

**TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE COLD WAR ERA (1945-1990)**Behçet Kemal YEŞİLBURSA<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This article examines the evolution of Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War era (1945–1990), highlighting its strategic orientation, key turning points, and underlying dynamics. Initially shaped by the Soviet threat and territorial demands in 1945, Türkiye adopted a firmly pro-Western stance, culminating in its accession to NATO in 1952 and participation in regional security pacts such as the Balkan and Baghdad Pacts. The study traces how Türkiye’s foreign policy, anchored in Western alignment, gradually diversified in response to changing international conditions, including détente, the Cyprus crisis, and the emergence of a multipolar world order. The analysis explores critical phases: the consolidation of Western ties (1945–1965), the shift toward a more balanced approach following the Johnson Letter and Cyprus crisis (1965–1973), the active diplomacy and strategic recalibration after the 1974 Cyprus operation (1973–1983), and the deepening of U.S. relations amid regional challenges and European integration efforts (1983–1991). Drawing on archival sources and scholarly literature, the article argues that while Türkiye maintained its Western orientation throughout the Cold War, it simultaneously pursued pragmatic adjustments to safeguard national interests, manage regional conflicts, and respond to global transformations.

**Keywords:** *Turkish Foreign Policy, Cold War, NATO, Cyprus crisis, Turkish-American relations.*

**Article Category:** International Relations / History

**Date of Submission:** 13.01.2026

**Date of Acceptance:** 11.02.2026

**DOI:** [10.5281/zenodo.18650906](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18650906)

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## SOĞUK SAVAŞ DÖNEMİNDE TÜRK DIŞ POLİTİKASI 1945-1990)

**Öz:** Bu makale, Soğuk Savaş dönemi (1945–1990) boyunca Türk dış politikasının evrimini, stratejik yönelimini, temel dönüm noktalarını ve altında yatan dinamikleri incelemektedir. Başlangıçta 1945'teki Sovyet tehdidi ve toprak talepleriyle şekillenen Türkiye, kesin bir Batı yanlısı tutum benimsemiş, 1952'de NATO'ya katılımı ve Balkan ile Bağdat Paktları gibi bölgesel güvenlik girişimleriyle bu yönelimini pekiştirmiştir. Çalışma, Türkiye'nin Batı'ya bağlı dış politikasının, Johnson Mektubu, Kıbrıs krizi ve çok kutuplu dünya düzeninin ortaya çıkışı gibi değişen uluslararası koşullara yanıt olarak nasıl çeşitlendiğini izlemektedir. Analiz, kritik aşamaları ele almaktadır: Batı ile ilişkilerin pekiştirilmesi (1945–1965), Johnson Mektubu ve Kıbrıs krizi sonrası daha dengeli bir yaklaşım (1965–1973), 1974 Kıbrıs Harekâtı sonrasında aktif diplomasi ve stratejik yeniden düzenleme (1973–1983) ve bölgesel sorunlar ile Avrupa entegrasyon çabaları eşliğinde ABD ile ilişkilerin derinleşmesi (1983–1991). Arşiv kaynakları ve akademik literatüre dayanarak, makale Türkiye'nin Soğuk Savaş boyunca Batı yönelimini korurken aynı zamanda ulusal çıkarlarını korumak, bölgesel çatışmaları yönetmek ve küresel dönüşümlere yanıt vermek için pragmatik ayarlamalar yaptığını savunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Türk Dış Politikası, Soğuk Savaş, NATO, Kıbrıs krizi, Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri.*

## **Introduction: Methodology**

This article adopts a historical-analytical research design to investigate the evolution of Turkish foreign policy during the Cold War period (1945–1990). The study employs a qualitative, document-based methodology, integrating both primary and secondary sources to establish an evidence-based narrative and analytical framework.

Primary sources constitute the core empirical foundation of the study and include archival materials from the UK National Archives (FO and FCO series), *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) volumes, parliamentary minutes, bilateral agreements, and contemporary diplomatic correspondence contained within the retrieved document. These materials allow for a direct examination of state-level perceptions, alliance dynamics, and policy responses as they unfolded.

Secondary sources, consisting of established scholarly monographs, journal articles, and regional studies on Turkish foreign policy and Cold War history, complement the primary materials by providing interpretive depth and historiographical context. The combination of these two layers supports a multidimensional understanding of Türkiye's strategic behaviour.

Analytically, the study applies a multi-theoretical framework comprising structural realism, neoclassical realism, balance-of-threat/alliance theory, and role theory. This integrated approach enables the examination of systemic pressures, domestic political constraints, elite threat perceptions, and identity-based role conceptions in explaining policy continuity and shifts.

To organize the empirical analysis, the Cold War period is divided into four analytically distinct phases (1945–1965, 1965–1973, 1973–1983, 1983–1991). Periodization facilitates structured comparison across different strategic environments and identifies critical junctures—such as the Johnson Letter (1964), the 1974 Cyprus intervention, and the U.S. arms embargo—where systemic and domestic factors intersected to reshape policy choices.

Overall, this methodology provides a rigorous, transparent, and theoretically informed basis for assessing Türkiye's foreign policy behaviour within the broader context of Cold War international politics.

### **1. Cold War**

The Cold War can be defined as a state of extreme tension between the United States and the Soviet Union; and, although it did not break into all-out war, it was characterised by mutual

hostility and involvement in both covert warfare and war by proxy in a game of political one upmanship. It was the development of nuclear weapons that kept the Cold War “cold”, because any resort to war would have been suicidal, with both sides being totally devastated in the event. The struggle between the two sides was conducted indirectly, very often at considerable risk, and the resulting tensions ensured that both sides maintained a high and continuous state of readiness of war.

To understand the reasons behind the Cold War, it is necessary to go back to the origins of the Soviet state. The Russian Revolution of October 1917 resulted in the emergence of the Soviet socialist state. It was a new type of state that looked upon the outside world with both hope and fear: hope that the revolution would spread, but fear that it would be overpowered by its stronger, capitalist neighbours. Indeed, it was not until the Second World War and the defeat of Germany that the Soviet state stepped into the international arena. This was also the first time that it had close dealings with the United States, its main ideological opponent.

American politicians generally accepted that the Soviet Union would be a lasting, great power. In fact, many of them even thought they would be able to come to a mutual agreement with the Soviets at the end of the war. With the defeat of Germany and Japan, a vacuum had developed in Europe and Asia, and it needed to be filled. Americans were divided on whether or not the Soviets’ filling this gap would be a threat to their interests. President Roosevelt thought it would not, but his hopes of coexistence did not materialise. Doubts began to arise in spite of the meeting Yalta in February 1945. As a result, by 1947, a rift had developed between Moscow and Washington.

As Britain continued to decline as an economic and military great power after 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union emerged as the only truly great powers. The immense and real economic strength of the United States and the potential economic strength of the Soviet Union, together with their military and nuclear power after 1949, gave them the status of superpowers, overshadowing the rest of the world in power and influence.

These developments became more apparent during the 1950s as the two superpowers competed in developing more powerful nuclear weaponry. Both sides appeared willing to go to the very “*brink*” of war during crisis. This was the decade when the East-West tensions of the so-called “*Cold War*” – a term which the veteran American journalist Walter Lippman coined in the mid-1940s – were at their height. In this highly tense atmosphere, efforts to end nuclear testing failed, despite the risks of both fall-out and accidents. It was not until the late

1960s that a slightly more stable nuclear relationship became established. The Cuban missile crisis gave both superpowers a severe shock and led them to exercise more care when threatening each other with nuclear retaliation. However, it also encouraged the Soviet Union to expediate its programme of nuclear research and development, and by the early 1970s, it had caught up with the United States in the number and quality of its delivery systems. Ironically, this paved the way for limited strategic arms agreements and a measure of détente between them: the Soviets, now feeling more secure, felt they could afford to agree to a standstill in the deployment of certain categories of weapons.

Détente was not long lived. During the 1980s the United States, suspicious that the Soviet Union had used détente to get ahead of them in the development of shorter range and other nuclear missiles, embarked on a new rearmament programme. The advent of new leaders (Gorbachev) in Moscow led to a renewed search for nuclear arms limitation. However, relations between East and West remained tense, although the rivalry was much more muted in the mid-1980s than it had been earlier in the decade.

There are several issues surrounding the Cold War: who was responsible for it happening; the inevitability of the conflict; Stalin's real intentions regarding a post-war agreement; and the loss of a possible mutual opportunity for the world powers. This paper aims to outline the origins and surrounding issues of the Cold War. While doing so, it does not set out to blame any of the involved parties, but to attempt to unravel some of the complexities of the issues which gave rise to the Cold War and to consider whether the whole situation could have been avoided.

It would be reasonable to claim that the confrontation between the two world powers of the United States and the Soviet Unions was the event that had the most permanent impact on the emergent international system after the Second World War. Until 1991, the aggression between these two powers, in addition to that between the two power blocs and alliances that had arisen from the conflict represented the starting point that made it necessary, but difficult, to attempt at détente. Ever since the Russian October Revolution and the entry of the United States in 1917 into world politics, this conflict has been depicted as "*the decisive battle*" between Capitalism and Communism, Pluralism and Totalitarianism, and the Liberal-democratic and the State Socialist systems.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wilfried Loth (1988), *The Division of the World, 1941-1955*, London: Routledge, pp. 1-9.

