

For the regional aspect, TİKA opened the Bosnia Herzegovina Program Coordination Office and the Albania Program Coordination Office, which are their first two offices in the Balkans, in 1996. The other offices in the region, Kosovo in 2004, Macedonia in 2005, Montenegro in 2007 and Serbia in 2009. In 2011 TİKA was restructured and reorganized with the new regulations according to the new requirements.²⁴⁰ The number of the projects that TİKA completed in the mentioned countries has been over 425.²⁴¹

²³⁷ Muzaffer Ercan Yılmaz, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-Orta Asya Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkileri", (Ed.Tayyar Arı), *Orta Asya ve Kafkasya: Rekabetten İşbirliğine*, Bursa, MKM Yayıncılık, 2010, p. 422

²³⁸ TİKA, see at <http://www.tika.gov.tr/tika-hakkinda/1>

²³⁹ TİKA 2011 Faaliyet Raporu, see at, <http://store.tika.gov.tr/yayinlar/faaliyet-raporlari/faaliyet-raporu-2011.pdf> (Access: 05.11.2012)

²⁴⁰ Information was obtained from TİKA Avrasya Bulletins "Office Presentation" pages published between 2005 and 2011.

²⁴¹ TİKA 2011 Faaliyet Raporu, see at <http://store.tika.gov.tr/yayinlar/faaliyet-raporlari/faaliyet-raporu-2011.pdf> (Access: 05.11.2012)

One of the most important project that TİKA has done after 2000's is the Turcology Project. In the scope of this Project, Turcology and Turkish language and literature departments was opened in the universities of the mentioned countries after the protocols that had been made and the physical and instructor expenses were covered. The Turcology projects were handed over YİE after 2009. TİKA has proved that it is the most important soft power of Turkey with the activities in almost every area from technical development assistance, social projects, medical projects to the restoration of historical structures. One can clearly see how TİKA is perceived abroad in the words of Bekir Bozdağ, the deputy prime minister in charge of TİKA, during his speech in the 2012 Turkish Grand National Assembly budget talks, "...whichever country I go when I talk about TİKA, I see that the people even the ministers have an excessive sympathy towards us with smiling eyes..."²⁴²

Briefly, TİKA has become one of the important instruments of the Balkan opening of Turkey with the projects and activities which has been carried out in the region without any language, religion or race discrimination.

5.3.3. Yunus Emre Institute

Yunus Emre Institute (YEI) was founded in 2007. The main goals of the institution are to do educational and scientific activities and to introduce and lecture the Turkish culture, history and literature. With its cultural centers opened abroad YEI supports scientific projects, cultural activities and courses. At the same time, YEI is strengthening communications between cultures by reinforcing education of Turkish language, presentation of Turkey and development of relations with other countries.²⁴³

Today YEI has 25 cultural centers in 19 countries. 10 of these centers are in the borders of the Balkans, 2 of which are in Bosnia Herzegovina, 3 in Kosovo, 2 in Albania, 2 in Romania and 1 in Macedonia.

²⁴²Bekir Bozdağ's adress see at <http://www.bekirbozdag.com.tr/78-haberler/152-basbakan-yard-mc-s-bozdag-n-buetce-konusmasi> (Access 28.12.2012)

²⁴³Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, see at http://yunusemreenstitusu.org/turkiye/index.php?lang=tr&page=68&anIicat_1=0&anIitm_1=1 (Access:26.12.2012)

With the claim of being a respectable member of international are by being a regional actor, Turkey intends to make YEI a world-wide functional institution like Goethe Institute, British Council and Cervantes in terms of culture and language. In the Balkans, YEI had to open second (in Bosnia Herzegovina) and third office (in Kosovo) in order to meet the demand which has been on increase.

