

## THE HISTORICAL PROCESS OF TURKEY'S (POSSIBLE) RUPTURE FROM THE ATLANTIC SYSTEM

Yıldırım Koç<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Andre Vltchek is a journalist who has been working on Turkey for more than 20 years. Five of his books have been translated into Turkish and published. On 19 August 2016, he wrote an article on the developments in Turkey in which he stated the following:

*"I know Turkey well. I have worked closely with Turkish people for more than 20 years. (...) And honestly: the more I know Turkey, the less I understand it! It is one of the most complex countries on Earth. Turkey is unpredictable, full of contradictions and shifting alliances. Nothing is really what it appears to be on the surface. And even under the surface, the currents are often merging, separating, and even reversing their course. To write about Turkey, to write fairly and in-depth, requires jogging through a minefield. In the end, you always get it wrong! (...) I am surprised how many foreign analysts are suddenly daring to pass (often patronizing) judgments on the recent events in Turkey. How certain many of them sound!"<sup>2</sup>*

Turkey is going through an important epoch in her history. Turkey had been integrated into the Atlantic system in the post-WWII period; but from 24 July 2015 and 15 July 2016 onwards, the policies pursued by the government are in total conflict with the interests of the U.S. Whether these changes are mere negotiation bluffs or real, whether these real changes are tactical or strategic can only be evaluated by a historical perspective on the relations of Turkey with the U.S.A.

Following the weakening and collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S.A. claimed to be the hegemon of the unipolar world and decided to restructure Western Asia and North Africa in line with her interests and demands.

The acknowledgement of defeat in Vietnam in 1973 and about 60 thousand casualties in war had left a deep imprint on the American people. The U.S., rather than having her own troops bearing the main burden, decided to use the Turkish armed forces as a surrogate or subcontractor. The role the Turkish troops had played in the Korean War (Battle of Wawon, Battle of Wayuan or Battle of Kunuri, 27-29 November 1950) in saving the 8th U.S. army was to be repeated. It was hoped and believed that about 40 years of close cooperation with the Turkish officers would be sufficient to persuade them to play the same role in 1991 and later. George Soros was stating that the most important export commodity of Turkey was the Turkish army.

This project failed in 1991 and in the following years. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought the obsession of the armed forces about the communist threat came to an end.

Then two projects were put to practice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Instructor, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey; Vice-President, Patriotic Party, Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> Andre Vltchek, *Global Research*, August 19, 2016, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/turkeyletusnotcelebrateyet/5541689>

The U.S. authorities contacted the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party or *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*) and started using it in their plans for Western Asia.<sup>3</sup> A Kurdistan to be totally dependent on the U.S. for its survival would be an important base and surrogate for the Americans.

The second project was getting control of the armed forces using the Gülen movement.

During the post-WWII period, Turkey was assigned with the tasks of confronting the Soviet Union (in defence) and constituting a chain in the Green Belt (Muslim fundamentalist states encircling the USSR). Thus, integration into the Atlantic system did not constitute a threat to the territorial integrity of Turkey. Independence was infringed, but in spite of problems with the Atlantic system from time to time, the state policy considered the pros and cons, costs and benefits, and decided to continue within this system, while confronting the U.S. on tactical issues from time to time.

From the beginnings of the 1990s, Turkey was expected to act aggressively on behalf of the U.S. in restructuring Western Asia and North Africa. The second assignment was to be the stronghold of "moderate Islam", or "American Islam" as Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran named it.

Both these tasks were in conflict with the very existence of Turkey. The majority of the people of Turkey resisted these demands.

Today Turkey ranks first in the negative attitude of the general public on the Americans.

When peaceful methods of persuasion did not work, the U.S. resorted to another coup d'état; this time using the espionage organisation led by Fethullah Gülen. This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who until a couple of years ago, boasted about being the co-chairperson of the Greater Middle East Project, in order to save himself, his family and his party, accepted the war declared by the U.S. using subcontractors, a proxy war. While fighting a battle of life and death against the surrogates of the U.S. (PKK and Gülen), he changed the strategy of Turkish foreign policy and started to loosen Turkey's ties with the Atlantic system and develop fraternal relations with the East, that is, Russia, China, Iran and other neighbouring countries.

Whether this seeming attempt to change the strategy of Turkish foreign policy is real or simply a bluff to strengthen his position in the negotiations with the U.S. or if it is sincere, whether it will lead to veritable results and to a rupture from the Atlantic system is still blurred, but there is more hope than in the past. The government is facing serious economic and social problems. The U.S.A. will make use of all instruments available to it to weaken the government, to force it to capitulate and play the role assigned to it by the U.S. This means a bloody civil war in Turkey. It seems that the objective conditions for a strategic change in Turkey's foreign policy are present; the result depends on the struggle of the progressive (Kemalist and socialist) forces in Turkey and the correct perception of the developments by and attitude of the "East".

---

<sup>3</sup> Perinçek, Doğu, *Abdullah Öcalan ile Görüşmeler*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2009; Perinçek, Doğu, *Türkiye Solu ve PKK*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2013.

This paper is an attempt to elaborate in more detail on the developments and the possibility of Turkey's rupture from the Atlantic system.

### **The Period of Independent Foreign Policy**

In order to understand the possible changes in the foreign policy of Turkey, it is necessary to have a brief look at the history of the relations of Turkey with the Atlantic system.

The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, following wars extending from 1911 to 1922. In 1911, the Ottoman army fought against the Italians in Tripoli. In 1912-1913, the Balkan Wars were fought between the Ottomans on the one side, the Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs and the Montenegros on the other side. The Ottoman Empire was on the side of the Central Powers during World War I in the 1914-1918 period. Then the War of National Liberation against imperialism and its surrogates took place in the 1919-1922 period, ending with the victory of the Turkish army under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

During the period 1923-1938, the Republic of Turkey under the presidency of M.K.Atatürk, pursued an independent foreign policy, with fraternal relations with the USSR. Turkey and the USSR cooperated in the construction of the Kayseri (1935) and Nazilli (1936) textile factories, in the preparation of the First Industrialisation Plan (1934-1938), in establishing the Straits regime in favour of Turkey (1936) and in various other areas.

The death of M.K.Atatürk was followed by WWII, in which Turkey could keep out. However, the adverse effects of the global catastrophe was felt in all walks of life.

The period 1923-1945 can be summarised as the years of independent foreign policy, with especially close relations with the USSR during M.K.Atatürk's lifetime. The military supplies and gold donated by Soviet Russia in 1921-1922, which were of vital importance for the victory of the Turkish army during the War of National Liberation, contributed greatly to forging this fraternal relationship.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Integration of Turkey into the Atlantic System**

In 1945, when the alliance of the USSR with the U.S.A. and the UK was still in force, Turkey faced a serious problem with the Soviet Union.

During WWII, Turkey pursued a flexible policy. When Nazi Germany seemed to be successful, pro-German policies were implemented. Turkey exported chromium and other commodities to Germany. Another source of problem was the support given by some ethnic Turks in the Soviet Union to the Nazis during the War.

---

<sup>4</sup> A major work on Turkish foreign policy: Oran, B. (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Vol.I, 1919-1980; Vol.II, 1980-2001*, İletişim Pub., İstanbul, 2001.

Following the termination of WWII, the USSR refrained from renewing the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality of 1925.

There have been claims that, the precondition of the Soviet Union for renewing Treaty was handing over by Turkey to the Soviet Union the provinces of Kars and Ardahan in the north-east. These Ottoman provinces were given to Czarist Russia following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the 1877-1878 war. Then, on 16 March 1921, by the Treaty of Moscow, they were returned to Turkey. The claim was that, the last transaction was concluded at a time when Soviet Russia was weak and now the balance of forces had changed.

It is also claimed that the USSR also demanded joint control over the Dardanelles and Bosphorous Straits to safeguard her Black Sea coasts.