There is a great body of literature on the history of the Cold War and the détente, and of the diverse interpretative models that set out to explain it. Indeed, the differing interpretations over time became very much part of the conflict. Following the antagonistic character of East-West relations, the literature on the Cold War was marked by three opposing basic positions. The first, which predominated in the Western literature, was “*traditional*” thesis of Soviet expansionism as the cause of the conflict. The second was the “*revisionist*” thesis of the economic imperialism of the United States as the central factor in world politics since the Second World War. Both standpoints suffered from a lack of empirical documentation and therefore, rational objectivity.<sup>3</sup>

The conflicts that underpinned the interpretations of the Cold War were considerable. On the one hand, proponents of the revisionist stance accused the traditionalists of having an insufficient theoretical basis. On the other, traditionalists accused revisionists of inadequate academic solidity. Moreover, in both camps, there was uncertainty as to whether the Cold War was the inevitable result of a collision between two opposing social systems, or whether it was a result of an avoidable provocateur mechanism of mutual errors of judgement and panic reactions.<sup>4</sup>

Given these shortcomings, the third, or “*post-revisionist*”, thesis was proposed by John L. Gaddis, George C. Herring, Martin J. Sherwin, Geir Lundestad, and Daniel Yergin. They undertook an unprecedented empirical analysis of US foreign policy in the war and post-war eras, which allowed for a degree of progress in historical understanding hitherto impossible in the era of détente politics.<sup>5</sup>

The East–West confrontation shaped relations among states, economies, cultures, and societies between 1945 and 1991. This conflict constituted a geopolitical and ideological struggle that encompassed not only military forces and material resources, but also competing ideas and value systems. Although historians have examined the origins, developments, and consequences of the Cold War, relatively few have done so from the vantage point of the Soviet Union. The opening of archives in Russia and Eastern Europe has enabled Vladislav

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-9.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Leigh (1974), “Is there a revisionist thesis on the Origins of the Cold War?”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 89, pp. 101-106.

<sup>5</sup> Wilfried Loth (1988), *The Division of the World, 1941-1955*, pp. 1-9.

M. Zubok to produce the first comprehensive international study that interprets the conflict through the lens of the Kremlin.<sup>6</sup>

The definition of the Cold War in terms of its beginning and end is also a matter open to debate. Taking the way people saw themselves and the modes of speech they used at the time as the decisive criteria would place the beginning of the Cold War in 1947, and the end after the Cuban crisis of 1962. Alternatively, emphasising the system conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and its effects on the European continent would date the beginning of the conflict from 1917, and bring it up to the beginning of the 1990s. Again, defining the Cold War as that period in which the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated the international system, would mark 1943 as the beginning, with the end reaching the early 1990s. Given these varied and often imprecise uses of the term ‘Cold War’, for purposes of conceptualisation, the current study will limit the term to the central process from 1947 to 1991.<sup>7</sup>

This study’s evidence on Türkiye’s Cold War diplomacy can be coherently interpreted through a layered framework that combines structural realism (systemic bipolarity and alliance formation), neoclassical realism (domestic constraints and elite perceptions), balance-of-threat/alliance theory (NATO accession, pact politics), and role theory/English School (status-seeking, regional order-building). In a system defined by bipolar military structure yet evolving toward political multipolarity and economic turbulence, Ankara’s behaviour reveals how a middle power on a geopolitical fault line translates external constraints into policy via domestic filters and identity-laden role conceptions.

From 1945, Soviet pressure over territory and the Straits generated an existential threat perception; accordingly, Türkiye’s rapid Western alignment—Truman Doctrine support, Marshall aid uptake, and entry into NATO (1952)—mirrors structural realism’s prediction that vulnerable states bandwagon with a security-providing bloc to balance a proximate great power. The Balkan and Baghdad/CENTO pacts functioned as regional order-multipliers designed to thicken deterrence and embed Ankara in a wider Western security.

Systemic constraints alone cannot account for inflection points such as the Johnson Letter (1964), the Cuban missiles/Jupiter removal episode, and the 1974 Cyprus intervention followed by the U.S. embargo. These episodes altered elite threat perceptions, widened doubts

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<sup>6</sup> See; Vukob M. Zubok (2007), *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev (Cold War History)*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

<sup>7</sup> Martin McCauley (1991), *The Origins of the Cold War*, London: Routledge, p. 79.

about the reliability of allied guarantees, and—filtered through domestic politics—produced a more autonomous, diversified diplomacy (rapprochement with the USSR; opening to the Arab world; early PLO contacts). Thus, the 1965–73 phase exemplifies neoclassical realism: a constant structure (bipolarity) but shifting policy as leaders reassessed costs, reputational risks, and domestic tolerance for dependency.

The record shows alliance deepening when regional volatility raised the aggregate threat (e.g., Afghanistan 1979, Iranian Revolution, Aegean frictions), and alliance hedging when patron behaviour constrained core interests (post-1964, post-1974). Türkiye's base politics, periodic agreement revisions, and seizure/renegotiation of U.S. facilities in the late 1970s exhibit classic alliance-management strategies—leverage, conditional cooperation, and linkage—rather than simple bloc loyalty.

Identity and status, seeking dynamics help explain Ankara's shift from a “*Western outpost*” role toward a proactive regional stabilizer. Participation in Western institutions supplied recognition and status, but crises (Cyprus, Aegean, Middle East oil politics) encouraged a plural role conception: Western ally, regional balancer, and bridge to neighbouring societies. This is visible in the Middle East opening (post-1967 and 1973), evolving Palestine stance, and calibrated ties with Moscow in *détente* windows—moves that aimed to shape local order without severing the Euro-Atlantic anchor.

During the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was based on a central theme: cooperating with the West against the Soviet Union. Within this theme, the challenges of Turkish foreign policy were defined by the distinct lines of a ‘bipolar’ balance. Consequently, Turkish foreign policy had limited room for manoeuvre, limited ability to create new opportunities, but its stability remained strong. The most significant problems of Turkish foreign policy after World War II were the isolation Türkiye experienced during the war itself and the Soviet threat, which had already begun during the war, taking concrete form in 1945. In other words, it was the concern to ensure its security against the Soviet threat that emerged after the war. The Soviet Union's sending a note to Türkiye on March 19, 1945, declaring that it did not want to renew the Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression dated December 17, 1925, which was due to expire on November 7, 1945, and its request for territory from Türkiye and changes to the Straits regime in order to make a new treaty on June 7, 1945, had a profound impact on Türkiye.

Türkiye, isolated internationally, sought the support of the United Kingdom, with which it had been allied since 1939, and the United States, which emerged as a ‘super’ power after World War II alongside the Soviet Union. However, Türkiye did not receive the support it had hoped for. At the time, Britain, and especially the United States, believed they could reestablish post-war peace and order through cooperation with the Soviet Union. Considering that relations between Western powers and the Soviet Union were influenced by the atmosphere of cooperation during the war, and considering the US’s indifference to Türkiye’s security at the Potsdam Conference, which asserted that the Straits regime could be changed and that territorial claims were a matter of mutual concern, Türkiye’s isolation and anxiety immediately following World War II become more readily apparent. Turkish foreign policy between 1945 and 1991 can be divided as below:

### **1.1. 1945–1965**

During the period from 1945 to 1965, Türkiye’s foreign policy was shaped by the Soviet Union’s demands for territorial concessions and control over the Turkish Straits. In response, Türkiye aligned itself with the Western bloc. The Truman Doctrine (1947) and the Marshall Plan (1948) provided military and economic assistance from the United States. Türkiye’s accession to NATO in 1952 solidified its integration into the Western alliance. Regional security initiatives such as the Balkan Pact and the Baghdad Pact were pursued. Türkiye maintained a distant relationship with the Non-Aligned Movement and acted as a spokesperson for the West.

### **1.2. 1965–1973**

The Johnson Letter of 1964 marked a turning point in Turkish-American relations, prompting Türkiye to seek improved ties with the Soviet Union. Türkiye adopted a more active Middle East policy and strengthened relations with Arab countries. The Palestinian issue gained prominence, and Türkiye established relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

### **1.3. 1973–1983**

The 1974 Cyprus Operation was a significant milestone in Turkish foreign policy. The subsequent U.S. arms embargo and the closure of American bases strained bilateral relations. Türkiye began to pursue a more diversified foreign policy, balancing relations with both Western and Eastern blocs. Turkish-Greek relations intensified around the Cyprus issue and disputes in the Aegean Sea.

#### 1.4. 1983–1991

During this period, Türkiye's foreign policy was closely aligned with the United States. Issues such as the Armenian question, military cooperation, and aid dynamics influenced Turkish-American relations. The Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) led to water disputes with Syria and Iraq. Syria's support for the PKK posed a new security challenge. Pressure on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria strained bilateral relations. In 1987, Türkiye applied for full membership in the European Union.

**1945–1965 (Consolidation of Western Alignment):** High, proximate threat plus isolation security-maximizing alignment (NATO), plus regional pacts to densify deterrence; costs included strained Arab relations and reduced flexibility vis-à-vis Non-Aligned states.

**1965–1973 (Diversification under Constraint):** Alliance shocks (Johnson Letter) plus Cuban crisis lessons selective autonomy and East/Middle East openings while keeping the NATO core intact.

**1973–1983 (Assertive Autonomy and Re-equilibration):** Cyprus intervention asserts vital interests; U.S. embargo triggers base politics and cross-bloc balancing; economic turbulence narrows policy bandwidth; by 1980, controlled re-anchoring resumes.

**1983–1991 (Strategic Re-anchoring with Regional Assertiveness):** Heightened Middle East salience, Greek/Bulgarian frictions, and water-security/PKK challenges lead to closer U.S. ties but with issue-linkage diplomacy and continued European vector (EC application), setting the stage for post-bipolar activism.

#### 2. Turkish Foreign Policy between 1945 and 1965<sup>8</sup>

During the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was based on a central theme: cooperation with the West against the Soviet Union. Within this theme, the challenges of Turkish foreign policy were defined by the distinct lines of a 'bipolar' balance. Consequently, Turkish foreign policy had limited room for manoeuvre, limited ability to create new opportunities, but strong stability.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See; Annual Report on Turkey, all references to sources prefixed by FO and FCO refer to materials held at the National Archives (TNA), Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom, formerly, the Public Record Office (PRO).

<sup>9</sup> Baskın Oran (1996), "Turkish Foreign Policy: Notes on Its Basic Principles and the Post-Cold War Situation", *Ankara University Journal of Political Sciences*, 51(1-4), January-December 1996, pp. 353-370. See; Annual Report on Turkey, all references to sources prefixed by FO and FCO refer to materials held at the National Archives (TNA), Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom, formerly, the Public Record Office (PRO).