5.3.4. Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities

Established in 2010, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (YTB) has three main objectives. The first one is to solve problems of Turkish citizens living abroad and to ensure them live as citizens with equal rights in host countries, second objective is to develop social and cultural relations with kin and relative communities and countries, and the last one is to provide coordination among relevant institutions by determining all kinds of essences for the students, coming to Turkey in the context of “Great Student Project (GSP)” previously conducted by Ministry of National Education and lots of institutions and organizations, completing their education successfully.²⁴⁴

Shortly after its establishment, YTB completed its structure to conduct the policies towards kin and relative communities more effective and efficient on the basis of country and region desks. Following the structuring, YTB started its activities for kin and relative communities with relevant institutions and non-governmental organizations in the Central Asia, Caucasia, Balkans and Middle East.

One of the significant activities of YTB is to determine the all kind of essences for the students’ accomplishing their education process successfully coming to Turkey in the context of “Turkey Scholarships”, and to ensure coordination among relevant institutions.

YTB has made a radical change in foreign student scholarship system to actualize this aim. In this sense, it altered the criteria for student selection, exam type, and procedures and principles of emplacement. Prevention of repetition of the some mistakes done in the past, using the sources effectively, and above all creating heart ambassadors

²⁴⁴ Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı Kanunu, see at <http://www.ytb.gov.tr/Files/Document/5978Sayili-Yurtdisi-Turkler-ve-Akraba-Topluluklar-Baskanligi-Teskilat-ve-Gorevleri-Hakkinda-Kanun.pdf> (Access: 28.12.2012)

between Turkey and the grantee countries with these arrangements. Formed with the name Turkey Scholarships, the new system has already proved its success in the 2012 educational year. Moreover, YTB is carrying out activities towards graduate students in order to continue its communications with the students receiving education in Turkey. The increase in the number of foreign students in Turkey in last three years is highly remarkable. Including the 2010-2011 term, the number of international students in Turkey has reached 26.000.

5.3.5. Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, Anatolian Agency and Directorate General of Press and Information

Parallel to developments in Turkish foreign policy, Turkish Radio and Television Cooperation (TRT) has launched new initiatives and started multilingual and multicultural broadcasting. With multilingual broadcasts, which have become an important tool of public policy, Turkey reached the regions with which it has historical and cultural ties, and communication and interaction increased among the communities existing there. Broadcasting to the Central Asia, Caucasia and Balkans, TRT Avaz and TRT Turk were opened in 2009.²⁴⁵ TRT has a representative office in Bosnia Herzegovina in the framework of abroad facilities. And also, there are radios and news desks broadcasting in Balkan languages under the Department of Foreign Broadcasts. With the representatives in and offices throughout world is one of the important instruments of Turkey's public diplomacy. Opened as a representative of Anadolu Agency in 2009, Sarajevo Office was reconstructed under the Regional Directorate of Balkans in 2011, and Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania and Croatia offices were attached to this Directorate. Aiming to be among "world's top five effective agency" by 2020 according to 100. Year Vision, Anadolu Agency has been filling a major gap in communication and public diplomacy by providing first-hand news to regional news agencies and to Turkey from the region.²⁴⁶ Serving the most, Anadolu Agency has become one of the largest news agency in the Balkans. Such that giving interviews to Anadolu Agency is perceived as a great prestige by administrators and politicians from the western Balkan countries.

²⁴⁵ TRT Kurumsal Yapı, see at <http://www.trt.net.tr/trtavaz/> (Access: 26.12.2012)

²⁴⁶ AA Kurumsal, see at <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kurumsal/43971--aa-100--yil-vizyonu> (Access: 24.12.2012)

Another significant instrument of Turkish foreign policy, Directorate General of Press and Information (BYEGM) was established as a unit under the Office of Prime Minister in 1984. The purpose of BYEGM is to determination of promotion policy, timely public disclosure with accurate information, effective reflection of the government activities to foreign publics and assessment of the results, arrangement of affairs related to press, follow and evaluation of propagandas against Turkey, forming coordination with relevant governmental institutions and realization of all kinds of national and international activities that will contribute much to Turkey's image and prestige by collaborating with Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁴⁷

Some of the important activities of BYEGM on foreign policy are to share what it gets by searching national and international press with relevant institutions, to make annual press assessments²⁴⁸, to publish "Turkey Almanac"²⁴⁹ in different languages and to arrange meetings with foreign press members.²⁵⁰ BYEGM has regular meetings every year with the press employees of Balkan states. The last meeting, "Balkan Media Forum", was held in Bursa on third of May, 2011 with the theme of "Media, As an Effective Instrument for the Perpetual Peace in the Balkans"²⁵¹.