Whether these demands were actually put forth or they were created or exaggerated by the authorities to arouse anti-Soviet sentiments is controversial. However, an official publication of the USSR states the following:

*"In December 1945 the Soviet press carried letters by two Georgian scientists, who wrote that Turkey should return to Georgia some border regions that she had acquired under the Treaty of 1921. These letters were used by Western propaganda to stir up anti-Soviet feeling in Turkey."*<sup>5</sup>

*"On behalf of the Soviet Government the following statement was made to the Turkish Ambassador on May 30, 1952: 'In order to preserve good-neighbourly relations and strengthen peace and security the governments of Armenia and Georgia have found it possible to renounce their territorial claims on Turkey. As regards the question of the Straits, the Soviet Government has reconsidered its view and feels that the USSR's security can be ensured from the direction of the Straits on terms equally acceptable to the USSR and Turkey. The Soviet Government therefore places it on record that the Soviet Union has no territorial claims on Turkey.' (Pravda, July 19, 1953) This statement helped to clear the way for a gradual improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey."*<sup>6</sup>

Julius Braunthal, in his *History of the International*, touches upon the Soviet interest and claims on the Straits during the War as follows:

*"Molotov went to Berlin on November 1940 and had talks with Ribbentrop and Hitler (...) In addition, the Soviet Union must have a base for its land and sea forces, guaranteed by a long-term agreement, on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Moreover, there would have to be a special secret agreement among the four treaty powers 'to work out and implement the necessary military and diplomatic methods' in the event of Turkey refusing to allow the Russians to establish strongholds at the gates of Istanbul."*<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Ponomaryov, B.-Gromyko, A.-Khvostov, V., *History of Soviet Foreign Policy (1945-1970)*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, s.280. Bilal Şen's (an old veteran of the Communist Party of Turkey, TKP) article on "The Straits and Stalin in Soviet Sources" is the best reference text on this topic, using Soviet sources concerning the subject, with direct references to the exchanged diplomatic notes on these demands by Turkey and the USSR: Şen, Bilal, "Sovyet Kaynaklarında Boğazlar ve Stalin," *Tarih ve Toplum*, December 2000, p.13-18. A similar approach exists in Cüneyt Akalın's *Soğuk Savaş, ABD ve Türkiye-1, Olaylar-Belgeler (1945-1952)*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2003, p.162, 190-196, 198-206. Fahir Armaoğlu's book also includes valuable documents on this subject: Armaoğlu, Fahir, *Belgelerle Türk Amerikan Münasebetleri*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Pub., Ankara, 1991, p.125-151.

<sup>6</sup> Ponomaryov, B. et al., op cit, 1974, p.279-280.

<sup>7</sup> Braunthal, J., *History of the International*, Vol.II, Praeger Pub., Great Britain, 1967, p.520-521. The source of the information is given as follows: "For Stalin's conditions on Hitler's offer, see conversation between Molotov and Ribbentrop on 25 November 1940 in Diplomatic Documents, pp.234-237".

During these years there was no serious “threat” of communism in Turkey. About three fourths of the population lived in rural areas. According to the population survey of 1950, only 10.5 percent of the gainfully employed were wage- and salary-earners and quite a large proportion of even this percentage were semi-expropriated persons who preserved their relations with agricultural activities and land ownership. Most of the agricultural population were petty-bourgeoisie, either engaged in subsistence agriculture or were small commodity producers.

Capital accumulation in the hands of the indigenous bourgeoisie had increased during the War. These people who benefited from the wartime scarcity of commodities to reap very high profits in the black-market, preferred to cooperate with foreign companies in marketing their products in Turkey, rather than investing in productive areas. Their commercial relations with the U.S.A. was the additional main channel through which the U.S.A. could influence the policies of the governments and state in Turkey.

The famous long telegram of George F. Kennan from Moscow in February 1946 might be evaluated as the harbinger of the Cold War. The victories of the Soviet Red Army in breaking the backbone of the Germans and the great contributions of the communist parties of France and Italy in the war of resistance against German occupation had led to wide sympathy for communists all over the world. These developments and the victories of the People’s Liberation Army in China, the anti-imperialist struggles in Vietnam and Korea, intimidated the U.S.A. and the UK and the Cold War was initiated. The official inauguration of this confrontation may be the famous speech of the former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the “Iron Curtain” on 5 March 1946, accusing the Soviet Union of establishing an “iron curtain” from “Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic”.

The real or exaggerated problems with the USSR, together with the strengthening of the indigenous bourgeoisie, consisting mainly of Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities, and the Cold War forced Turkey into a dilemma; either to try to preserve the independent status, which had become increasingly difficult, or to align with the new Atlantic system being forged under the hegemony of the U.S.A.

The domestic and international factors led to the choice of the second option and Turkey was rapidly integrated into the Atlantic system.

### **The Impact of the Integration**

By being integrated into the Atlantic system Turkey lost much of her independence and accepted *de facto* the hegemony of the U.S.A., endangering her existence in an armed confrontation between the world powers.

During the Cold War, Turkey’s threat perception focused on the Soviet Union. Turkey’s armed forces were restructured to counter a possible Soviet offensive. The guarantees provided by the

NATO from 1952 onwards for preserving the territorial integrity of the country were accepted as comprehensive and real.

Turkey's integration into the Atlantic system benefited Turkey in a number of areas and created problems in others.

Turkey modernised her military equipment. The Truman Doctrine of the U.S. in 1947 provided 100 million U.S. Dollars. From 1952 onwards, NATO contributed to the modernisation of the army.

Turkey received financial assistance and equipment under the Marshall Plan from 1948 onwards and proceeded rapidly with building roads.

The period of 1946-1973 were years of the Golden Age of global capitalism. Turkey's economy grew rapidly in these years. The standard of living of the population increased considerably, which was of importance following the scarcities of the war years. New antibiotics (penicillin), pesticides, new agricultural machinery and implements, new consumer products and especially consumer durables were received favourably by the general public. The threats of siding with the U.S.A. in a possible conventional and perhaps a nuclear confrontation with the USSR were neglected by the great majority of the population, who focused on the rise in their standard of living. For the pragmatic people in general, the increase in the living standard was much more concrete and real than the much less likely possibility of war.

However Turkey also paid dearly for this choice.

In 1950, Turkey sent about 5,000 troops to Korea to support the U.S.A. The Turkish soldiers were sacrificed to save the U.S. army from extinction at the Battle of Kunu-ri (Battle of Wawon or Battle of Wayuan, 27-29 November 1950) Total number of casualties of the Turks was 721. 175 soldiers were missed in action. There were 234 prisoners of war.

Turkey was accepted as a member of NATO in 1952. Turkey received military assistance and thus improved her military capacity in the short run. However, this military assistance led to the destruction of the arms production capacity of Turkey and caused her to be totally dependent on U.S. sources.

The U.S.A. and NATO established military bases and installations in Turkey and deployed missiles with nuclear heads, making Turkey one of the main targets in a hot confrontation. These bases were used for intelligence and reconnaissance activities against the Soviet Union.

Following the accession of Turkey to the NATO, a gladio was established in Turkey, as in other NATO members. The claimed aim of this illegal organisation under the direct control of the Americans was to organise resistance in case of Turkey's occupation by the Soviet Union. However, it

became the main illegal instrument available to attack progressives and to organise provocations in Turkey.<sup>8</sup>

Turkey had prepared a new industrialisation plan to be implemented in the post-war period. The U.S.A. had this plan rejected and imposed new economic policies in line with the international division of labour structured in the interests of U.S. capitalists. Turkey was to be the market for U.S. products and would specialise in agriculture.<sup>9</sup>

In line with the Green Belt strategy to encircle (contain) the Soviet Union, the U.S. encouraged and supported the development of religious sects in Turkey, which were prohibited from the 1920s onwards. This constituted a serious threat to secularism, one of the main pillars of modern Turkey.

The U.S. tried to make use of Pan-Turkism to weaken the USSR. It was the gladio and its extensions in the political arena that cooperated in this initiative.

Turkey became one of the founding members of the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), together with Iran, Pakistan, the U.S.A. and the UK. The original plan was to found the Middle East Treaty Organisation (METO), but this project failed when Egypt withdrew, following the assumption of power by the Free Officers in 1952 under Muhammad Naguib and later Gamal Abdel Nasser. CENTO, as an instrument of the U.S.A. in confronting the USSR in the Middle East, led to further problems in Turkey's relations with the Soviet Union and progressive governments in Western Asia.