The most significant problem facing Turkish foreign policy after World War II was the isolation Türkiye experienced during the war itself, coupled with the Soviet threat that had already emerged during the war, which took concrete form in 1945. In other words, it was the concern about ensuring its security against the Soviet threat that emerged after the war.<sup>10</sup> The Soviet Union's diplomatic note to Türkiye on March 19, 1945, declaring its refusal to renew the Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression of December 17, 1925, which was due to expire on November 7, 1945, and its request for territorial claims from Türkiye and changes to the Straits regime to enable the conclusion of a new treaty on June 7, 1945, had a profound impact on Türkiye.<sup>11</sup>

Türkiye, isolated internationally, sought the support of the United Kingdom, with which it had been allied since 1939, and the United States, which emerged as a 'super' power alongside the Soviet Union after World War II. However, Türkiye did not receive the support it had hoped for. At the time, the United Kingdom, and especially the United States, believed they could restore peace and order in the post-war world through cooperation with the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, if one considers that relations between Western powers and the Soviet Union were influenced by the atmosphere of cooperation during the war, and if one considers the US's indifference to Türkiye's security at the Potsdam Conference, stating that the Straits regime could change and that territorial claims were a matter of concern to both states, one can better understand the isolation and anxiety Türkiye experienced immediately after World War II.<sup>13</sup>

The Potsdam Conference, the Soviet Union increasingly increased its political pressure on Türkiye and, on August 8, 1946, issued a harsh note to Türkiye outlining its views on the Straits. The Soviet Union also delivered this note, which included its views on the Straits, to

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<sup>10</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1995), *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1995*, Ankara: Alkım Yayınevi, p. 517; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Yayınları, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Mehmet Gönlübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, pp. 191-193; Feridun Cemal Erkin (1968), *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri ve Boğazlar Sorunu*, Ankara: Başnur Matbaası, pp. 246-318. For the beginning of the Cold War in the Middle East and Soviet demands on Türkiye, see; Bruce R. Kuniholm (1980), *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Türkiye, and Greece*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>12</sup> Mehmet Gönlübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 191-193; Michael Dockrill (1988), *The Cold War, 1945-1963*, London: Red Globe Press London.

<sup>13</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1995), *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1995*, Ankara: Alkım Yayınevi, pp. 426-430; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, p. 9; Mehmet Gönlübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 191-199.

Türkiye, the US, and the UK. After receiving the Soviet note on August 8, 1946, the US administration began to better understand the situation Türkiye faced.<sup>14</sup>

On 8 August 1946, the Soviet Chargé d’Affaires in Ankara handed in a note demanding modification of the Convention. After citing violations of the Convention alleged to have been permitted by Türkiye during the war, the note proposed five changes:<sup>15</sup>

1. the Straits to remain always open to merchant shipping of all countries and
2. to the passage of warships of the Black Sea Powers,
3. the passage of warships of other Powers to be forbidden except in cases specially provided for,
4. the Straits regime to be within the competence of Türkiye and the other Black Sea Powers,
5. Türkiye and the Soviet Union as the Powers most interested should by their common means ensure the defence of the Straits and prevent their utilisation by other states for purposes hostile to the Black Sea Powers.

Under Article 29 of the Convention this demand for revision should had been supported by one or two of the signatory Powers (according to the nature of the modification) and notified to all contracting parties; the neglect of this procedure was not however used as an objection to the Soviet proposals.<sup>16</sup>

The first three proposals had been suggested to the Turkish Government by the United States Government in November 1945, and the controversy has centred essentially round the fourth and fifth demands.<sup>17</sup>

The Turkish Prime Minister referred to the Soviet note in a declaration of policy on August 14th in which he said that Türkiye was bound by international convention and would defend her sovereign rights but was prepared to negotiate a revision of the Montreux Convention with her Allies and other interested states.<sup>18</sup>

The Soviet note, copies of which had been delivered by the Soviet Embassies to the British and the U.S. Governments also, was discussed by the two Secretaries of State in Paris, and the

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<sup>14</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, p. 205. For the Straits question, see; İsmail Köse (2022), *Tarihin Akışının Değiştiği Su Yolu Türk Boğazları*, İstanbul: İBB Yayınları.

<sup>15</sup> FO371/67305B, Review of Events in Türkiye in 1946.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

British and American Ambassadors in Ankara gave the Turkish Government substantially similar advice as to their reply. Both Governments expressed to the Turks their own willingness to take part in a conference and advised the Turkish Government to express their readiness to do the same while making clear that this offer did not imply agreement with any specific Soviet proposals.<sup>19</sup>

The British Government, in acknowledging the Soviet communication pointed out that the agreement at Potsdam allowed for direct conversations between each of the three Governments and the Turkish Government but had not, (as the Soviet note stated) provided for negotiations. It was pointed out that the Soviet proposals did not mention the UN with whose purposes and principles any modification of the Montreux Convention must be consistent, finally, the British Government pointed out that it had long been internationally recognised that the Straits regime concerned other states besides the Black Sea Powers and Türkiye and further expressed the view that Türkiye as the territorial power concerned should continue to be responsible for the defence and control of the Straits. The American reply also insisted on the concern of other than Black Sea powers with the Straits and on the necessity of relating the Straits regime to the UN and said that any aggression against the Straits would clearly be a matter for action by the Security Council. Both Governments stated their willingness to participate in any eventual conference.<sup>20</sup>

In their notes to the Soviet Union on August 19 and 21, 1946, the US and UK stated that they would not accept Soviet demands regarding the Straits. Türkiye subsequently sent a harsh note to the Soviet Union on August 22, 1946, vehemently rejecting the Soviet demands. However, the Soviet Union sent a second note to Türkiye on September 24, 1946. This note reiterated Soviet demands that the regime concerning the Straits be determined solely by Türkiye and other Black Sea littoral states and that the Straits be jointly defended by Türkiye and the Soviet Union. The US and UK, siding with Türkiye, reiterated their position in October 1946 in notes to the Soviet Union that Türkiye should remain the primary state responsible for the defence of the Straits. Seeing that Türkiye was supported by the US and the UK, Türkiye strongly rejected the Soviet demands in a reciprocal note to the Soviet Union on October 18, 1946. Thus, because of the inconclusive discussions, the Montreux

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

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

Convention Regarding the Straits continued as before and the discussions on the Straits came to an end.<sup>21</sup>

After its demands regarding the Straits were rejected, the Soviet Union further increased its pressure on Türkiye, continuing to be a source of concern and danger for the country. The cold snap in Turkish-Soviet relations, which began with the Soviet Union's unilateral termination of the 20-year Turkish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression in 1945, escalated into a crisis in 1946. Following this, Turkish-Soviet relations would experience a period of coldness that lasted until 1965.

Faced with the threat posed by the Soviet Union to its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, Türkiye sought the alliance of the United States as a counterweight. By 1947, the atmosphere of 'forced cooperation' between Western powers and the Soviet Union in 1945-46 would no longer last, and the United States would change its stance toward Türkiye. Soon sensing a Soviet threat in the Straits and, consequently, in the Eastern Mediterranean, the United States initiated arms aid to Türkiye and Greece in 1947 under the 'Truman Doctrine' to protect them against the Soviet threat, and a year later, economic aid under the 'Marshall Plan'. Thus, one of the most significant consequences of the Soviet threat for Türkiye was the Truman Doctrine, declared on March 12, 1947. The Truman Doctrine demonstrated that the United States would not abandon Türkiye in the face of the Soviet threat.<sup>22</sup>

The reasons that compelled Türkiye to seek US aid under the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan can be listed as follows: the Soviet threats directed against it after World War II, the military and economic aid it needed to achieve its development and defence, and the Westernization efforts that began with Atatürk. Perhaps the most important reason why Türkiye clung to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, so to speak, as a 'life buoy', was its need for military and economic foreign aid at the time.<sup>23</sup>

Although the aid provided under the Marshall Plan fell far short of meeting Türkiye's economic needs, the Marshall Plan, like the Truman Doctrine, was viewed in Türkiye as a

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<sup>21</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1995), *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1995*, Ankara: Alkım Yayınevi, pp. 426-430; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 205-209; *Ayın Tarihi* (1946), August 1946, No. 153, Ankara: İç İşleri Bakanlığı Basın Yayın Genel Müdürlüğü, pp. 72-74, 76-83; *Foreign Relations of the United States* (1946), Council of Foreign Ministers, Volume II, pp. 801-923. For more detailed information on the Straits, see; Feridun Cemal Erkin (1968), *Türk-Sovyet İlişkileri ve Boğazlar Sorunu*. See also; Harry M. Howard (1947), *The Problem of the Turkish Straits*, Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.

<sup>22</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 211-222; Michael J. Hogan (1989), *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>23</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 18-19; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 211-222.

policy that, in the words of Foreign Minister Necmettin Sadak, ‘far transcended a simple economic framework’ and was predominantly political. Thus, following the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan was also considered a significant step in Türkiye’s efforts after World War II, both toward Westernization and toward defence cooperation with the United States.<sup>24</sup>

After facing the Soviet threat in 1945-46 and the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine, Türkiye based its entire foreign policy philosophy on the principle of close ties to the West and aimed to participate in virtually all political, military, and economic institutions established by the West. Initially, Türkiye’s goal was to establish close cooperation with the United States, perhaps even leading to an alliance, to ensure its security against the Soviet threat. However, after the implementation of the Truman Doctrine, this limited objective shifted to a more comprehensive and thoroughly pro-Western foreign policy.<sup>25</sup>

Truman Doctrine on Turkish foreign policy can be seen in Türkiye’s stance on the Palestinian issue. Until the Truman Doctrine, Türkiye had pursued a policy of supporting Arab states. However, after receiving aid, it shifted its stance under the influence of the US. Initially supporting the establishment of an independent Arab state in the region, it recognized Israel in May 1948, ten months after its founding. This laid the foundation for years of sour relations between Türkiye and the Arab states.<sup>26</sup>

The United States Aid agreement was signed in Ankara in July 14th of 1947; its drafting made clear that it was an agreement between two sovereign states. The amount was fixed at one hundred million dollars, though this may be increased. Fifty per cent, was for the Army, thirty per cent, for the Air Force, ten per cent, for the Navy and the remaining ten per cent, for roads, arms factories, etc., with the exception of any part which must clearly be regarded as primarily end directly increasing the Turkish economic potential, it would be a gift, and over two hundred American specialists would be lent to Türkiye. The first specialists had found that the mission had over-estimated the landing facilities and other technical resources of the Turks did far the American specialists had largely succeeded in claiming the fears which many privately held, and which were loudly trumpeted by Moscow Radio, that the aid would transform Türkiye into an American satellite.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-222; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 46-54.