5.3.6. Practice of Sister Municipalities

Sister municipality practices began to spread primarily with the municipalities in the countries Turkey has historical and cultural relations in the post-Cold War period. Applied since the beginning of the 19.the century in various parts of the world, states aims at forming friendships by framing social, cultural and technical cooperation between countries and communities with this method. In this context, sister municipality initiatives has a significant function as an instrument of public diplomacy in local level.

²⁴⁷BYEGM Kararnamesi, see at :

<http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspx?MevzuatKod=4.5.231&MevzuatIliski=0&sourceXmlSearch=>
(Access: 24.12.2012)

²⁴⁸ In Annual Assessments of Foreign Press, all news are collected and prepared as a report.

²⁴⁹ Turkey Almanac prepared in 2012 was published in 12 different languages.

²⁵⁰ BYEGM Faaliyetleri, see at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/Content.aspx?s=tk> (Last Access: 24.12.2012)

²⁵¹ BYEGM Basın Duyuruları, see at <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/basinduyurulari.aspx?ahid=261&ac=1#3>

By the end of 2011, it's known that 1042 municipality in Turkey has a sisterhood relation with a foreign municipality. Among them, 302 municipalities has sister municipality in the Balkans.²⁵² Every year Turkish municipalities are holding mutual projects and activities with their sister municipalities in the Balkans. Looking at the distribution, it can be seen that the activities are centered in social aids, various courses, festivals and mosque construction.

5.3.7. The Other Instruments and Practices

Besides the institutions and organizations counted above, there are other institutions, structures and practices that have function and contribution to Turkey's Balkan policy. To mention them briefly, Kızılay takes the first place.²⁵³ Kızılay presented great services to the Balkans during the crisis of 1990s. Today, Kızılay's similar activities are going on the needier regions.

Directorate of Religious Affairs is also another institution ensuring cultural contribution to Turkey's Balkan policy. The Directorate provides training programs for preachers in Turkey every year, presents religious releases and materials for Muslim communities, organizes consultation meetings with local religious officers in the region and provides financial supports for taking inventory of Islam foundations works.²⁵⁴ In addition to these, Directorate of Religious Affairs also supports the capacity building activities of Offices of Mufti in the Balkan region.

Cultural relations have started between Turkey and the Balkan countries after the collapse of Yugoslavia. Coinciding with Turgut Özal period, the foundation of cultural relations was laid by TİKA, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, twin municipality activities and Turkish-based NGOs. During the AKP period, the present foundations' capacities and budgets were increased and agency and institutions such as Yunus Emre Institute, Public Diplomacy Coordination and YTB were founded. Moreover, Turkey

²⁵² Mahalli İdareler Genel Müdürlüğü İstatistikleri, see at <http://www.migm.gov.tr/IstatistikiBilgiler.aspx> (Access:29.12.2012)

²⁵³ Kızılay, Tarihçe, see at <http://www.kizilay.org.tr/kurumsal/sayfa.php?t=-Kurumsal-Tarihcemiz> (Access 26.12.2012)

²⁵⁴ Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı tanıtım, see at http://www.diyaret.gov.tr/turkish/tanitim/rapor_ms2010.pdf (Access: 09.12.2012)

has started carrying out a systematical public diplomacy with all those institutions and the others.

