

XV. Turkish Political Islam and its Role in the Geopolitical Complex of the Middle East

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Whether or not political islam¹ constitutes a threat for the regime of Turkey -secular by inference- remains an either sincere or hypocritical, yet always invariable, question for the western decision-making and international political influence centres.

At a slow pace, Turkey's Western partners begin to realise the radical changes our neighboring country is undergoing. Only a few countries are touched as deeply by the global political changes of the early 90s as was Turkey.² The same goes both for the situation in its interior and for its foreign relations, in the framework of which Ankara now seeks a new role in the region and in international politics as well. This, of course, is a direct result of the fact that Turkey belongs to a most important geopolitical complex; one that inter-connects three continents (Asia, Europe and Africa), has access to three oceans (Atlantic, Indian and Pacific), is a coastal geographical area of three semi close seas (the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf) and is prominent in straits and sea routes of utmost importance to maritime traffic (the Malaga Straits, the Strait of Hormuz, the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, the Suez Canal and the Straits of Gibraltar).

1. Islam, with a capital I, refers to the Muslim religion, whereas the islams refer to the various political and cultural forms of Islam, according to their geographic coordinates.

2. Cf. Udo Steinbach, «Ordnungsmacht oder Krisenfaktor? Die Türkei zwischen Orient und Okzident», in: *Friedensgutachten* 1996, Hg. Bruno Schoch, Friedhelm Solms & Reinhart Mutz, Munster 1996, 203-215.

Besides, according to some American analysts,³ the geopolitical value of our neighboring country also resides in the fact that it is adjacent to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Shiite theocratic Iran and Hafez al-Assad's Syria. It would, of course, be rather naive for one to believe that the USA considers the afore-mentioned countries as hostile. Or that, if one of the said countries is occasion-ally considered as opposing the USA, this would be an irreversible situation. The aforesaid countries' territories are of great importance a) for the transportation of Caspian oil and natural gas (i.e. the Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey route) and b) for the creation of an "Islamic⁴ security zone" south of Russia; hence the American effort to win over Iran, namely the only non-Sunnite state in the region. It is obvious, from a geopolitical point of view, that Iran's shift towards the Western world or, at least, the preservation of good relations with this world and its energy markets, resolves in the most economical and secure way the problem of transporting Caspian oil to the Arab-Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean and the other international oceanic regions.

Here, in the process of this approach between Iran and the West, we shall stress once again the importance of Erbakan's Turkey, of Erbakan himself as well as of Ozal; their role has been reinforced by the Sunnite "secular" and "tarikati" islam which is of Sufi origin -and therefore of common roots with the Shiite islam.

Another factor that needs to be co-examined, is that Turkey controls from a geographical and a political point of view (not without severe criticism on behalf of the Arab world) the flow of the Tigris' and Euphrates'⁵ waters towards Syrian and Iraqi territories, while from a purely defensive/strategic point of view, the fact that it offers the USA and Israel military, naval and air force bases takes it even higher in the conscience of the American establishment. These bases have been used occasionally by either the USA or other Western security complexes against some of the three aforementioned countries. Many have, indeed, wondered why these important defence agreements between Israel and Turkey⁶ were signed

3. Cf. «*Financial Times*» 20-11-1996 and «*FAZ*» 30-1-1996.

4. Islamic refers to the cultural dimension of the Muslim world, whereas islamist refers to the radicalized political aspect of Islam.

5. See I. Th. Mazis, *Le rôle de la Turquie en matière de Géopolitique de l'eau dans le Croissant Fertile*, Enimerosi eds, Corfu 1996, 54 (in French) and I. Th. Mazis, *I Geopolitiki ton Idaton sti M. Anatoli: Aravikes hores, Israil, Turkia* [*The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East: Arab countries, Israel, Turkey*], Trochalia, Athens 1996, 421.

6. The publication of the military agreements that were signed between the two coun-

while the latter was under an «islamic» government and how one can interpret this geostrategic decision on behalf of Israel. The first question may be answered in two ways: a) The Islamic movement has unintentionally served the Israeli strategy in the Middle East and b) Among the main actors of the region's Islamic front (i.e. Turkey, Sudan, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia) only 20% is of Arab origin.

As pertains to the second question, the answer is relatively simple should one consider that none of the aforementioned countries has ever actually attacked Israel. Iraq was the only one to do so, but let us not forget how much the world of radical Islam used to -and still does- hate Iraq. Let us not forget that the Israelis “were the first ones to announce the oncoming fall of the Persian monarchy [...] and the first ones to send an emissary from Tel Aviv in order to deter the last group of [the Shah's] followers from any conspiracy that would lead to an attempt against the Ayatollah's life”.⁷