<sup>25</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 211-222; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 211-222.

<sup>27</sup> FO371/72540, Annual Report on Türkiye for 1947.

In 1948, Turkish interest in foreign affairs was based on fear of Russia. Their old religious and cultural traditions which bind them to Western Europe had been displaced by more than a superficial veneer of Westernisation with an Asiatic outlook and methods; but with practical and realistic determination they were making full use of their geographical position as an outpost of Western defence against Russia.<sup>28</sup>

This feeling of isolation and mistrust had again been a highlight of Turkish foreign policy during the year. There had been no change in Türkiye's relations with her neighbours, and her Soviet Ambassador had diminished almost to extinction in 1949. But nobody had attempted to conceal that relations with Türkiye remained uneasy. The attitude of the Turkish press including semi-official *Ulus*, had followed with growing resignation from Moscow.<sup>29</sup>

Truman Doctrine was Türkiye's turning its back on almost all Asian states. Türkiye did not participate in the first Asian states conference, held in 1949. The most significant factor influencing Türkiye's stance was not only the pro-Western foreign policy Türkiye began pursuing, but also the Western-oriented administrative approach of Turkish statesmen, beginning with Atatürk, and the related perception of Turks as a European rather than an Asian nation.<sup>30</sup>

Türkiye, perceiving the Westernization efforts that began during Atatürk's era as a means of establishing closer ties with European states, regretted its exclusion from NATO and the Council of Europe, which were established in 1949. However, Türkiye's dismay at the Council of Europe did not last long, and at a meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on August 8, 1949, it was decided to invite Greece, Iceland, and Türkiye to the Council. However, Türkiye's efforts to join NATO would not bear fruit until 1952.<sup>31</sup>

Following the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Türkiye made close cooperation with the US a central element of its foreign policy. Faced with the deteriorating global situation and the continuing Soviet threat, Türkiye sought to develop its relations with the US within the framework of an alliance, going beyond military and economic aid. Besides security concerns, one of the key factors driving Türkiye's entry into NATO was economic. It was the

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<sup>28</sup> FO371/78661, Annual Report on Türkiye for 1948.

<sup>29</sup> FO371/87933, Annual Report on Türkiye for 1949.

<sup>30</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 37-38. For this conference and Türkiye's non-participation, see; Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1948-1950, pp. 9792-9793.

<sup>31</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, p. 226; Melvyn P. Leffler (1985), "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Türkiye, and NATO, 1945-1952", *Journal of American History*, 71, March 1985, pp. 807-825.

concern that American military and economic aid, which began during World War II and increased after the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, would diminish if it remained outside NATO. Therefore, after 1949, Türkiye's primary foreign policy objective became NATO entry. Finally, because of intensive diplomatic efforts undertaken with US support, Türkiye joined NATO on February 18, 1952, and participated as a full member in the Lisbon meeting of the NATO Council of Ministers held from February 20-25, 1952.<sup>32</sup>

Türkiye's entry into NATO has had significant consequences for Turkish foreign policy. The Truman Doctrine, which initiated Turkish foreign policy, aimed at ensuring its security within Western defence systems and establishing mutual commitments with the United States, was successfully concluded with Türkiye's entry into NATO. However, NATO entry will accelerate this trend in Turkish foreign policy, and Turkish governments will strive to expand these newly established relationships to encompass every aspect of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>33</sup>

Turkish governments have equated NATO with the US. For Turkish governments, NATO has become less an alliance ensuring Türkiye's security and more a tool for shaping Türkiye's political, military, economic, and social relations with the US. Türkiye's entry into NATO has profoundly impacted Turkish-American relations. After joining NATO, Türkiye has become a key element of US global policy, particularly in the Middle East, and has permitted the establishment of military bases and facilities on its territory to serve this policy.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Türkiye's entry into NATO carries far more significance for a state's security than simply entering into an alliance with another state. As a result of all this, those directing Turkish foreign policy will consider NATO a national policy and a worldview for Türkiye and will evaluate international events through this institution's lens. Foreign Minister Fuat Köprülü stated the following on this matter in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1955: *"The Atlantic Alliance is a national policy for us. Because the unwavering principles of Turkish foreign policy, such as loyalty to the aims and principles expressed in the UN Covenant, the*

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<sup>32</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 223-236; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, p. 66; Hüseyin Bağcı (1990), *Demokrat Parti Dönemi Dış Politikası*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, pp. 14-39. For Türkiye's entry into NATO, see; Yusuf Sarımay (1988), *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*, Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları.

<sup>33</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, p. 83; William Hale (2021), *1774'ten Günümüze Türk Dış Politikası*, çev. Nasuh Uslu, Ankara: Serbest Akademi; Yusuf Sarımay (1988), *Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi*.

<sup>34</sup> After joining NATO, Türkiye not only tied its entire security to cooperation within this organization under the slogan of "mutual defence," but also established a vast network of bilateral agreements with the United States. These bilateral agreements, signed between Türkiye and the United States, established American strategic air and missile bases in Türkiye. These missile bases, established in 1959, were dismantled following the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis following a mutual agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. See; "Ohappenings with Turkish Foreign Policy...", pp. 235-236.

*desire to live in peace with all other nations, and the determination to preserve freedom and territorial integrity at all costs, are also the fundamental principles of NATO.*"<sup>35</sup>

The best example of how those directing Turkish foreign policy interpreted NATO solidarity broadly is their stance on the independence of Algeria, a matter of great interest to the Turkish public. In 1955, Türkiye voted in the UN General Assembly not to bring the Algerian issue into the agenda, despite the wishes of Asian-African countries. However, Greece, a NATO member and Türkiye's ally in the Balkan Pact, voted with Asian-African countries in this vote. This clearly demonstrates why Asian-African countries supported Greece at the UN on the Cyprus issue in December 1965. In 1957, Türkiye abstained from the 'self-determination' proposal made by Asian-African countries regarding Algeria and did so again in 1958. Like its ally France, Türkiye did not want the Algerian issue to be brought before the UN.<sup>36</sup>

One of the most significant consequences of Türkiye's entry into NATO for Turkish foreign policy is that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Türkiye to stay out of a potential inter-bloc war. Türkiye's entry into NATO, and particularly the various military bases and facilities established in Türkiye as a requirement of this alliance, have eliminated the possibility of Türkiye staying out of a war between the blocs.<sup>37</sup>

One of the impacts of NATO on Turkish foreign policy is the acceleration of Türkiye's Middle East policy. After joining NATO, Türkiye not only established close military and economic relations with the US and the West but also embarked on an intensive foreign policy effort to strengthen Western defences through regional pacts. The Balkan Pact, established in 1954, and the Baghdad Pact, established in 1955, were the results of Türkiye's intensive efforts in this direction.

The Balkan Pact, a classic military alliance signed<sup>38</sup> between Türkiye, Greece, and Yugoslavia in Bled on August 9, 1954, was a pact-like version of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the same states in Ankara on February 28, 1953. While Türkiye played a leading role in its establishment, the Balkan Pact quickly lost its significance due to the policies pursued after Yugoslavia's reconciliation with Moscow and the deterioration of

<sup>35</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>36</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, p. 314; Haydar Çakmak (2012), *Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-2012*, Ankara: Barış Kitap.

<sup>37</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, p. 84; Ayşegül Sever (1997), *Soğuk Savaş Kuşatmasında Türkiye, Batı ve Ortadoğu, 1945-1958*, İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları.

<sup>38</sup> Hüseyin Bağcı (1990), *Demokrat Parti Dönemi Dış Politikası*, pp. 54-61. For the text of the agreements, see; *Aydın Tarihi* (1953), February 1953, No. 231, Ankara: İç İşleri Bakanlığı Basın Yayın Genel Müdürlüğü, pp. 286-288; *Aydın Tarihi* (1954), August 1954, No. 249, Ankara: İç İşleri Bakanlığı Basın Yayın Genel Müdürlüğü, pp. 85-88.

Turkish-Greek relations. Differences of opinion arose between Türkiye and Yugoslavia regarding the nature, scope, and future of the Balkan Pact immediately after its signing. Greece, however, maintained a lukewarm attitude towards the pact from its very inception. Relations between Greece and Türkiye became particularly strained with the emergence of the Cyprus issue in 1954. The Balkan Pact, which continued in its current form until 1960, officially ended in June 1960. The Balkan Pact's short lifespan was primarily due to its division of the region, excluding other states. Hastily established without much preparation to protect Western interests in the region, the Balkan Pact quickly became ineffective, preventing Türkiye from pursuing an effective policy in the Balkans.<sup>39</sup>

Following the signing of the Balkan Pact, Türkiye, with the encouragement of the US and UK, would turn its attention to the Middle East and establish the Baghdad Pact, which would divide the region into two opposing blocs. The Baghdad Pact was established on February 24, 1955, as a result of Türkiye's intense diplomatic efforts, and the UK, Pakistan, and Iran joined the pact in that same year. However, the Baghdad Pact was short-lived. The regional members (Türkiye, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan) viewed the Baghdad Pact not as an organization to ensure Middle Eastern defence, but as a tool to secure American aid. Following the revolution that broke out on July 14, 1958, Iraq withdrew from the pact on March 24, 1959, and the pact was subsequently renamed the Central Treaty Organization on August 2, 1959. It was changed to Organization (CENTO).<sup>40</sup>

Initially established to unite Middle Eastern countries within a single political and defence system, the Baghdad Pact not only created new divisions among Arab countries, making this goal even more difficult to achieve, but also divided them into two distinct groups. Two separate blocs emerged, with Iraq on one side and Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia on the other. Thus, by dividing the Arab states, the Baghdad Pact, instead of ensuring regional security, undermined it. The Soviet Union benefited from this fragmentation and the rivalry between these two factions. Through economic and military aid agreements with Egypt and Syria, the Soviet Union entered Middle Eastern politics as if the Baghdad Pact had never

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<sup>39</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1995), *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1995*, Ankara: Alkım Yayınevi, pp. 522-524; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 237-249; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 123, 125. For detailed information on the Balkan Pact, see; Oral Sander (1969), *Balkanlardaki Gelişmeler ve Türkiye, 1945-1965*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi.