Opening Turkish Universities, educational institutions and YEI's which introduce Turkish Language and Culture in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania, restoring the pieces of Ottoman History and Culture and overhauling the Turkish parts in the history works of countries such as Kosovo and Albania are considered as the activities in the scope of public diplomacy.²⁵⁵

In conclusion, the cultural and public diplomacy activities have started to take effect in the Balkans. To set an example, AA, one of the institutions mentioned above, was opened in Sarajevo District Office in 2007 and this left a significant impression at the region.²⁵⁶ Kemal Kaptaner, the organization director of AA, points out the importance of AA's restructuring at the region by his words: "Turkey used to be at the agenda with terrorist actions before AA publications, but now with the publications centered in Sarajevo, it has also carved out a niche in improvements at social, cultural and economic areas".

5.4. Reemergence of Neo-Ottomanism in the AKP Period

Contrary to the 1990s Balkan Opening which came forward as an obligation as a result of crises and conflicts in the region, the second Balkan Opening, in 2009 was reflection of Davutoğlu's Strategic Depth" since the region is important in terms of Turkey's foreign policy and domestic stability due to its historical and geographical position.²⁵⁷ In this context, Turkey has taken enthusiastic initiative in the Balkans not only in the countries where Turks and Muslim communities exist but throughout the region. Turkey has paid attention to the political and economic stability of the Balkans while on the other hand made effort to develop social and cultural relations. Turkey's proactive and multidimensional policy under AKP rule in the Balkans caused discussions to increase

²⁵⁵Gergely Nagy, Turkey: A Welcome Return To The Balkans? See at <http://www.eurasiareview.com/03012012-turkey-a-welcome-return-to-the-balkans-analysis/> (Access:12.12.2012)

²⁵⁶ Kerem Öktem, Turkey's Foreign Policy in a Changing World, *International Conference*, Oxford 30 April-2 May 2010 see at <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/seesox/workshopreports/ReportfromTFPconf.pdf>

²⁵⁷ Davutoğlu, "Stratejik Derinlik" Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, *op.cit.*, p.119

at home and abroad. Within the discussions some find Turkey's initiative role essential and favorable due to the long common history and culture while some others asserted that Turkey is aiming to dominate the region via its political, economic, and cultural instruments.

Şaban Kardaş, who is as an Associate Professor of international relations in the Department of International Relations at TOBB University of Economics and Technology argues that the Balkans is a region on which the Ottoman had reigned over five centuries. Because of this and particularly the human factor of the Balkans let it be one of the leading regions of Turkish foreign policy. Having a conservative and Islamist base, AKP has been pursuing an assertive and pro-active policy towards this region due to the Ottoman heritage. In practice, it can be said that AKP's Balkan policy is mainly focus on making continuous contact with the leading actors, increasing economic interdependence and cooperation, stability and peace, cultural interaction and contributing to integration of these countries to the Europe-Atlantic structures.²⁵⁸

According to Bülent Aras, chairman of SAM (Center for Strategic Research) Turkey cannot be considered as a single zone like Russia, Germany, Iran or Egypt in geographical and cultural aspect. Turkey has to show maneuverability and take control in many regions at the same time, hinging upon its geo-cultural position. These differences require not only a multidimensional and proactive policy but also a foreign one which is flexible, replaceable and can be revised. The reason of "axis shift" accusations for the AKP's foreign policy derives from the change in these parameters. On the other hand, it has been claimed that there's a piece of truth in the claims of axis shift in relations particularly with EU after some tension and crises.²⁵⁹

Well known scholar Baskın Oran points to the parallelism between AKP's and Atatürk's westernist foreign policy does not accept the neo-Ottomanist claims and argues; " It is neither new and neo-Islamist nor purely Neo Ottoman. Not neo-Islamist because Turkey is equally concerned with the Balkans, Greece and Europe as it is with the Middle East. And it is not neo-Ottoman because under the Republic, Turkey

²⁵⁸ Şaban Kardaş, Türk Dış Politikasında Eksen Kayması mı?, *Akademik Orta Doğu*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2011 pp.19-40

²⁵⁹ Bülent Aras, Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy, SETA Brief, No: 32, May, 2009, pp-3-15

continued its relations with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan due to their shared interest “in keeping the Kurds in their place.”²⁶⁰

Thinking in a similar way to Oran, Mustafa Şahin, an another scholar, states that AKP foreign policy bears resemblance to Atatürk’s foreign policy pointing out that the policy AKP carries out has also aimed for building peace and stability just like Atatürk did in in the Balkans.²⁶¹ Thus, Şahin does not consider AKP’s Balkan policy as neo-Ottomanist.