The integration of Turkey into the Atlantic system led to the deterioration of her relations with the former colonies and the anti-imperialist underdeveloped countries. The victory of the War of National Liberation of Turkey was received warmly by the peoples of the colonies and M.K.Atatürk was highly revered. The policies of Turkey after being integrated into the Atlantic system led to rapid disappearance of this position. Turkey supported France in the war of liberation of the Algerian people (1954-1962). Turkey's attempts to develop relations with the non-alignment movement after 1955 were in vain.

These problems, however, did not lead to immediate concrete negative consequences for the great majority of the population. The warnings of the progressive forces concerning the possible vital dangers were not heeded, were perceived as the anti-American propaganda of the communists. Thus, the governments which adopted and implemented these policies were supported by the people.

Turkey's economy faced problems in 1957-1958. The attempts of the government to receive financial assistance from the World Bank failed. The increase in economic problems led Turkey to a

---

<sup>8</sup> İlsever, Ferit, (1) *Kontrgerilla I, Teori*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2008; (2) *Kontrgerilla II, Örgütlenmesi*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2009; (3) *Kontrgerilla III, Belgelerle Olaylar*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2010. Perinçek, Doğu, *Gladyo ve Ergenekon*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Thornburg, Max Weston, *Türkiye'nin Bugünkü Ekonomik Durumunun Tenkidi*, Ankara, 1950. *Türkiye'nin İktisadi Kalkınması, Barker Misyonu Raporu (Hülâsa), Türkiye Ekonomisi, Kalkınma Programı İçin Tahlil ve Tavsiyeler*, Milletlerarası İmar ve Kalkınma Bankası, Washington, D.C., 1951.

tactical change in her foreign policy. Turkey tried to develop financial cooperation with the USSR. Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu contacted the USSR and the visit of prime minister Adnan Menderes to the Soviet Union was planned in 1960. This rapprochement attempt by Turkey while preserving her firm position in the Atlantic system would not be tolerated by the U.S.

The Menderes government had been a close accomplice of the Americans, had joined the NATO, had permitted the establishment and functioning of U.S. military bases and installations in Turkey. Especially during the last years of his rule, Menderes had also started a witch hunt against progressive forces in Turkey and had forbidden all democratic protests.

On 27 May 1960, the progressive officers of the armed forces intervened and a military government was established. The pro-American elements in the leadership of this initiative could be purged on 13 November 1960 and this military intervention cleared the ground for the development of the working class movement and of socialism in Turkey.

### **Tactical Confrontations with the Atlantic System – Problems and Mutual Responses<sup>10</sup>**

Turkey's relations with the U.S.A. deteriorated in the 1960s, leading to mutual responses.

The Cuban crisis of 1962 led to the withdrawal of the nuclear headed Jupiter missiles from the U.S. military bases in Turkey, without Turkey's approval or even knowledge.

Then in late 1963 the Cyprus problem emerged.

The Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960. The former UK colony acquired independence. The population consisted of the Turkish and Greek communities. However in December 1963, the Greek Cypriots attacked the Turkish Cypriots. Turkey, which was one of the guarantor powers, retaliated by bombing the Greek strongholds and threatened using troops. U.S. president Johnson sent the Turkish prime minister İsmet İnönü a letter, stating that the arms of the Turkish army were the possessions of the U.S. and had been leased to Turkey under the condition that they could be used in military operations endorsed by the U.S. only. Besides, article 5 of the NATO treaty which stipulated that in case of an attack by a third party, the NATO would side with the NATO member would not be implemented in case the Soviet Union attacked Turkey to support the Greek Cypriots, who had good relations with the Soviet Union and were within the non-alignment movement.<sup>11</sup>

This attitude became a milestone in the relations between Turkey and the U.S.A.

While preserving membership in the NATO, Turkey started to diversify her foreign relations.

---

<sup>10</sup> For the period 1945-1971, George S. Harris's book is of great value to evaluate the U.S. perspective: Harris, George S., *Troubled Alliance, Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research-Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Washington,D.C., 1972.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cyprus-conflict.org/materials/johnsonletter.html>, Turkish text, Akalın, Cüneyt, *ABD ve Türkiye-2, Yumuşama Yılları (1961-1989)*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011, p.162-166 and İnönü's reply, p.167-173.



Turkey had applied for accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959. The Ankara Association Agreement with the EEC was concluded in 1963 and came into force in 1964.

Turkey started to exchange high-level delegations with the USSR. Then important agreements were concluded between Turkey and the USSR for receiving financial and technical assistance and the establishment of important infrastructural investments in Turkey.<sup>12</sup>

From 1961 onwards, the socialist/communist movement began to develop rapidly. The socialist Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) received 3 percent of the votes cast in the national elections of 1965 and had 15 deputies in the National Assembly of 400 members. This party launched anti-imperialist and anti-American campaigns.

The working class movement also gained strength and became a veritable social power. Especially the Teachers Trade Union of Turkey (TÖS), established in 1965, carried out extensive and effective anti-imperialist propaganda.<sup>13</sup> The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK), established in 1967, was anti-imperialist and advocated socialism.<sup>14</sup>

The military aggression of the U.S. against the People's Democratic Republic of Vietnam caused widespread anti-imperialist sentiments in Turkey, as well. Turkey, in September 1965, opposed the use of force in Vietnam by the U.S. at the UN General Assembly.<sup>15</sup>

The response of the U.S.A. to these "adverse" developments was manifold.

The U.S. first played the Kurdish card.

Turkey has a multi-ethnic population. The Turkish nation comprises a number of ethnicities, the overwhelming majority being of Turkish origin. During the late Ottoman times, the intelligentsia tried to unite these ethnicities under Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism or Pan-Turkism. All these attempts failed. The nation-building project under the leadership of M.K.Atatürk focused on cultural unity within a unitary state structure. The "Turkish nation" was defined as "the people of Turkey which established the Republic of Turkey," repudiating any reference to ethnic origin, creed, colour of the skin, etc. The imperialist powers in the fourth quarter of the 19th century had encouraged and supported ethnic separatism to disintegrate the Ottoman Empire. The same play was staged from 1965 onwards. Mullah Mustafa Barzani, one of the leaders of the Iraqi Kurds and president of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, established the Turkish branch of this organisation in 1965 and started separatist propaganda.

At the same time, the Americans proposed Turkey to establish a Turkish-Kurdish federation by annexing Mosul. This proposal was first made in 1965, then in 1974, 1986 and 1991.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Akalın, C., op cit 2011, p.110-111.

<sup>13</sup> Koç, Y., *Kuruluşunun 50. Yıldönümünde Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası TÖS Tarihi, Belgelerle, 1965-1971*, Kuzgun Pub., Bursa, 201 .

<sup>14</sup> Koç, C.-Koç, Y., *DİSK Tarihi*, Epos Yay., Ankara, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Akalın, C., op cit, 2011, p.108, 115.

In 1965, a number of “association for struggle against communism” (Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği) were established in a number of cities in Turkey by the encouragement and the support of the CIA.

Fethullah Gülen, who from this date onwards established an espionage and terror organisation and tried a coup d'état on 15 July 2016 was founder of one of these associations in the province of Erzurum.

Another fundamentalist and anti-socialist movement developed under the leadership of Aykut Edibali, which was the main militant power in attacking the progressive and socialist organisations and persons in the second half of the 1960s.

Other fundamentalist sects were also encouraged.

Alpaslan Türkeş, the pro-American personality in the leadership of the 27 May 1960 military intervention who had been purged in November 1960, became the leader of the Republican Peasant and Nation Party (CKMP) in 1965 and transformed this party into the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in 1969, adopting the anti-socialist “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” as its ideology. This party established camps and trained quasi-military militants who cooperated with the gladio (“the counterguerilla organisation of the NATO”) in murdering progressive persons, attacking progressive and socialist organisations and making provocations. They constituted the main militant force in the mass massacres committed in the 1978-1980 period.

In the 1950s, the trade union movement had developed in Turkey under the control of the Turkish state. The Cold War had its impact on the trade unions, as well. The umbrella organisation of trade unions (Confederation of Trade Unions of Turkey, Türk-İş), established in 1952, was anti-communist and to please the government, organised a number of demonstrations and rallies to “condemn communism.” The Atlantic system, having no serious fears of communist infiltration into the labour movement in these years, paid little attention to this area.