<sup>40</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1995), *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1995*, Ankara: Alkım Yayınevi, pp. 524-528; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 251-271. For more detailed information on the Baghdad Pact, see; Behçet K. Yeşilbursa (2013), *The Baghdad Pact and Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1955-1959*, London: Routledge.

existed. Yet the Baghdad Pact was established to create a defensive bloc against the Soviet threat.<sup>41</sup>

The Baghdad Pact had significant consequences for Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye, which played a significant role in establishing the pact with the encouragement of the US and UK, not only received no reward for its actions, but the pact's resulting developments negatively impacted Turkish foreign policy. The pact's most significant consequence from the perspective of Turkish foreign policy was undoubtedly the deterioration of Turkish-Arab relations. Türkiye's Middle East policy following the establishment of the Baghdad Pact was founded not only on measures against the Soviet threat but also on its desire to play a leading role in the region by isolating Egypt, which it viewed as a rival, in international politics.<sup>42</sup> Another significant consequence of the pact for Turkish foreign policy was the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations, which had been good since 1947. Türkiye, which withdrew its ambassador to Israel in November 1956, believing that this action would strengthen the Baghdad Pact's position, not only failed to achieve its goals but also deeply offended Israel.<sup>43</sup>

The reason Türkiye was motivated to establish the Baghdad Pact was the promise it made, at Britain's insistence, when it was about to be admitted to NATO, to focus primarily on the defence of the Middle East. By joining the Pact and playing at least a seemingly leading role in its establishment, it provoked the Soviet Union against itself and limited its ability to capitalize on the changing behaviour of that state in international politics after 1953. The Baghdad Pact not only further damaged Türkiye's relations with the Soviet Union but also worsened its relations with the Arab states outside of Iraq. Turkish-Egyptian relations, which had deteriorated in 1951 due to the Middle East Command, became even more strained. This tension was largely due to Egypt's dissatisfaction with the disintegration of Arab unity and the erosion of its own leadership, as well as to its anxiety about Britain's attempts to maintain its presence in the region. However, Türkiye struggled to grasp this reality and attempted to attribute the hostility that arose among Arab states against the Baghdad Pact solely to the competition for leadership in the Middle East.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1995), *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, 1914-1995*, Ankara: Alkım Yayınevi, pp. 524-528; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 251-271.

<sup>42</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, p. 133; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 251-271.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 251-271.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 251-271, 300-309; Mahmut Dikerdem (1990), *Ortadoğu'daki Devrim Yılları*, İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi.

The Balkan and Baghdad Pacts, established by Türkiye through intense diplomatic efforts just beyond its borders to protect the interests of these states in the Middle East and the Balkans, with the encouragement of the US and the UK, not only did not serve Türkiye's regional interests, but on the contrary, both pacts attracted the hostility of other states in the region, including the Soviet Union. After the failure of the Balkan and Baghdad Pacts, Türkiye would have little to do in two regions of paramount importance to Türkiye: The Middle East and the Balkans. Its relations with both regional states would remain strained for a long time.

After joining NATO, Türkiye pursued a pro-Western, and particularly pro-American, foreign policy. Türkiye viewed and evaluated international events through the lens of the United States, voting in line with American policy in international organizations, and became the West's spokesperson. As a result, a period of coldness began in Türkiye's relations with the Asian-African states (i.e., the bloc known as the Non-Aligned). This coldness, which began with Türkiye's failure to attend the Asian Conference in 1949, would become more evident in 1955, and the view that a neutral policy could not be pursued in a world divided into two hostile blocs would become a key element of Turkish foreign policy. The Bandung Conference convened in 1955 provides a prime example of this stance by Türkiye. Initially, Türkiye had no intention of attending the conference of Asian-African states (the Non-Aligned) that opened in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955, and, as in the 1949 Asian Conference, it declined the invitation. However, under pressure from the West, and particularly the United States, Türkiye decided to attend the conference in March 1955. Western powers convinced Türkiye that its participation was crucial, ensuring that an 'effective spokesperson' would be present at the conference to represent the West and convey its views.<sup>45</sup>

At the conference meeting on April 21st, Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu specifically emphasized the communist threat and condemned the policy of neutrality. By defending NATO and the Western bloc in general, Türkiye was appearing at the conference against states that opposed all forms of bloc formation and adopted neutrality as their foreign policy principle. These countries viewed Türkiye as the spokesperson of the West, and this greatly

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<sup>45</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 121-122; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 273-276; Hüseyin Bağcı (1990), *Demokrat Parti Dönemi Dış Politikası*, pp. 61-63.

displeased them. Moreover, in a subsequent speech, Zorlu openly stated that Türkiye had gone to Bandung to act as the West's spokesperson and at its insistence.<sup>46</sup>

After Stalin's death in March 1953, the Soviet Union's international peace efforts, undertaken under the principle of 'peaceful coexistence', also turned to Türkiye. In accordance with this principle, the Soviet Union sent a diplomatic note to Türkiye in May 1953, declaring its renunciation of its territorial claims. However, those directing Turkish foreign policy interpreted the changes in Soviet foreign policy following Stalin's death, which were welcomed by neutral states, not as a genuine innovation, but as a tactical shift. Far from having<sup>47</sup> a positive impact on official Turkish circles, the Soviet Union's efforts to draw closer to Türkiye further increased Türkiye's distrust of the state during the Middle East crises of 1956-57-58. These concerns about distrust, and Türkiye's reliance on aid, particularly from the United States, for its economic development, led to a stronger dependence on the West and its commitment to following the US's lead in its relations with the East. Because they viewed events from this perspective, those directing Turkish foreign policy rejected neutrality as a foreign policy stance and viewed Western allegiance as the best way to secure Türkiye's national interests. Similarly, because of this perspective, those directing Turkish foreign policy viewed the Soviet Union's attempts at multilateral or bilateral agreements with Westerners between 1954 and 1960 with great caution.<sup>48</sup> However, in the face of the softening of East-West relations in the early 1960s, those directing Turkish foreign policy, like some other NATO members, began to reexamine Turkish-Soviet relations in the hope of gaining political and, especially, economic advantages. Consequently, a joint Turkish-Soviet declaration was issued on April 12, 1960, announcing that Prime Minister Menderes would officially visit the Soviet Union in July. However, due to the coup attempt in Türkiye on May 27, 1960, this visit was prevented.<sup>49</sup>

While Türkiye was implementing the Balkan and Baghdad Pacts, it was confronted with the Cyprus issue, which would preoccupy it until early 1959.<sup>50</sup> The Cyprus issue, which assumed an international dimension in 1954, would fundamentally impact Turkish foreign policy in the

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<sup>46</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 273-276. Deputy Prime Minister F. R. Zorlu said the following in a speech to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1956: "Our duty is clear. We will defend our own policy, our own views first. We went there (Bandung) at the last minute. Our allies really wanted this participation, they said, 'Go, it will be very bad if you don't go.'" See; *Ibid.* pp. 273-276.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311-313.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311-313.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 318-319, 321.

<sup>50</sup> Hüseyin Bağcı (1990), *Demokrat Parti Dönemi Dış Politikası*, pp. 101-123. For detailed information on the Cyprus Problem, see; Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi.

years to come and become one of its central themes. The Republic of Cyprus was established on August 16, 1960, within the framework of the principles stipulated by the Zurich and London Agreements signed in February 1959. However, this Republic would not last long and effectively ceased to function on December 21, 1963.<sup>51</sup> While the Cyprus issue between 1954 and 1960 significantly strained Turkish-Greek relations, the emergence of Cyprus as an independent republic eased the tense atmosphere in Turkish-Greek relations somewhat. However, this detente in relations between the two countries was not sufficient to restore the pre-1954 spirit of cooperation. As a matter of fact, the softening in relations between the two countries after 1960 did not last long, and with the 1963 Cyprus crisis, Turkish-Greek relations entered a period of tension once again, more severe than before.<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Turkish Foreign Policy between 1965 and 1973<sup>53</sup>

The period 1965-73 was one of the most dynamic periods in Turkish foreign policy. The significant changes in international relations from the mid-1960s onward, coupled with the infusion of new elements into domestic political developments in Türkiye, brought new dimensions to foreign policy, a reflection of domestic and external factors. International developments in the mid-1960s, the détente between the two ‘super’ powers, and the emergence of a ‘multipolar’ world outlook, albeit with some lag, also influenced Turkish foreign policy.<sup>54</sup>

Between 1965 and 1971, due to internal and external factors, Turkish foreign policy entered a period of dynamism rarely seen in the history of the Republic. This period revealed how far Türkiye could move away from the West and how close it could move to the East. In this respect, it is possible to say that Turkish foreign policy reached, in a sense, an ‘optimal balance point’ after 1971.<sup>55</sup> During the 1965-71 period, Türkiye pursued a more ‘active’ policy than in other periods after World War II, attempting to adapt to changing global conditions. Indeed, towards the end of the 1960s, the transformation of the ‘bipolar’ world of the post-World War II era into a ‘multipolar’ one and the emergence of signs of détente between the two ‘superpowers’ also influenced Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye managed to

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<sup>51</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 529-534. For the texts of the Zurich and London Treaties and the Cyprus Constitution and the Treaty of Guarantee, see; Murat Sarıca vd. (1975), *Kıbrıs Sorunu*, İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi.