The Neo Ottomanism claims which are addressed to the AKP foreign policy are derived from Serbians, leading Darko Tanaskovic who used to be a Serbian diplomat having been discussed on his book that he has written recently called ‘’ Neo Osmaniza; A Doctrine or a Foreign Policy Practice ‘’ is a leading figure on these discussions. Some researchers and academicians who think like Tanaskovic claim that the Neo Ottomanism influence for the purpose of imperialism in AKP’s foreign policy has lifted its effectiveness on the Balkans day by day.²⁶²

Having the same opinion with Tanaskovic, Srdja Trifkovic who is foreign affairs editor of Serbian “Chroniclemagazine” states that AKP has been undermining Kemalist legacy and heading for the Ottoman legacy. Trifkovic, as emphasizing the Davutoğlu’s “order instituting role” in the Balkans asserts that Turkey under AKP rule has imperial dreams for the Balkans as it was in the past.²⁶³

Piro Misha, an Albanian publisher and commentator in the interview with The Economist magazine, he points out Davutoğlu’s Sarajevo speech and states that many people in the Balkans do not regard the Ottoman centuries as a golden era. Misha also asserts that Turkey is particularly interested in Muslim minorities in the Balkans but

²⁶⁰Oran,*op.cit*, International Conference.

²⁶¹ Mustafa Sahin, Islam, Ottoman Legacy and Politics in Turkey: An Axis Shift? See at <http://www.thewashingtonreview.org/articles/islam-ottoman-legacy-and-politics-in-turkey-an-axis-shift.html> (Access: 10.12.2012)

²⁶² Milos Dindic, Neo Ottomanism- A Doctrine or a Foreign Policy Practice, *Belgrade Centre For Security Policy*; Ten Years of Security Sector Reform in Serbia”, (Book Review of Darkon Tanaskovic), No: 18, Fall 2010, pp.100-110

²⁶³ Srdja Trifkovic, Neo-Ottomanism in Action: Turkey as a Regional Power, see at <http://www.balkanstudies.org/articles/neo-ottomanism-action-turkey-regional-power>

Christians. Because of this reason Turkey's foreign policy in the Balkans is seen perilous.²⁶⁴

Alexander Murinson who is a scholar in Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, analyzes moderately the AKP's Balkan policy and emphasizes its diligence for dependent foreign policy. Murinson, as accepting AKP's pro-Ottoman and Islamist stance he states that AKP seeking ways to develop its relationship and cooperation with all neighboring regions not only with the Balkans.²⁶⁵

Davutoğlu, put an end the discussions by his words :“...I am not a neo-Ottoman. Actually there is no such policy. We have a common history and cultural depth with the Balkan countries, which nobody can deny. We cannot act as if the Ottomans never existed in this region. My perception of history in the Balkans is that we have to focus on the positive aspects of our common past. We cannot create a better future by building on a negative view of history....Turkey's primary interests in the Balkans are to help normalize bilateral relations among the Balkan states to deepen regional integration. ...Turkey has a clear, honest and open approach in its efforts towards the region. We do not have a hidden agenda. Hence our relations are based on mutual trust with the countries of the region.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ The Economist, Correspondent's diary, Correspondent's diary, Day two: Albania and the Ottoman legacy, see at http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/07/correspondents_diary_0