However, with the democratisation of the early 1960s, socialist/communist influence in the labour and trade union movement increased. The U.S. government agency AID (Agency for International Development) began to donate enormous sums of money to Türk-İş. More than 600 trade union officials were taken to the U.S.A. for periods of 1-3 months in the 1962-1972 period. They were well hosted and pleased, but at the same time their personal weak spots were specified and duly noted.<sup>17</sup>

The Americans were unfamiliar with the social structure in Turkey. To fill this gap, an extensive field intelligence study was carried out by about 1200 Americans who were sent to Turkey to serve as

---

<sup>16</sup> Akfırat, Fikret, *Kukla Devlet, ABD Kürdistan'ı Nasıl Kurdu*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2007, p.36; Bögün, Hasan, *ABD ve AB Belgeleriyle Türk Ordusu, 12 Eylül 1980'den Çuval Olayına*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2007, p.47, 260-261.

<sup>17</sup> Koç, Yıldırım, *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi, Osmanlı'dan 2016'ya (Özet)*, Kuzgun Kitap, Bursa, 2016, s.166-167.

health care personnel and English language teachers. These so-called “peace corps” carried out surveys in the rural and urban areas about the ethnic origin, religious beliefs, political orientation, etc. of the population.<sup>18</sup> This extensive intelligence operation facilitated the U.S. operations in Turkey in the later years.

However, in spite of all the efforts of the Americans, anti-imperialism influenced ever larger sections of the population. A radical and militant labour movement emerged in the 1968-1970 period. The socialist movement, although weakened by internal strife and the anarchist tendencies of small factions, had appeal for quite a large population.

Another important development was the radical officers in the armed forces.

In spite of the direct control of NATO over the armed forces, some officers were influenced by the anti-imperialist movements in the world and in Turkey and tried to organise a Kemalist coup d'état on 9 March 1971 to realize an anti-imperialist program. They were defeated and purged from the armed forces.

It is especially after this initiative of the radical officers that the Americans started to have the Gülen espionage organisation infiltrate the army. The influence of NATO, by itself, was not sufficient to control the officers; it had to be complemented by a fundamentalist illegal organisation with direct links with the CIA.

In spite of all these initiatives by the U.S.A., in 1972 Turkey signed the “Declaration on the Principles of Goodneighbourly Relations between the USSR and the Republic of Turkey”.

The U.S.A. had acknowledged defeat in Vietnam in 1973 and withdrawn her troops. In the wake of this trauma, Turkey in 1974 took two steps and challenged the U.S.A.

In 1971, the U.S. had forced Turkey to prohibit the cultivation of the opium poppy in Turkey, which affected the income of about 100 thousand families, with the claim that Turkey was the source of drugs smuggled into the U.S. On 1 July 1974, the Turkish government repealed its former decision and re-permitted the cultivation of opium poppy.<sup>19</sup>

In 1967 there was the colonels' coup d'état in Greece. In 1974 the mounting economic problems in this country caused the colonels to stage a coup d'état in Cyprus. The coup aroused indignation in Turkey. The massacre of Turks and progressive Greek Cypriots led to the intervention of the Turkish armed forces on 20 July 1974, in accordance with the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960. The Turkish army, together with the Turkish Cypriots, got control over 37 percent of the island.

Both these steps aroused severe responses of the U.S. A military embargo was imposed on Turkey. The Americans expected Turkey to retreat.

---

<sup>18</sup> Özbalkan, Müslim, *Gizli Belgelerle Barış Gönüllüleri*, Ant Pub., İstanbul, 1970; Erboz, Fatih-Soydan, Macit, *1962'de Geldiler, 1972'de Gittiler, Barış Gönüllüleri, 10 Karanlık Yıl*, Empati Pub., Ankara, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Akalın, Cüneyt, op cit, , 2011, p.120-121.

However, Turkey, although she was still part of the Atlantic system, responded by two challenging steps.

A new state was established in Cyprus on 13 February 1975: The Cypriot Turkish Federal State.

On 24 July 1974, Turkey unilaterally repealed the agreement (Joint Defence Cooperation Agreement of 1969) between Turkey and the U.S.A. concerning the functioning of bases and assumed control of all the U.S. military bases and installations in Turkey. The intelligence activities of the U.S. in Turkey came to a standstill.

During this process, on 20 July 1975, Turkey established a fourth army, the Aegean Army, which was outside of the NATO command.

From 1975 onwards, the response of the U.S. was to escalate the political confrontation between the right- and left-wingers in Turkey to the level of a civil war. The gladio within the Turkish armed forces and its extensions and collaborators in the society began to commit murders.

Meanwhile, the intelligence activities of the U.S. were shifted to Iran, which was then under the control of the U.S. However, in 1978, anti-American demonstrations in Iran increased, as well, leading to the toppling down of the Shah and the assumption of power by Ayatollah Khomeini. All the intelligence activities of the U.S. bases in Iran collapsed.

The importance of Turkey for U.S. intelligence activities increased again; the U.S. repealed the embargo on Turkey.

Some U.S. bases were given back to the U.S., with certain limitations. But the U.S. required and demanded the extension of intelligence activities.

In the meantime, in 1978 Turkey signed the "Political Document on the Principles of Goodneighbourly and Friendly Cooperation Between the USSR and the Republic of Turkey". Turkey became the largest credit receiver from the Soviet Union outside of the socialist block.

Besides, Turkey vetoed the re-accession of Greece to NATO, in spite of U.S. insistence.

The response of the U.S. was manifold.

Political assassinations acquired a mass character. The number of gladio-inspired and realized deaths increased to massacre proportions. The number of victims of political assassinations was 37 in 1975, 108 in 1976, 315 in 1977, 1095 in 1978, 1362 in 1979 and 2206 in 1980.

The import substitution industrialisation and increases in international oil prices had led to the depletion of the foreign exchange reserves in Turkey. International credits were curtailed. Imports of basic intermediary goods were almost ceased. Shortages of basic consumer goods and gasoline led to serious problems. The GNP declined by 2.5 percent in 1979 and by 4.8 percent in 1980.

The organisation of monopoly capitalists in Turkey (TÜSİAD) started a wide scale campaign against the progressive party in power (People's Republican Party, CHP), eventually leading to the resignation of the government in October 1979, following an electoral defeat.

In addition to these steps, assassinations of Turkish diplomats by the Armenian terrorist organisation ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) began. In the period 1975-1984 period 42 Turkish diplomats were murdered in attacks by the ASALA.

In the meantime, the balance of power in Western Asia was further changed by the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet army.

Following the coup d'état of the communist officers in the Afghan army, the Soviet Union was called for help. This meant that the Soviets had come closer to the Middle East, which held about 65 percent of the confirmed oil reserves in the world. The U.S. adopted the Carter Doctrine, which stated that any threat to the oil interests of the U.S. in the Middle East would be considered *casus belli*.

Under these conditions, the reactionary coup d'état of the armed forces in Turkey took place on 12 September 1980. The military government gave in to all the demands of the U.S. The problems concerning the military bases in Turkey and Greece's re-accession to the NATO were solved immediately. Following the coup, there was again a purge of Kemalists and socialists from the armed forces. 397 officers, 176 petty officers and 447 war academy students were dismissed.<sup>20</sup>

### **Full Control of the Atlantic System Re-established**

During the military dictatorship (1980-1983) and the Motherland Party (ANAP) rule (1983-1990), the Atlantic system exercised full control over the developments in Turkey.

Turkey gave her consent to the re-accession of Greece to NATO.

U.S. bases and installations in Turkey were reactivated and expanded in line with the demands of the U.S.

The toll of the coup for the progressive forces was heavy. The progressive organisations and persons were persecuted.

In spite of the endeavours of the U.S., the number of progressive officers, especially at lower ranks, had increased in the Turkish armed forces. They were purged and imprisoned following the coup. The Gülen espionage organisation intensified its efforts to infiltrate the armed forces. The gladio increased its power and influence.