<sup>52</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 833-843.

<sup>53</sup> See; Annual Report on Turkey, all references prefixed by FO and FCO refer to materials held at the National Archives (TNA), Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom, formerly, the Public Record Office (PRO).

<sup>54</sup> See; Hazal Papuççular (2024), *Cumhuriyet'in Dış Politikası: Olaylar, Aktörler, Kurumlar 1923-2023*, İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.

<sup>55</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 491-540.

transition to a multifaceted foreign policy that normalized relations with other countries, especially neighbouring ones, without encountering any significant conflicts with its allies. However, with the memorandum of March 12, 1971, Turkish foreign policy entered a period of stagnation and this situation continued until 1973.<sup>56</sup>

A look at Turkish foreign policy in 1965 reveals significant changes made in this policy between 1964 and 1965. The foundation of these changes in Turkish foreign policy after 1965 lies in the Cyprus incidents that broke out in December 1963 and the resulting “Johnson Letter” incident of June 1964. With Greek Cypriot attacks against the Turkish Cypriot population in Cyprus escalating, Türkiye, relying on the authority granted to it by the Treaty of Guarantee, decided to launch a military intervention in Cyprus on June 7, 1964. However, it was met with a harsh letter from US President Johnson to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü on June 5, 1964. In his letter, Johnson warned that if Türkiye intervened, even to protect the Turkish Cypriot population in Cyprus, the US would not protect it against any Soviet threat.<sup>57</sup>

The Johnson Letter severely damaged Turkish-American relations and left deep, lasting scars. Just as the Truman Doctrine was a turning point in Turkish-American relations, the Johnson Letter was a turning point that reversed the robust era ushered in by the Truman Doctrine. While Turkish-American relations entered a serious standstill from 1964 onward, Turkish-Soviet relations began to develop at an increasingly rapid pace. This was the most significant consequence of the 1963-64 Cyprus events for Turkish foreign policy.<sup>58</sup>

After the 1964 Johnson letter, Türkiye stopped unequivocally following US initiatives and began to pay attention to whether they aligned with Turkish national interests. Another significant development in Turkish-American relations was the revision of bilateral agreements between the US and Türkiye and their consolidation into a single agreement in 1969.<sup>59</sup>

However, it would be a mistake to attribute the changes that began to be seen in Turkish foreign policy, and therefore in Turkish-American relations, after 1964 solely to the US’s stance on the Cyprus crisis (i.e., the Johnson letter). Significant changes occurred in the structure and elements of international relations from the early 1960s onward. The 1962

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 491-540.

<sup>57</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 785-789; İsmail Soysal (1993), *Türk Dış Politikası Çalışmaları Kılavuzu, 1919-1993*, İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, pp. 17-18.

<sup>58</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 789-794. For Turkish-American relations, see; G. S. Harris (1972), *The Troubled Alliance: The United States and Türkiye: Their Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971*, Stanford, California: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

<sup>59</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, p. 240.

Cuban crisis demonstrated the dangerous nature of international politics, and as a result, a period of détente (detente) began in East-West relations.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, it was the Cuban crisis and the missile issue that first raised suspicions about the US in Türkiye. In response to the Soviet Union's withdrawal of the missiles it had placed in Cuba, the US's dismantling of the Jupiter missiles in Türkiye, which were outdated but a symbol of US support for Türkiye through missiles, gave rise to the Turkish public's belief that the US would not hesitate to make decisions that could jeopardize Türkiye's security and even its very existence. By ensuring the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba, the US was protecting its own security from a threat, while by removing the Jupiter missiles from Türkiye, it was weakening Türkiye's security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Furthermore, by this action, the US demonstrated that it prioritized its own security interests over those of its allies.<sup>61</sup>

Amidst the atmosphere of anxiety and insecurity created by the Cyprus crisis, NATO's contributions to Türkiye's security began to be questioned for the first time. In the talks held in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in September 1964, it was stated, almost for the first time, that "*the Turkish Army is not NATO's guardian*" and the government was urged to pursue "*a more energetic and characterful foreign policy*".<sup>62</sup> While the traditional policy of ensuring security within NATO, the equating of modernization with dependence on the West, and economic dependence on the US prevented Türkiye from fully breaking away from NATO and the US, the Johnson letter loosened the rigid and rigid nature of Turkish-American relations, thus enabling Türkiye to develop its relations with the Soviet Union, its neighbours, and Third World states.<sup>63</sup>

After 1964, Türkiye attempted to impose a certain degree of flexibility on its foreign policy and narrow the scope of its relations with the United States. In this respect, the 1964 Johnson letter is considered a turning point in Turkish-American relations. From the Truman Doctrine to the Johnson letter, Turkish-American relations developed along a steadily upward trajectory. The first significant decline in this trajectory occurred under the influence of the Johnson letter. However, this change did not bring relations between the two countries to a

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<sup>60</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 819-820; Colin Bown & Peter J. Mooney (1985), *Cold War to Détente, 1945-85*, Oxford: Heinemann Educational.

<sup>61</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 819-820; Ferenc A. Vali (1971), *Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Politics of Türkiye*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 129. For the impact of the Cuban crisis on Turkish-American relations, see; Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 209-225.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 241.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

complete rupture. Fundamental elements that ensured continuity in relations between the two countries have always existed.<sup>64</sup> In short, the conditions and environment were created in 1964 to reshape Turkish-American relations and Turkish foreign policy in general. The Johnson letter served as a catalyst for such an adjustment.<sup>65</sup>

The impact of the Johnson letter on Turkish-American relations resulted in significant structural changes in Turkish foreign policy. The first of these was the shift in Türkiye's policy toward the Soviet Union and the development of Turkish-Soviet relations. After 1964, Turkish-American relations declined, while Turkish-Soviet relations developed on a steadily rising trajectory.<sup>66</sup>

On October 30, 1964, a Turkish Foreign Minister, Feridun Cemal Erkin, visited Moscow for the first time in a long time, and this was followed by other reciprocal visits at various levels. At the end of Erkin's visit, a joint declaration issued on November 6, 1964, acknowledged for the first time the principle of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems, the reduction of international tensions, and the Soviet Union, again for the first time, acknowledged the existence of two separate 'national communities' in Cyprus. However, by the 1970s, this peaceful atmosphere in Turkish-Soviet relations began to fade, and relations entered a period of stagnation and even coldness.<sup>67</sup>

Just as the 1963-64 Cyprus crisis marked a turning point in Türkiye's relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, it also marked a turning point in Türkiye's relations with Middle Eastern countries.<sup>68</sup> In December 1965, when the Cyprus issue was being discussed at the UN, 14 Arab countries voted against Türkiye. Following this defeat at the UN in December 1965, Türkiye began to approach Middle Eastern countries it had previously completely neglected. Türkiye's initial implementation of its policy of opening up to the Middle East was the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. While Türkiye, on the one hand, demanded

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243-245.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>66</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, p. 521.

<sup>67</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 241-242; Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 829, 831.

<sup>68</sup> There are three distinct periods in Türkiye's relations with Middle Eastern countries. The first period is between 1950 and 1960, the second from the 1964 Cyprus crisis to the 1973 oil crisis, and the third period after 1973. During the 1950-1960 period, Türkiye conflicted with Middle Eastern countries, parallel to the East-West conflicts in the Middle East. While Türkiye relied on the West during this period, the Middle Eastern countries' conflict with the West hindered the development of Turkish-Arab relations. See; Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, p. 845. For Türkiye's Middle East policy until 1970, see; Ömer E. Kürkçüoğlu (1972), "Türkiye'nin Arap Orta Doğu'suna Karşı Politikası, 1945-1970", *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 27(2). For Turkish-Middle Eastern relations, see also; Philip Robins (1991), *Türkiye and the Middle East*, London: Pinter/RIIA.

Israel's immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories, it also consistently voted in favour of Arab countries in UN votes. Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and particularly the oil crisis that emerged that same year, Türkiye became increasingly insistent on Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. From the 1964 Cyprus crisis to the 1973 oil crisis, Türkiye prioritized a policy of engagement with Middle Eastern countries, and after the 1973 oil crisis, the Middle East became a key element in Türkiye's global foreign policy. During this period, Turkish foreign policy was based on the Western alliance, while simultaneously striving to maintain its relations with the Western alliance in harmony with its Middle East policy.<sup>69</sup>

Another change in Türkiye's Middle East policy brought about by the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the oil crisis was its stance on the Palestinian issue. Initially, Türkiye adhered to the principle of "*the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people*" but placed little emphasis on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. However, over time, Türkiye's stance on this issue began to change, and Türkiye recognized the Palestinian people's right to establish a state. Although Türkiye was for a time sceptical of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), founded in 1964, it established political relations with the organization in 1975. When the PLO declared its statehood in November 1988, Türkiye immediately recognized it. After 1980, as Türkiye began to pursue a new and dynamic Middle East policy, its relations with Middle Eastern countries began to accelerate and develop.<sup>70</sup>

#### **4. Turkish Foreign Policy between 1973 and 1983<sup>71</sup>**

To better understand the developments in Turkish foreign policy after 1973, it is necessary to first examine the international context of the period. The international structure of this period was militarily bipolar, politically multipolar, and economically chaotic.<sup>72</sup>

Militarily, the bipolarity of the period was the most significant constraint on Turkish foreign policy. The shaping of the Turkish defence system after 1945, based on its alliance with the US, left Türkiye dependent on the US in the 1970s. It became clear that Türkiye could not easily separate from the US in a bipolar world. Politically, the increasing multilateralism of the 1970s created an even more favourable environment for the developments in Turkish foreign policy that began in the mid-1960s. In other words, as Türkiye developed its political

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<sup>69</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, p. 845.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 846-847, 849-850; İsmail Soysal (1993), *Türk Dış Politikası Çalışmaları Kılavuzu, 1919-1993*, p. 19.