²⁶⁵ Alexander Murinson, Turkey's Neo-Ottomanist Vision-Eurasia? see at <http://www.strategicoutlook.org/turkish-foreign-policy/news-turkey%E2%80%99s-neo-ottomanist-vision--eurasia.html>

²⁶⁶ Ahmet Davutoğlu's address see at, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/davutoglu-i-m-not-a-neo-ottoman>

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Throughout the history the Balkan Peninsula has had a great significance for all neighbouring regions, particularly for the Europe in terms of security, defence, transportation and economic since the Greek period. The region has also been an important place in the Turkish history in many aspects. For example, Turkish settlement in the Balkans was crucial to the Ottoman Empire for its security and expansion as well as Gaza ideology. Similarly, the Balkans occupies a distinctive place in the Turkish foreign policy in the context of common history and culture, human factor, and its location as an integral part of Turkey which has the potential of affecting political and economic stability of Turkey.

At the beginning of the inter-war period Turkey tried to solve all problems remained from the Treaty of Lausanne and later normalized the relations with the new-founded Balkan states so as to ensure the stability in the region and secure its borders. Throughout the 1930's Turkey, besides bilateral relations, gave priority to the regional cooperation via new formations such as Balkan Conferences and Balkan Entente for the purpose of increasing security and hindering any intervention in the region. In the Cold War period, the Balkans fall off the agenda of Turkish foreign policy because of communist rule in the region and Turkey's strict adherence to the Western Bloc with a few exceptions like in the breaking out Cyprus Conflict.

With the end of the Cold War Turkish foreign policy came across with the Balkans after a very long time as a result of Yugoslavia's break up in 1992. The real acquaintance of Turkey with the Balkans was the result of conflicts and wars as seen in the cases of Bosnia and Kosovo. In all crises emerged in the region, Turkey tried to take an active role, particularly with the support of the US and the OIC. Considering the capacity and the limitations of the period Turkish foreign policy was active and assertive with towards the region especially where Turkish minority and Muslims. It can be said that Turkey returned to the Balkans with its discourses and policies in this period even

though the initiative policies towards the region could not be sustained after the mid-1990s.

Neo-Ottomanism which is examined in the first chapter is an expression to define the Turkish foreign policy towards the neighboring regions that were within the territories of the former Ottoman Empire which is asserted to be intrusive. In this context it is seen that neo-Ottomanism arguments based on the formation of 19th century Ottomanism have been oriented to first, foreign policy of Turgut Özal period and later, AKP period with ten-year of interval since 1990's. There are several understandings of the concept of neo-Ottomanism which are differs from each other both inside and abroad. Some asserts that neo-Ottomanism itself has an imperial sense since it refers to the Ottoman Empire while others consider it in the sense of cultural and historical background in terms of "pax-Ottomana" as well as multidimensional and initiative policy.

Turkish Foreign policy under AKP rule has been mainly shaped by Ahmet Davutoğlu since the beginning. According to him being a fundamental and inseparable element of regions of the Middle East, the Balkans, the Central Asia and Caucasia, Turkey should get through its passive position as a superficial bridge between mentioned regions in this new era. In fact, he argues that considering Turkey as a "bridge country" is not always a quite well description. Turkey, situated at the heart of Eurasia, is in fact a central country. Yet, it is a "bridge country" as it is found on the north-south, east-west passage-ways at the same time. The advantage coming from its unique location, rich historical accumulation and the strong identity may render Turkey an active player and a problem solver in the world politics breaking away static parameter policy and single parameter policy and realizing a transformation in strategic mind-set.