### **Islam, Imperialism and Turkey**

The position of radical Islamic organisations with respect to the U.S. changed in these years, creating new problems for the U.S. The factors leading to this change were, on the one hand, the

---

<sup>20</sup> Tiftikçi, Osman, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Ordu'nun Evrimi*, Sorun Pub., İstanbul, 2006, p.209.

collapse of the Soviet system, which was perceived and propagated as the fall of communism on a global scale. On the other hand, the atrocities committed by Israel was a turning point.

Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks tried to mobilise the Muslim populations of the colonies against imperialism. Thus in December 1918, they established the Central Bureau of Muslim Organisations of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). The name of this body was later changed to Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East.<sup>21</sup>

The Congress of the Peoples of the East which was convened by the Communist International in September 1920 called for jihad, holy war of Muslims, against imperialism.<sup>22</sup>

In some countries, the communists worked together with the Muslim fundamentalists. During the 4th congress of the Communist International, on 12 November 1922, Tan Malaka, the president of the Communist Party of Java spoke about the cooperation with the Muslim fundamentalists as follows:

*"We inflicted a defeat on their leaders with the Qur'an in our hands, and at our congress last year we compelled the leaders of the Sarekat Islam, through their own members, to cooperate with us. (...) So Pan-Islamism no longer has its original meaning, but now has in practice an entirely different meaning. Today, Pan-Islamism signifies the national liberation struggle, because for the Muslims Islam is everything: not only religion, but also the state, the economy, food, and everything else. And so Pan-Islamism now means the brotherhood of all Muslim peoples, and the liberation struggle not only of the Arab but also of the Indian, the Javanese and all the oppressed Muslim peoples. This brotherhood means the practical liberation struggle not only against Dutch but also against English, French and Italian capitalism, therefore against world capitalism as a whole. That is what Pan-Islamism now means in Indonesia among the oppressed colonial peoples, according to their secret propaganda – the liberation struggle against the different imperialist powers of the world."<sup>23</sup>*

However, this cooperation was limited in time and space. It was the imperialist powers which could mobilise the Muslim fundamentalists against the communists.

It was only in Iran in 1978-1979 that the Muslim fundamentalists and the communists (Tudeh) cooperated against the pro-American Riza Shah Pehlevi; but this brief cooperation came to an end with the destruction of Tudeh by the fundamentalists.

However, the success of the fundamentalists in Iran led to a change of attitude of some Muslims. Anti-American sentiments increased. The policies of Israel contributed to this change of attitude.

In September 1982, the Israel army occupied Lebanon and carried out a massacre of the Palestinians living in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. These acts caused the indignation against Israel to intensify further.

On 18 April 1983, the Islamic Jihad Organisation bombed the U.S. embassy in Beirut (Lebanon) and caused 63 deaths and 120 injured. On 23 October 1983, the Islamic Jihad Organisation attacked

---

<sup>21</sup> M.A.Persits, "Eastern Internationalists in Russia and Some Questions of the National Liberation Movement (1918-July 1920)," Ulyanovsky, R.A. (ed.), *The Comintern and the East*, Progress Publishers, 1979, Moskova, s.71-90.

<sup>22</sup> Riddell, John-Shirvani, Ma'mud, *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920-First Congress of the Peoples of the East*, Pathfinder, 1993.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.marxists.org/archive/malaka/1922-Panislamism.htm>,

the U.S. marine and French soldiers barracks in Beirut, causing the death of 307 American and French soldiers and wounding 75. On 20 September 1984, the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut was bombed, leading to 24 deaths.

These Islamist attacks on U.S. presence in Lebanon harbingered a radical change in the policies of at least some of the fundamentalists.

The U.S. started to complement the “Green Belt” theory with “moderate Islam.”

Following the collapse of the USSR and weakening of the nationalist movements in the Arab countries, Muslim fundamentalists became more self-confident and demanding. The policies of the U.S.A. during the Gulf War in 1991 reinforced this attitude.

On 26 February 1993, the fundamentalists attacked the Americans in the U.S. for the first time. The World Trade Centre in New York City was bombed, causing 6 deaths and 1.042 wounded.

On 7 August 1998, the Islamic fundamentalists attacked the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, causing 242 deaths and more than 4.000 wounded.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the U.S. prepared a comprehensive report in 2000 on terrorism.<sup>24</sup> The report points to Hezbollah “as the greatest international terrorist threat to U.S. interests in the 1980s. Dedicated to creating an Iranian-style Islamic theocracy in Lebanon, the group seeks the removal of all non-Islamic influences from the area.” In this report, it is also stated that in February 1998, Bin Laden was among the signatories of a fatwa (religious decree) calling for a jihad (holy war) against the U.S. targets (military and civilian) anywhere in the world.

The 11 September 2001 attack by 19 al-Qaeda members on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, the Pentagon in Virginia and a failed attack in Washington, D.C. caused the death of 2,996 and wounding of more than 6,000 Americans.

The western powers tried to develop “moderate Islam” which would counter Islamic terrorism and support the policies of the U.S. and other powers. However they failed in their attempts on a number of cases (Sheik Dr. Abdul Hamid El Ensari, Cemal El Benna, Mansur el Nukedan, Şaker el Nabulsi).<sup>25</sup> The U.S. needed a “respectable partner in the Islam world.”<sup>26</sup>

Turkey was assigned this new role. During the Cold War, Turkey was to be a part of the Green Belt encircling the USSR. During the period following the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of radical Islam terrorism, Turkey was assigned the task of countering these movements by “moderate Islam.” The Gülen movement was fit for this task. It was thanks to this assignment that the Gülen

---

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *30 Years of Terrorism, A Special Retrospective Edition, Terrorism in the United States - 1999, 2000.*

<sup>25</sup> For a summary of these attempts, Milson, Menahem, *Reform vs. Islamism in the Arab World Today*, The Middle East Media Research Institute MEMRI Special Report No.34, 15 September 2004, s.11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Blackburn, R., “The U.S. Alliance with Militant Islam,” *Terror and Empire*, [www.greenmac.com/World\\_Events/theusall.html](http://www.greenmac.com/World_Events/theusall.html).

movement could establish schools in about 90 countries of the world, which served as bastions for U.S. intelligence activity.

### **Resistance Against the U.S.**

In 1990, the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait brewed up. On 2 August 1990, Iraq launched the invasion of Kuwait by bombing Kuwait's capital. The Iraqi army invaded Kuwait without much resistance. The U.S. succeeded in getting a UN resolution to intervene. The Gulf War started on 16 January 1991.

During the 1989-1991 period, the Soviet system was in the process of dissolution. Her control over the developments in Western Asia was severely curtailed. The U.S. tried to shift the balance of power to her advantage.

The U.S. proposed Turkey to annex the northern part of Iraq and to establish a federal state of Turks and Kurds. Some pro-American journalists began to write articles in which they claimed that Turkey would either get smaller (losing south east Anatolia) or get larger (annexing northern Iraq and establishing a federal state).

The president of Turkey Turgut Özal agreed with the proposal, but the armed forces and many democratic mass organisations resisted. The head of the general staff, Necdet Torumtay resigned, stating that generals to replace him would do the same. The project failed.

This firm attitude of the armed forces in spite of its 4-decades relationship with and dependence on NATO, the position of the pro-American Turgut Özal and the infiltration attempts of the Gülen espionage organisation led to a confrontation between the armed forces and the U.S.A. A new period of the relations between Turkey and the Atlantic system began.

The Soviet Union collapsed and disintegrated in December 1991.

The U.S. was too self-confident and claiming to be the hegemon in a unipolar world, intended to restructure the Middle East. The Greater Middle East project was initiated, later to be expanded to include North Africa.

The demands of the U.S. from Turkey changed from confronting the USSR (defensive) to acting as surrogate of the U.S.A. to restructure Western Asia and North Africa (aggressive). A total of 25 states were the targets of U.S. potential intervention. Turkey, with her armed forces, was to play a vital role in this new scenario as the subcontractor of the U.S. The infiltration of the Gülen movement into the armed forces further intensified during this period, to secure total control of the U.S. on the Turkish army. Dependence on NATO and the infiltration of the Gülen espionage organisation were considered necessary to counter and defeat the rejuvenating Kemalist tendencies in the Turkish armed forces.