<sup>71</sup> See; Annual Report on Turkey, all references to sources prefixed by FO and FCO refer to materials held at the National Archives (TNA), Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom, formerly, the Public Record Office (PRO).

<sup>72</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 543-545.

relations with non-Western countries, especially the Soviet Union, its security concerns vis-à-vis these countries diminished. Economically, the world's increasingly chaotic structure, while encouraging multilateral political relations, also had negative effects on multilateral foreign policy. Türkiye was one of the countries most affected by the economic turmoil of the 1970s.<sup>73</sup>

The 1965-73 period revealed the limits to how far Türkiye could move away from the West and how far it could move closer to the East. In other words, it became clear that falling below a certain level in relations with the West and rising above a certain level with the East was impossible and could only do more harm than good.<sup>74</sup> After the sudden change (stagnation) brought about by the 1971-73 period, Turkish foreign policy entered a period of revitalization within these limits in the years following 1973. Both the "revival" in the international arena and the renewed growth of Türkiye's foreign interest after 1971-73 revitalized Turkish foreign policy. Thus, Turkish foreign policy entered a period of renewed activity after 1973, just as it had between 1965 and 1971.<sup>75</sup> The most significant factor that prompted Türkiye to pursue an active foreign policy during this period was the Cyprus incidents that broke out in 1974. Just as the emergence of multilateralism in Turkish foreign policy in the mid-1960s was closely linked to the initial outbreak of the Cyprus crisis, the 1974 Cyprus operation further imperatively pushed Türkiye toward a foreign policy that reinforced this direction. After 1974, the Cyprus issue became both a fundamental theme and an external determinant of Turkish foreign policy and, once again, had a significant "feedback" effect on the domestic (political and economic) drivers of foreign policy.<sup>76</sup>

Türkiye's intervention in Cyprus in 1974 had significant consequences for Turkish foreign policy. Following the 1974 Cyprus operation, the US embargo, which began in February 1975, caused significant disruptions in Turkish-American relations. Türkiye responded to this US stance by abrogating the Turkish-American Defense Cooperation Agreement of July 3, 1969, on July 25, 1975, and seized all American bases and facilities in Türkiye. A new agreement on this matter became possible only after Türkiye's full sovereignty over these bases and facilities was fully recognized on March 29, 1980.<sup>77</sup> The lifting of the embargo in September 1978, the regime changes in Iran in February 1979, and the Soviet invasion of

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 546-547; George McGhee (1990), *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection*, London: Palgrave Macmillan London.

<sup>74</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, p. 549.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 546-547, 549.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 546-547; Baskın Oran (2003), *Türk Dış Politikası, Cilt-II: 1980-2001*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

<sup>77</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, p. 824.

Afghanistan in December 1979 created a new strategic structure in the Middle East, within which the US needed a stable and strong Türkiye more than ever. For this reason, the September 12, 1980, coup in Türkiye was welcomed by the United States. Furthermore, the foreign policy implemented by Ronald Reagan, who won the US presidential election in November 1980, ushered in a new era of rapprochement between Türkiye and the United States.<sup>78</sup>

Turkish-Soviet relations, which entered a period of stagnation after 1971, deteriorated further after the 1974 Cyprus operation. The Soviet Union opposed Türkiye's 1974 Cyprus operation and demanded that the Cyprus issue be addressed at an international conference. Meanwhile, developments in Greece played a role in the Soviet Union's turning away from Türkiye. Greece's withdrawal from NATO following Türkiye's Cyprus operation greatly pleased the Soviet Union, and it immediately began to approach Greece. Another development that would bring joy to the Soviets was the US imposition of an arms embargo on Türkiye in February 1975. The negative impact of this embargo, which continued until September 1978, on Turkish-American relations, and the continuation of this negative impact after 1978, undoubtedly pleased the Soviet Union. Following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, Türkiye's concern for the Soviet Union, both in the general escalation of international tension and specifically in the Middle East, negatively impacted Turkish-Soviet relations. By the time of the September 12, 1980, coup, Turkish-Soviet relations were stagnant, even estranged.<sup>79</sup> However, the September 12 administration's rapid restoration of domestic stability, its return to the international arena, and its continued multifaceted foreign policy led to a softening of relations with the Soviet Union. While strengthening its relations with the United States, the September 12 administration adopted a policy of not completely turning its back on the Soviet Union.<sup>80</sup>

The 1974 Cyprus operation profoundly affected Turkish-Greek relations. Until 1974, Turkish-Greek relations revolved almost entirely around the Cyprus issue, with issues such as the Turks of Western Thrace and the militarization of the Aegean islands taking a back seat. However, after 1974, while the Cyprus issue remained a central issue in Turkish-Greek relations, relations between the two countries focused more on issues such as the continental shelf, the width of territorial waters, and air control. The damage to Turkish-Greek relations caused by the 1974 Cyprus crisis has not yet been repaired. With the Pan- Hellenic Socialist

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 819.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 831-832.

<sup>80</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 605-606.

Party (PASOK) coming to power in Greece in the general elections of October 18, 1981, and Papandreou's appointment as prime minister, Turkish-Greek relations entered a new period of tension.<sup>81</sup>

While Turkish foreign policy during the 1973-1983 period exhibited some variations in line with changes both internationally and domestically, it essentially conformed to the multilateralism of the mid-1960s. This multilateral policy, implemented between the West, East, and the Third World, experienced some turmoil after 1980 in terms of relations with Western Europe and the Socialist countries, but it did not undergo any fundamental changes. While the essence of the multilateralism of Turkish foreign policy remained unchanged, there were some changes in terms of factors and scope of action. While political factors played a more significant role in the formation of multilateral foreign policy in the mid-1960s, the economic factor became a decisive factor in its own right after the 1970s, and especially after the 1980s. As a result of the rapprochement in political relations, the role of the economic factor became increasingly distinct and independent. It can even be said that the economic factor, which was the result of political relations in the 1960s, began to become a reason for political rapprochement from the 1980s onwards.<sup>82</sup>

After the September 12, 1980, coup attempt, the resurgence of domestic stability—that is, the shift in focus toward inward focus—had a depressing effect on foreign policy, similar to the period after 1971. Furthermore, this situation, in parallel with the decline in international sophistication, also had a detrimental effect on Turkish foreign policy. Consequently, the focus on domestic issues after 1980 led to a relative stagnation in foreign policy. During this period, Türkiye's need for security, both domestically and internationally, came to the fore.<sup>83</sup>

## 5. Turkish Foreign Policy between 1983 and 1991<sup>84</sup>

Between 1983 and 1991, Türkiye based its foreign policy entirely on the United States. Despite occasional ups and downs, turmoil, and turmoil during this period, Turkish-American relations were generally close. In the 1980s, Turkish-American relations were shaped by three

<sup>81</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 833-843. For more detailed information on Turkish-Greek relations, see; Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer (1981), "Türkiye's Security Policies", *Adelphi Papers*, No. 164. Also see; Şükrü Gürel (2018), *Türk-Yunan İlişkileri*, Ankara: İmge Yayınevi.

<sup>82</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 607-608.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 598-602. For domestic developments in Türkiye during 1980-91, see; Feroz Ahmad (1993), *The Making of Modern Türkiye*, London: Routledge. pp. 181-212. For domestic and foreign developments in Türkiye during the same period, see also; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Türkiye: A Modern History*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 292-322.

<sup>84</sup> See; Annual Report on Turkey, all references to sources prefixed by FO and FCO refer to materials held at the National Archives (TNA), Kew, Richmond, Surrey, United Kingdom, formerly, the Public Record Office (PRO).

issues: American aid to Türkiye, the Armenian issue, and military cooperation. During this period, two factors emerged that negatively impacted US aid to Türkiye. One was the US's 7/10 ratio in its aid to Türkiye and Greece, and the other was the US Congress's desire to include Cyprus as a factor in aid to Türkiye.<sup>85</sup>

Another significant factor affecting Turkish-American relations during this period was the Armenian issue. In 1974, the Armenian 'diaspora' in various Western countries launched a terrorist attack against Turkish diplomats abroad. Unable to achieve the expected results from these terrorist attacks, the Armenians would halt these actions in the mid-1980s. Conversely, the Armenian lobby in the US attempted to pass an 'Armenian Genocide' resolution against Türkiye in 1984. Despite lengthy congressional debate, these efforts would fail in 1990.<sup>86</sup>

A significant point of contention in Turkish-American relations between 1983 and 1991 was the 'Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement' (DEA), signed on March 29, 1980. Türkiye, dissatisfied with the implementation of this agreement, failed to achieve any tangible results in its negotiations with the US between 1985 and 1987 to renew the agreement. While Türkiye failed to achieve any resolution to its grievances regarding the DEA, the US, in the 'Defense Cooperation Agreement' signed with Greece on July 8, 1990, pledged to "protect the independence and territorial integrity of Greece against Türkiye in the event of an attack by Türkiye."<sup>87</sup>

Tensions in Turkish-Greek relations constituted one of the most important issues in Turkish foreign policy between 1983 and 1991. While the Cyprus issue remained a central issue in Turkish-Greek relations during this period, relations between the two countries focused more on issues such as the continental shelf, the width of territorial waters, air control zones, and the militarization of the Turks of Western Thrace and the Aegean islands. Papandreou, who came to power in 1981, adopted a harsh policy against Türkiye, further exacerbating the tensions in Turkish-Greek relations.<sup>88</sup>

The Motherland Party (ANAP) government, which came to power in November 1983 in Türkiye, responded to Papandreou's harsh policies, though it occasionally became harsher,

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<sup>85</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 965-967; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Türkiye: A Modern History*, p. 315.

<sup>86</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 965-967; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632.

<sup>87</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 965-967; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632.