Bringing a new vision to the initiative policy starting with Turgut Özal, AKP has started to pursue a dynamic, multidimensional and proactive policy based on doctrine of "Strategic Depth". It can be said that Turkey's relations with the EU, the USA, the Middle East, Africa, the Central Asia, the Caucasia, and Russia have gained a momentum and transformation as a reflection of this new look. In this connection, the rejection of the US demands to use Turkish military bases against Iraq with the resolution of March 1 of 2003, supporting the Annan Plan in the Cyprus issue in 2004, developing good relations with Syria and launching tripartite advisory meetings

between Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in 2009 are some of the remarkable policy initiatives of the AKP. This multidimensional and proactive policy of AKP has attracted attention particularly in the Balkans and the Middle East and caused for claims that Turkey is walking away from the West and pursuing neo-Ottomanist policy since the two regions are the territories of the former Ottoman Empire. In the case of the Balkans, Davutoğlu's speech, given in Sarajevo in 2009, which refers to the success stories of the Ottoman centuries with emphasis of the need of reinventing it increased the claims of neo-Ottomanism towards AKP.

Considering the practices implemented up to now, Turkey under AKP rule is seen first of all to confer with every country and each actor in the Balkans for peace and stability and attempted to improve political, economic and cultural relations. In order to reach this target, particular attention was paid to establish councils of strategic cooperation and economic cooperation, to negotiate and communicate through high level visits and to the shuttle diplomacy. The most concrete result of this new approach is the environment of dialogue and trust established with Serbia with which Turkey had quite poor relations in the last decade. This new page opened in the relations manifested itself in the relations between Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with the tripartite advisory meetings launched by Davutoglu in 2009.

The second fact seen in the Turkey's Balkan policy has been contributing the integration of the countries of the region with the institutions of Euro-Atlantic. In this context Turkey has paid particular attention to and supports the membership of the Balkan countries for EU and NATO with the idea that it would contribute to the peace and stability of the region. For example, Turkey played pioneering role in NATO membership of Albania in 2009 and the invitation for Bosnia and Herzegovina to Membership Action Plan of NATO in 2010.

In the Turkey's Balkan policy, the third fact in practice is to cooperate with the extra-regional actors against the regional powers when needed. In this context, the cooperation carried out with the US in the relations maintained with Bosnia and Herzegovina during/after the crises and in the independence process of Kosovo can be given as examples. Organization of Islamic Conference is also one of those significant tools used by Turkey in its Balkan policy in addition to NATO as already seen in the

Bosnian case. Finally, Turkey under AKP rule pays particular importance to the social and cultural relations and activities of public diplomacy in the region which is examined in the final chapter.

In addition to the above mentioned principles, an increase has been observed both in terms of quality and quantity of the public diplomacy practices in parallel with the economic growth in Turkey, and a change and development in its foreign policy after 2000's. The main public diplomacy instruments of the Turkish foreign policy, which is examined with its instruments and effects are as follows; TİKA, The Turkish Red Crescent, TRT, Yunus Emre Institute, Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities and Directorate General of Press and Information. For the regional aspect, TİKA opened the Bosnia Herzegovina Program Coordination Office and the Albania Program Coordination Office, which are their first two offices in the Balkans, in 1996. The other offices in the region, Kosovo in 2004, Macedonia in 2005, Montenegro in 2007 and Serbia in 2009.

As a result of AKP foreign policy implemented in the region and discourse used by its leadership which is also examined in final chapter increased the claims of neo-Ottomanism both in Turkey and abroad. Davutoğlu took these claims as an accusation for being imperial and put an end as saying "I am not a neo-Ottoman". Considering the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans in terms of "pax-Ottomana" as also admitted by Davutoğlu Turkey cannot act as if the Ottomans never existed in the region. When examining Turkey's relations with the countries of the Balkans in the context of politics and economics which might be perceived as the instruments of imperial policy it is seen that Turkish foreign policy is not neo-Ottomanist since foreign trade figures between Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo are still under 300.000 dollars in numbers. The fact is that the discourse and rhetoric used by the leadership of AKP caused an increase in the neo-Ottomanist claims towards Turkish Balkan policy as can be taken from some examples such as Davutoğlu's Sarajevo speech in 2009 and Erdoğan's address for the international media after 2011 general elections. To sum up, despite the increase in political, economic and cultural relations including the practices of public diplomacy, neo-Ottomanism of AKP remains mainly in discourses.

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