As was summarised above, the position of radical Islamic organisations with respect to the U.S. changed in these years, creating new problems for the U.S. The factors leading to this change were, on the one hand, the collapse of the Soviet system, which was perceived and propagated as the fall of communism on a global scale. On the other hand, the atrocities committed by Israel were a turning point.

Aggressive military role in Western Asia and “moderate Islam” “assignments” were in total conflict with the basic principles of the Republic of Turkey.

To persuade Turkey to accede to these demand, the U.S. adopted a policy of carrot and stick.

The carrot was the dream of annexing northern Iraq, having access to oil reserves which would solve Turkey’s age-old and main economic problem of current account deficit.

The stick was the armed Kurdish separatist organisation, the PKK.

The PKK was established in 1978, claiming to be a Marxist-Leninist organisation struggling for the liberation of “Kurdistan” from Turkish rule. However, the claim that it had close links with the Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) from the very beginning and was used by it to eradicate the other socialist/communist organisations in south-eastern Turkey seems plausible.

In 1991, the U.S. decided to make use of the PKK in the Middle East.<sup>27</sup> The PKK training camps were moved from the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon to northern Iraq. Much of the arms and ammunition left by the retreating Iraqi army after the Gulf War in 1991 was handed over to the PKK. Thus strengthened PKK began to increase its terrorist activities in Turkey and could mobilize large crowds in south-eastern Anatolia.

Turkey did not participate in the Gulf War, but acceded to the demands of the U.S. to provide airport facilities to prevent the Iraqi forces from surpassing the 36th parallel (“Operation Provide Comfort”). The activities of the U.S. aircrafts provided safe ground for the PKK. Besides, there were numerous cases when the American aircrafts saved wounded PKK terrorists and dropped them material and food.<sup>28</sup>

The conflict of interest between Turkey and the U.S.A. became harsher.

In this period extending until the assumption of political power by the AKP in November 2002, Turkish governments tried and to a considerable extent succeeded in curbing the power of the PKK.

Turkey had two important and extensive military operations into northern Iraq which annihilated a total of about 3300 PKK militants in 1995 and 1997, challenging the opposition of the U.S.<sup>29</sup> It was this firm stance of the military which persuaded the government to take a determined position.

---

<sup>27</sup> Akfırat, Fikret, op cit, 2007, p.48.

<sup>28</sup> Akfırat, Fikret, op cit, 2007, p.46.

<sup>29</sup> Akfırat, F., op cit, 2007, p.51, 90.

A classified document of the General Staff of Turkey on 4 August 1995 summarised the situation as follows: “The objective is to push Turkey to the front in order to realize the ‘Pax Americana’ in the Middle East. In the future we would be in a bloody fight with the countries of the Middle East. We would have to give in continuously to the impositions of the U.S.A. in the future, according to the plan of the Pentagon. There would be no other option for a Kurdistan which shall be founded on the foundations of enmity with the people of Iran and the Arabs and which can be engaged in military confrontation with Turkey any time but to accept the patronage of the U.S.A.”<sup>30</sup>

Turkey also waged a war against fundamentalism. It was mainly the armed forces which was especially sensitive about this issue and imposed a secular program on the governments. In 1996-1997, fundamentalism was considered to be the most dangerous threat for Turkey in the military documents. Some fundamentalists were purged from the armed forces and other parts of the administrative apparatus.<sup>31</sup> This attitude of the army caused the infiltrated elements of the Gülen movement to be much more careful in disguising themselves.

In 1998 there was an important change in the government in Russia, which led to a change in the balance of power in Asia. In 2000, Turkey took important steps to improve her relations with China and Russia. The Turkish and the Russian navies cooperated in the Black Sea. Agreements were concluded between Turkey and Russia and China for cooperation in certain areas.

Throughout this period, the official state policy of Turkey was to oppose the establishment of a Kurdistan in northern Iraq and to advocate the territorial integrity of Iraq. Turkey believed that the natural resources of Iraq belonged to the Iraqi people as a whole. This policy was expressly stated to the American by the prime minister and the head of the general staff in 2001.<sup>32</sup>

In 2003, the U.S. hoped to use the territory of Turkey to launch an attack to Iraq from the north and had prepared 80 thousand troops to be deployed in Turkey. The U.S. also demanded the free use of Turkey’s territory, ports, airports, roads and waterways for military purposes.<sup>33</sup> However, the Parliament did not permit it and the plans of the Americans had to be changed. This attitude was perceived as the policy of the Kemalists in the armed forces.

During the 1990s, the Gülen movement was perceived by the general public and majority of the politicians as a peaceful initiative, trying to expand Turkish culture to other countries, promoting and encouraging economic relations with other parts of the world, opposing such terrorist organisations as the Hezbollah in Turkey. It claimed to complement the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since this espionage organisation was not perceived as a threat to the Republic of Turkey, almost all of the governments and eminent political personalities tolerated and even assisted its activities.

---

<sup>30</sup> Bögün, H., op cit, 2007, p.263.

<sup>31</sup> Bögün, H. op cit, 2007, p.96-97, 102, 127.

<sup>32</sup> Bögün, H., op cit, 2007, p.234, 235.

<sup>33</sup> Bila, Fikret, *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara’da Irak Savaşları*, Ümit Pub., 2003.

During these years, a number of anti-fundamentalist, anti-imperialist and anti-PKK intellectuals were assassinated. The perpetrators of these acts have not yet been fully disclosed. Eşref Bitlis, the general commander of the gendarmerie, lost his life in a doubtful plane crash on 17 February 1993. He had objected to the U.S. plans in Western Asia and was successful in preventing them to a considerable extent.<sup>34</sup>

On a number of occasions, the U.S. aircrafts harassed helicopters carrying Turkish officers.

During the NATO manoeuvres in October 1992, an American aircraft carrier, USS Saratoga (CV-60) fired (“by accident”) a Sea Sparrow missile on a Turkish destroyer Muavenet and killed five soldiers.

On 4 July 2003, Turkish officers in northern Iraq were enslaved by the Americans and were badly treated.

During these years, the officers of the U.S. armed forces had at their disposal the following map for the future of Western Asia. This map was displayed on various occasions and the Turkish officers reacted firmly.



To safeguard U.S. interests in Western Asia and North Africa, the Central Command (CENTCOM) was established. “The CENTCOM area of responsibility includes 25 nations, ranging from Egypt in the west to Pakistan in the East, and from Kazakhstan in the north to Kenya in the south. It encompasses some 428 million people who represent 17 different ethnic groups, speak six major languages with hundreds of dialects, and live under distinct forms of government and various standards of living.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Akfırat, Adnan, *Eşref Bitlis Suikastı (Belgelerle)*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2004.; Senem, Nusret, *Genelkurmay’a Eşref Bitlis Dosyası*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 2000, p.32.

The following maps show the area of responsibility of the U.S. Central Command<sup>36</sup>:



The map below shows the time necessary to reach the area of responsibility from Florida, where the headquarters of CENTROM is located.



The long distance in between could be overcome by using the Incirlik Base in Turkey.

This was clearly stated in an article by Zalmay Khalilzad in 2000, one time ambassador of the U.S.A. to Afghanistan, Iraq and the UN.

“Turkey is ideally located to play a vital role to ensure security both in the Persian Gulf and in the Caspian Basin. Turkish military facilities provide an excellent location for projecting power to both

<sup>36</sup> *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 2000, p.33 and *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1995, p.37.

regions. For example, the bulk of Persian Gulf and Caspian energy resources are within 1,000 miles of İncirlik.”<sup>37</sup> Then, on the next page of the book, the following map appeared:

86 The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan

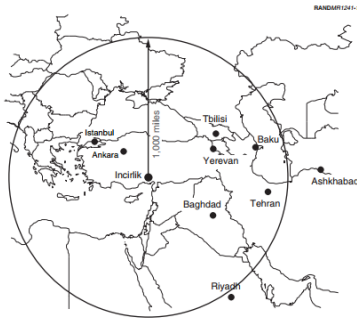


Figure 1—Turkey-Persian Gulf and Caspian Basin

General Anthony C.Zinni, Commander in Chief, U.S.Central Command, formulated the objectives of CENTCOM in the following words:

*“It has four elements. The first is obvious –providing access to the energy resources of the region, which is a vital national interest. The second element is something often overlooked –the growing commercial significance of the area. (...) The third is the number of maritime choke points in the region, such as the Suez Canal and Strait of Hormuz. We must ensure these passages remain open to communication and trade. Fourth, there are issues of stability –the Middle East peace process, extremism, and other concerns that could destabilise the region and reach beyond it. This is more than terrorism. (...) We worry about extremism, something that involves more than just the threat of terrorism. There is a movement, a new **jihadism**, that is, coalescing around extremist groups. Its origins can be traced to Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden and others have brought extremists together through hostility to the West as well as other countries in the region. (...) If you look at CENTCOM in strictly cultural terms, it might make sense to circumscribe the entire Islamic world –the Greater Middle East or however you want to refer to this overall region.”<sup>38</sup>*

### **How could the Gülen organisation increase its political and economic influence?**

Fethullah Gülen and his espionage organisation assumed important tasks for the U.S.