<sup>88</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 955-965; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Türkiye: A Modern History*, p. 317.

almost always by seeking ‘dialogue’. Prime Minister Turgut Özal sought to thwart Papandreou's ‘problem-making’ and ‘tension-building’ policies with a ‘hand of friendship’ policy. However, this policy by Özal and his government yielded no results. Consequently, the tension in Turkish-Greek relations persist to this day.<sup>89</sup>

In the 1980s, when Türkiye began building dams and irrigation facilities in Southeastern Anatolia as part of the GAP project, it faced an unexpected backlash from its two southern neighbours, Syria and Iraq. Syria and Iraq, concerned that the GAP project would significantly reduce the flow of water from the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, demanded the sharing of the Euphrates waters. While Iraq exerted harsh political pressure on Ankara, Syria also began supporting the PKK terrorist organization, which had established headquarters in Damascus in 1984, and allowed the organization to establish training camps in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, under its control. Thus, Syria sought to gain leverage against Türkiye regarding the Euphrates waters. Furthermore, the Iran-Iraq War (Gulf War), which began in 1980 when Iraq attacked Iran using the Shatt al-Arab border dispute as a pretext and lasted eight years, constituted a significant issue in Turkish foreign policy during the 1980s. Türkiye followed a neutral policy throughout the Gulf War.<sup>90</sup>

A significant problem facing Turkish foreign policy between 1983 and 1991 was the tension that arose in Turkish-Bulgarian relations as a result of Bulgaria’s oppression of the Turkish minority. Beginning in late 1984, the Zhivkov regime’s attempts to force the Turkish minority, estimated to number around 1.5 million and constituting approximately 15% of Bulgaria’s population, to change their names and adopt Slavic names, thus attempting to dissolve and Slavicize the Turkish presence in the country , provoked strong reactions in the Turkish public opinion and brought Turkish-Bulgarian relations to the brink of collapse. In February 1985, Türkiye announced its readiness to accept 500,000 of our compatriots, and when it repeated this statement in June 1989, it faced an extremely difficult situation. With the arrival of 300,000 of our compatriots in Türkiye in a short period of time, it became clear that Türkiye was incapable of accepting and settling such a large number of immigrants. Therefore, Türkiye closed its border with Bulgaria shortly thereafter. This situation was a complete

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<sup>89</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 955-965; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632.

<sup>90</sup> İsmail Soysal (1993), *Türk Dış Politikası Çalışmaları Kılavuzu, 1919-1993*, p. 22; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Türkiye: A Modern History*, pp. 312-322.

scandal for Türkiye; Türkiye bluffed, and Bulgaria called it. The resulting tension between Türkiye and Bulgaria continued until<sup>91</sup> Zhivkov's fall from power in 1989.

One of the key issues concerning Turkish foreign policy between 1983 and 1991 was Türkiye's official application for 'full membership' in the European Community, or the European Union as it is now known, on April 14, 1987. Türkiye established its first connection with the European Community with the Ankara Agreement, signed on September 12, 1963, six years after the Community's establishment. Because 'low-wage' Turkish workers constituted a cost advantage for the Community economies undergoing rapid development in the 1960s and 1970s, Türkiye's relations with the Community also steadily improved. However, with the military takeover of September 12, 1980, Türkiye's relations with the Community began to deteriorate. Türkiye's application for 'full membership' in 1987 has not been on the Community's agenda until now. However, Türkiye's entry into the Customs Union in January 1996 was a significant step towards European Union membership.<sup>92</sup>

With the collapse of bipolarity, Türkiye lost some frontline leverage but gained manoeuvrability, extending influence on the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East while maintaining Euro-Atlantic commitments. The Cold War legacy thus bequeathed a dual anchor—Western institutionalization plus regional agency—underpinned by the state's demonstrated capacity to recalibrate in response to shocks. This adaptive repertoire furnishes the strategic template for navigating the post-Cold War and contemporary multipolar environments.

## Conclusion

The Cold War can be interpreted through several analytical perspectives, each offering a different understanding of its origins and duration. One view situates its beginning in 1947, identifying it with the emergence of open political and ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Another interpretation traces its roots back to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, framing the Cold War as a prolonged global confrontation between capitalism and socialism. A third perspective argues that the rivalry truly crystallized during the Second World War, particularly from 1943 onward, when the two powers began to shape post-war international politics and global security structures.

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<sup>91</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 968-969; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Türkiye: A Modern History*, p. 317.

<sup>92</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu (1963), *Kıbrıs Sorunu, 1954-1959*, pp. 969-970; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, pp. 611-632; Erik J. Zürcher (1993), *Türkiye: A Modern History*, pp. 315-316.

By the mid-1950s, the world had become divided into two distinct blocs. Europe's partition and the creation of competing spheres of influence formalized a bipolar international order in which neutrality became increasingly difficult. This study focuses on the period from 1947 to 1991, although pre-1947 developments played a decisive role in shaping the ideological, economic, and strategic foundations of the conflict. Britain, once a central actor in global politics, experienced a significant decline in its economic and political capacity after the war, leading to a growing dependence on the United States.

The post-war environment created an unprecedented opportunity for the United States and the Soviet Union to redefine the global order. President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed cooperation with the Soviets was essential for long-term stability and envisioned a system of collective security anchored in the United Nations. He viewed Stalin as a potential partner in constructing a new international framework, particularly one that would limit the re-emergence of colonialism.

Stalin, however, approached the relationship from the perspective of security and reconstruction. His priorities included establishing a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and obtaining economic resources to rebuild the war-devastated Soviet Union. Although he opted for cooperation, he remained cautious, judging U.S. intentions through concrete policy decisions rather than diplomatic rhetoric.

Roosevelt's death in 1945 introduced new uncertainties into U.S.–Soviet relations. The refusal of the United States and Britain to fully accept Soviet predominance in Eastern Europe led Moscow to consolidate its control more assertively. What Soviet leaders viewed as necessary security measures were interpreted in Washington and London as signs of expansionist ambition. President Harry Truman's insistence on U.S. primacy, combined with unsuccessful attempts to use America's temporary atomic monopoly as a diplomatic tool, further worsened mutual distrust. The Soviet Union's first atomic test in 1949 solidified the emerging bipolar nuclear structure.

Misconceptions and insufficient communication contributed significantly to escalating tensions. American policymakers underestimated the depth of Soviet insecurity, while Soviet officials feared Western economic and political influence, particularly in Germany. These concerns intensified as the United States advanced policies such as the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, initiatives that became foundational to the broader strategy of containment.

Although the Cold War was not historically predetermined, it evolved from the incompatible strategic priorities of the two superpowers. The United States sought cooperation under its own leadership, while the Soviet Union prioritized security above all else. Opportunities for compromise existed in 1945 but quickly diminished in the face of mutual suspicion, ideological distrust, and conflicting national interests. The Cold War ultimately developed into a long-term global rivalry shaped by structural, ideological, and psychological factors, raising important questions about whether the confrontation could realistically have been avoided.

After facing Soviet demands and threats in 1945-46, Türkiye based its entire foreign policy philosophy on the principle of maintaining close ties to the West. Therefore, it considered it a goal to join all political, military, and economic organizations established by the West. To this end, it first joined the organizations established for the economic development of Europe, then the Council of Europe, and finally joined NATO in 1952. After this, Türkiye, again in line with the West's general policy, sought to establish a number of political and military orders within its own region. Indeed, these efforts led to the establishment of first the Balkan Pact and then the Baghdad Pact. After joining NATO, Türkiye evaluated all international events from the perspective of this organization. Those who direct Turkish foreign policy considered NATO a national policy and a worldview for Türkiye. Türkiye's assessment of international affairs from NATO's perspective has, in practice, manifested itself in the hope of strengthening the organization's power by providing assistance to its allies on their own soil and supporting each member of the organization in every way possible regarding the external challenges they face, whether or not these challenges are related to NATO's strength.<sup>93</sup> In short, Türkiye's foreign policy after 1952 hindered the development of its relations with non-aligned states, including its neighbours. Furthermore, during this period, those directing Turkish foreign policy failed to act in accordance with our long-term national interests and were largely influenced by immediate concerns. However, considering that the primary objective of the policy toward the United States was, to a large extent, to increase aid from the United States, it can be said that the foreign policy pursued was successful in achieving this objective.<sup>94</sup>

During the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was based on the principle of cooperating with the West against the Soviet Bloc. Within this framework, Türkiye's challenges were defined by the distinct lines of a 'bipolar' balance. Consequently, Turkish foreign policy had limited

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<sup>93</sup> Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, p. 311.

<sup>94</sup> Oral Sander (1979), *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, 1947-1964*, pp. 122-123; Mehmet Gönübol vd. (1996), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1995*, p. 333.

room for manoeuvre, limited ability to create new opportunities, but its stability was solid. Consequently, Türkiye's position during the Cold War was clear and stable. Türkiye was an outpost of the Western Bloc and benefited greatly from the strategic importance this afforded, although this importance was subject to fluctuations caused by technological and political influences. With the end of the Cold War, the status quo around the world, along with the conditions within which Turkish foreign policy operated, changed radically. Like everything else in the world, the balances upon which Türkiye's foreign policy was based were disrupted, and Türkiye's influence in the region increased.<sup>95</sup>

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, international relations became increasingly complex. Turkish foreign policy, in the throes of the new status quo, faced the necessity of establishing a new (and no weaker) role for itself. With the emergence of new opportunities outside the Western world, it became more active than before, its manoeuvrability expanded significantly, but in the meantime, it naturally lost its former stability in the 'bipolar' world. However, to conclude that Turkish foreign policy has abandoned the status quo and Westernization based on this new situation is profoundly contradictory. In a period where the old status quo is collapsing and a new one is being established, Turkish foreign policy maintains both its historical continuity and geopolitical position, while simultaneously seeking its place within the 'new world order' without abandoning its fundamental principles.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Baskın Oran (1996), "Turkish Foreign Policy: Notes on Its Basic Principles and the Post-Cold War Situation", pp. 359, 368.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 368. See also; Graham E. Fuller & Ian O. Lesser (1993), *Türkiye's New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

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