Fethullah Gülen used on the one hand religion, on the other hand material benefits. The support he got from the U.S. was of great importance.

He constructed an illegal sect since the mid-1960s patiently and infiltrated the state institutions, established employers’ associations, trade unions of workers and public servants and various associations of all kinds. The Gülen movement had many health care institutions, universities, schools, university examination preparation courses, charity organisations. The movement controlled directly a number of newspapers, radio stations and TV channels.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Khalilzad, Z., “A Strategic Plan for Western-Turkish Relations”, Khalilzad, Z.-Lesser, I.O.-Larrabee, F.S. (ed.), *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations, Towards a Strategic Plan*, Rand, Santa Monica, 2000, p.85.

<sup>38</sup> Zinni, A.C., “Challenges in the Central Region,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 2000, p.26-29.

<sup>39</sup> There are quite a large number of books on the Gülen movement. The most important texts are written or edited by Nusret Senem: (1) *Devlet Arşivlerinde FETÖ*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2016; (2) *Fethullah Gülen’in Konuşmaları ve Pensilvanya İfadesi*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2012; (3) *Nurculuk ve Fethullah Gülen Hakkındaki Mahkeme Kararları*, Kaynak

He claimed to be the “Imam of the world” at the beginning. Then he started claiming to be the “Imam of the Universe” and mahdi (or mehdi), reincarnation of Christ and saviour. His disciples believe these.

Still residing in the U.S.A. since 1999, all his activities are controlled and led by the CIA. During an interview with him in 1997, he said, “America is the name of the nation which still steers the world boat.”

The Gülen movement used high technology espionage equipment to tap telephone conversations, to record private conversations using listening bugs, to record private relations of persons by candid cameras, to monitor personal computers. The information thus received was used to blackmail eminent personalities or to eradicate them. Many potential enemies were thus deleted. This activity constituted an important component of their espionage work.

The Gülen movement’s militants employed by government institutions authorised to prepare entrance examinations for civil service, the military schools, police, universities and other institutions handed over the questions before the examination to the members and sympathisers of this espionage organisation. People who thus entered an institution or was thus promoted had to repay this assistance in various ways, ranging from financial contribution to acting in line with the demands of Gülen.

The prime minister R.T.Erdoğan was bugged and the bugs in his private office were disclosed in December 2011. Following the abortive coup attempt on 15 July 2016, it was discovered that the closest functionaries of the President and the Commander of the General Staff were militants of the Gülen organisation and had systematically carried out tapping, bugging and recording activities.

The Gülen militants had access to confidential or classified economic documents and these were used to increase the wealth of the organisation. Access to classified military documents caused serious problems for Turkey’s security, since the information thus received was forwarded abroad, to Gülen, who resided in the U.S.A.

The success of the Gülen movement in infiltrating the armed forces can be understood looking at the figures of officers purged following the abortive coup. Following the abortive coup attempt on 15 July 2016, of the 325 total number of generals and admirals in the Turkish armed forces, 149 were dismissed from the army for being members of the illegal Gülen organisation, together with 1099 officers and 436 petty officers.<sup>40</sup>

---

Pub., İstanbul, 2012; (4) *Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı Raporlarında Fethullah Gülen*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011; (5) *Genelkurmay Raporlarında Fethullah Gülen*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011; (6) *Emniyet İstihbaratının Fethullah Raporları*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011; (7) *Emniyet’in Işık Evleri Raporu*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011; (8) *Fethullah ve Susurluk*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2012. Latif Erdoğan, who had been a disciple of Gülen for 45 years, published in 2016 a book accusing Gülen and disclosing the activities of the movement: *Şeytanın Gülen Yüzü*, Turkuvaz Pub., İstanbul, 2016.

<sup>40</sup> There are a number of books concerning the infiltration of the Gülen movement into the armed forces. One outstanding example is the book by Mustafa Önsel, a colonel, a victim of the Gülen movement, who spent four years in prison due to

## **The Justice and Development Party (AKP) Period**

Turkey was shocked by the economic crises of 2000 and 2001. The coalition government decided for early elections in November 2002. In May 2000 there was a split in the fundamentalist party (Fazilet Partisi, Virtuous Party) and the splintering group founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) on 14 August 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The AKP was a coalition of pro-U.S.A. conservative and fundamentalist forces. One of the firmest supporters of the AKP was the Gülen movement.

The AKP received 34.6 percent of the valid votes cast and got 363 of the 550 deputies in the Grand National Assembly at the 2002 November elections.

R.T.Erdoğan did not have the qualified militants to occupy the administrative and judicial posts in the state bodies. So he depended on the Gülen movement for recruiting competent personnel.

Besides, there was a court case against the AKP at the Constitutional Court at which the public prosecutor demanded the dissolution of the party. Until the termination of this case in 2008, R.T.Erdoğan fulfilled all the demands of the Gülen movement which had a considerable influence on the judiciary.

In the 2002-2012 period, R.T.Erdoğan and his party acted in line with the demands of the U.S. Turkey was a loyal member of the Atlantic club. R.T.Erdoğan stated in more than 30 occasions that he was the co-chairperson of the Greater Middle East project. Abdullah Gül, minister of foreign affairs of Turkey, concluded in 2003 a bilateral agreement with Colin Powell, the minister of foreign affairs of the U.S., which included all the demands of the U.S.<sup>41</sup> Although A.Gül approved these demands, they could not be realized because of the resistance of the armed forces.

There were still Kemalist groups within the armed forces which resisted the pro-American policies of the AKP governments about the activities of the PKK and the Gülen movement. These groups were purged from the armed forces with the cooperation of the AKP and the Gülen espionage organisation. In addition to the Kemalist officers, The Workers' Party (the current Patriotic Party), which was launching an anti-imperialist and anti-Gülen campaign for years was targeted. Almost all the leaders of the Workers' Party were also arrested and spent up to six years in prison. The newspaper (Aydınlık) and T.V. channel (Ulusal Kanal) controlled by the Workers' Party were also under attack. Phoney trials were created based on invented evidences.

---

phoney trials and was later acquitted: *Ağacın Kurdu, TSK'de Şakirtlerin İşgali mi? Fethullah'ın Askerleri*, Alibi Pub., Ankara, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Akfırat, Fikret, op cit, 2007, p.297-304.

The promotion of the Gülen militants infiltrated into the armed forces was made possible through the liquidation of Kemalist officers; two birds with one stone.<sup>42</sup>

When the armed forces were cleansed of the Kemalist officers to a considerable extent and the Gülen infiltrators were appointed to higher posts in the armed forces, the U.S. and the Gülen movement became much more demanding. They tried to have a total control of the National Intelligence Organisation (MİT), the police, the armed forces and the AKP.

This was perhaps a unique case in history of taking over and conquering a state peacefully through the patient infiltration operation of a fundamentalist espionage organisation supported and controlled by the U.S.A.

At this juncture, there were two options available for Turkey. Either Turkey would be under the total control of the Gülen movement (and thus the U.S.) and would be used for military operations in the Greater Middle East or a Kurdistan would be founded on the territories of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran and would be expected to fulfil this function. Both options would have meant disaster for the Turkish people. The bill of the catastrophe would have to be paid by R.T.Erdoğan and his party.

To prevent R.T.Erdoğan's resistance and to increase the control over him, on 17 and 25 December 2013 some recorded conversation belonging to R.T.Erdoğan, his family and friends were disclosed, incriminating R.T.Erdoğan of extensive corruption.

To save his life and his party, Erdoğan was obliged to part ways with the Gülen movement, which he had supported and had enjoyed the support of, and the U.S.

Erdoğan started a policy which would lead the U.S. and Gülen plot to failure.

First of all, some Gülen militants were purged from the police. Then in queue were some of the judges and public prosecutors. The victims of the phoney trials who had been convicted to life imprisonment (army officers and leaders of the Patriotic Party) were released from prison. Purges of the army officers began, as well. The work of 50 years of infiltration into the state was in the process of collapse.

This policy change affected the other surrogate of U.S. imperialism, the PKK, as well. The armed forces initiated a comprehensive attack on the PKK forces from 24 July 2015 onwards.

The Gülen movement and the U.S. faced a dilemma.

Either to keep silent and bit by bit lose the gains of a patient infiltration work of 50 years, or to take the chance of an early coup attempt.

They opted for the second.

The abortive coup d'état on 15 July 2016 was not a war between the Gülen movement and R.T.Erdoğan.

---

<sup>42</sup> Perinçek, Doğu, *Türk Ordusu Kuşatmayı Nasıl Yaracak*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2011; Perinçek, Doğu, *Türk Ordusunun Strateji Sorunu*, Kaynak Pub., İstanbul, 2009.



It was one of the battles of the secret war between Turkey (and the Kemalist and other progressive/socialist forces in this country) and the U.S.A., which had been going on for quite a long time. The U.S.A. lost this proxy battle carried out by the Gülen movement and the PKK.

During this process, Turkey took significant steps to improve the relations with Russia, following the downing of a Russian Su-24 aircraft by a Turkish F-16. The response of Russia was positive.

### **Turkey's Possible Rupture from the Atlantic System**

Western Asia is the main energy (oil and natural gas) supplier of the world and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future. For the U.S., which is losing her global hegemonic position, control of this area is of vital importance.

What role does the U.S. policy makers would like Turkey play? Would this role be in harmony with Turkey's national interests? If not, what would be the responses of the U.S. and Turkey?

Turkey has a number of foreign military bases and installations in her territory. Map of U.S. and NATO military presence in Turkey in 2016 is presented below:<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Zanotti, Jim-Thomas, Clayton, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations*, Congressional Research Service, August 26, 2016.

**Figure 4. Map of U.S. and NATO Military Presence in Turkey**



Sources: Department of Defense, NATO, and various media outlets; adapted by CRS.

Notes: All locations are approximate. All bases are under Turkish sovereignty, with portions of them used for limited purposes by the U.S. military and NATO. The U.S. and German Patriot missile batteries are scheduled to be withdrawn by October 2015 and January 2016, respectively.

The U.S. can establish alternative bases in Cyprus or in a future Kurdistan under her direct control. But both these alternatives are not on the agenda for the time being. It seems that the U.S. will continue to be dependent on Turkey both for the bases and for struggle against Muslim fundamentalism.

Turkey has benefited in the past in military equipment assistance of the U.S.; but in recent years, Turkey has been trying with considerable success to develop her defence industry and to meet her needs through diversified sources, developing relations with China, Russia, Pakistan and South Korea.

Turkey is not dependent on U.S. military grants. Currently annual military grant assistance from the U.S. is approximately 3-5 million Dollars, which can easily be ignored by Turkey.

Under these conditions, Turkey seems to be in a quite advantageous position with respect to the U.S.

A recent U.S. report summarizes this relationship as follows:

*"Turkey's location near several global hotspots makes the continuing availability of its territory for the stationing and transport of arms, cargo, and personnel valuable for the United States and NATO. Turkey's hosting of a U.S./NATO early warning missile defense radar and the transformation earlier this decade of a NATO air command unit in Izmir into a ground forces command appear to have reinforced Turkey's strategic importance for the alliance. Turkey also controls access to and from the Black Sea through its straits pursuant to the Montreux Convention of 1936."*<sup>44</sup>

*"The potential for the United States to use its political relationship with Turkey to boost U.S. influence in the greater Middle East remains inconclusive. Regardless of some difficulties with the United States and*

<sup>44</sup> Zanotti, J.-Thomas, C., op cit, 2016, p.23.

*other NATO countries, Turkey remains a key regional power that shares linkages and characteristics with the West, which may distinguish Turkey from other Muslimmajority regional powers such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Therefore, cooperation with Turkey, along with other actors, is likely to remain relevant for the advancement of U.S. interests in the volatile area.*<sup>45</sup>

However, the demands of the U.S.A. or the “assignments” to Turkey following the collapse of the Soviet Union are in conflict with the vital interests and the existence of Turkey.

During the Cold War, the obsession of the “communist threat” and the guarantees provided by the NATO for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Turkey persuaded the majority of the armed forces and the people to side with the Atlantic system.

Following the termination of the Cold War, the new “assignments” imposed on Turkey constituted vital threats for Turkey’s security and existence. The officers who were trained within the NATO structure began to question the relations with the U.S. Only the members of the illegal espionage organisation of Gülen did not care about the future of Turkey.

The government, which in the past boasted about being U.S.’s partner, was obliged to oppose these demands. The result was the abortive coup attempt, which further reinforced the government’s stance. Especially the government is aware of the fact that it was the U.S. which organised, prepared and ordered the coup attempt. There is a life-or-death struggle of the government. Thus, the rapprochement with the Russian Federation after the plane crash seems not a means of strengthening Turkey’s hand in negotiations with the U.S., but a serious change in policy. The same is valid for relations with Turkey’s neighbours. Turkey cannot risk being isolated in Western Asia and being a surrogate of the U.S.A.

The U.S., which is economically and politically losing ground in Western Asia, is in need of Turkey fulfilling the two tasks pointed out above; and most probably, start a war of attrition against the government by deepening the economic crisis and encouraging and supporting the PKK and PYD. The U.S. can even support anti-government workers protests and demonstrations to emerge as the economic crisis deepens. A rapprochement between Turkey and the U.S.A. seems unlikely.

Thus, the objective conditions for a strategic change in Turkey’s foreign policy are on the agenda. Whether these conditions will result in an actual and lasting change of course depends on the realisation of the expectations of the government from the “East”. In case this subjective precondition is also available, Turkey can enter a totally new era in which the progressive and socialist elements will have a better chance of increasing their influence during a period of the third general crisis of capitalism and the deepening crisis of the Turkish economy. Thus, a rupture is possible and although quite difficult, may be probable.

---

<sup>45</sup> Zanotti, J.-Thomas, C., op cit 2016, p.26.

## **YILDIRIM KOÇ**

He was born in Samsun (Turkey) on 9 September 1951. He graduated from the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey) in 1973. He got a master's degree in social policy (industrial relations) at the Ankara University in 1982. He is a Marxist since 1969.

In the 1973-1980 period he worked at various progressive trade unions in Turkey as a researcher and educator. In the 1980-1983 period, he worked as instructor at the Department of Business Administration at the Middle East Technical University. He was dismissed from this post in 1983 (for political activity) by the military which had staged a coup d'état in 1980. He was arrested and spent a total of three years (1983-1984; 1990-1991) in prison, accused of being a member of a socialist organisation active against the military.

In the 1985-2008 period (except for Feb.1990-April1991), he was head of the education department of the Construction Workers Trade Union (YOL-IS). In the 1993-2003 period, he was also the senior advisor to the president of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Turkey (TÜRK-IS). At this post he was responsible for the relations with the ILO (International Labour Organisation), the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) and the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). He served as the representative of the Turkish Workers' Delegation at the Committee on the Application of Standards of the International Labour Conferences of the ILO in the 1993-2003 period. He was also a deputy member of the ETUC Executive Committee in these years.

Since 1998, for the last 18 years, he has been teaching labour history and contemporary labour relations at the Department of Economics, Middle East Technical University.

He has more than 50 books published on labour history and Turkish history. He is a columnist in the Aydinlik Newspaper since 1993.

Since 2013, he is vice-president of the Patriotic Party (Vatan Partisi) and chairperson of the Workers and Trade Unions Bureau.