It would definitely be most unscientific to overlook the ideological controversy between the radical islamist movement and the State of Israel. It is, nevertheless, not easy to overlook the objective alignment of certain vital Israeli interests with the presence of a considerable islamist movement in

tries within the framework of their Defence Cooperation, took place in February 1996. However, the negotiations for the conclusion thereupon started in 1991-1993. On 31 March 1994 an agreement was made on issues of confidentiality between the two countries and this agreement covers all following ones. Then we have the signing of a) The Memorandum on Military Aircraft and Training (18 September 1995) and b) The Agreement on Military Training Cooperation (23 February 1996) (*Turkish Daily News*, 5 June 1996). The latter was co-signed by the Turkish Chief of National Defence General Staff, General Cevik Bir and the Secretary General of the Israeli Defence Ministry, Mr. David Ivry. These agreements were followed by others, like, for instance, the one on the modernisation of Turkish F-4E Phantom aircrafts by the Israelis with contracts amounting to \$650 million. The final signature on this Agreement was made by “the islamist” Erbakan (5 December 1997), after having declared in his pre-election period that in case he won the elections, he would immediately annul all military agreements between Turkey and Israel. Also during the Erbakan administration (9-11 December 1997), the Israeli Defence Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Mordechai, was met in Ankara with full Head-of-State honors. It was then that the Agreements between the “islamist” Erbakan administration and the State of Israel were concluded, including programs of Aero-Spatial Cooperation (see Ammon Barzilai, «Israel and Turkey Look to the Stars as Strategic Ties Deepen», «*Ha'aretz*» Internet edition, 10 December 1997). I believe that the above are not too bad a performance for an “islamist”.

7. Christian Pahlavan, «De l'amour à la haine, Iran et Israël» in *Politique Internationale*, no. 19, Spring 1983, 91-106.

the region, as a result of either a conscious or an unconscious choice. To be more precise, from 1948 onward, the islamist movement «offers -de facto- considerable services» to Israel by dividing the Palestinian side as well as that of its Arab - Muslim supporters. It also weakens Arab nationalism that poses -either in its former pro-Soviet form or in its independent one of today- the prime and most serious threat to the survival of the State of Israel. Let us not forget that for Israel, security threats are also posed by Syria (under secular regime), Iraq (also of a “secular” character) and the formerly Marxist, formerly pro-soviet PLO. The remaining islamic countries in the region pose under no circumstances a security threat to Israel. What we mean is that we consider perfectly normal and logical the fact that, in the framework of the political logic of Likud and the orthodox religious parties that supported the Netanyahu administration, the possibility of implementing the Madrid and Oslo Agreements was never accepted. It goes without saying that such a development would mean giving up the plan to receive the Jewish settlers, a gradual surrender of the Golan Heights (together with the river Jordan’s source)⁸ to Syria, surrender of most of the Israeli dominance of the West Bank to the newly established Palestinian Entity etc. In short, in the consciousness of part of the political spectrum in Tel Aviv as well as of part of the Israeli society, such a development jeopardizes the very substance of the State of Israel and it must have been similar convictions that armed the hand that murdered one of the most prominent Sons of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin. This goes to say that any factor capable of deterring the implementation of the Oslo agreements, which give Yasser Arafat and the PLO great prestige, is welcomed by these circles. Most interesting -not to mention provocative- is the opinion of Ihab el-Sherif, as it was expressed in his doctoral thesis:⁹ “*the Israelis, in their battle against the PLO which constitutes for them a most serious danger, favoured indirectly -albeit with all means available- a strengthening of the islamists on the Occupied Territories so as to hurt Arafat’s image as a leader by presenting him as incompetent to represent the Palestinian people in its entirety on the one hand and on the other to render feasible a future substitution of the conciliatory side of Arafat’s Fatah with an islamist one and therefore a hard-core one as pertains to any concession with the State of Israel*”. Thus, “*in the 80s*

8. I. Th. Mazis, *The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East: Arab countries, Israel, Turkey*, Trochalia, Athens 1996, 43-44.

9. Ihab el-Sherif, *L’Islamisme militant en Egypte: ses origines, son evolution et sa radicalisation, 1970-1990*, Vol. II, 398-400 in Alex de Valle, *Islamisme et États-Unis: Une alliance contre l’Europe*, L’Age d’Homme, Lausanne 1997, 122.

*the Israelis allowed the islamists to take powerful posts within the religious institutional bodies of the Occupied Territories. At the time, the theoretical analysis indicated that the damages [to Israel] by these elements would be amortised by their contribution to the eradication of the PLO. We had to wait until September 1993¹⁰ for the Labour Party Administration under Yitzhak Rabin to put an end to this opportunist method” -and to lose his own life two years later (4 November 1995) by the hand of another “Son of Israel”.¹¹ According to the same strategic analysis, the geopolitical balance in the area could lean toward Israel’s side thanks to the presence of allies: the Shiite -made in Teheran- Hezbollah and the Sunnite Hamas in the S. Lebanon territory! As provocative as it may sound, it was these two terrorist Islamist organisations that gave Tel Aviv *de facto* the right to justify -using the so-called “islamist danger”- the presence of the pro-Israeli SLA-¹² as well as that of the Israeli army around the Litani River,¹³ which is the best source of potable water in the region. Well known are also the claims of certain Israeli nationalist parties in S. Galilee, based precisely on the fact that the region’s water resources are vital to Israel’s survival.¹⁴*

So, it is perfectly logical as well as feasible, from a strategist’s point of view, for Tel Aviv to think that, should the Peace Treaties between the two sides (i.e. the PLO and Israel) be signed and implemented and

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10. On 13 September 1993, Israel and the PLO sign, in the presence of Y. Rabin and Y. Arafat, a declaration of principles on the preliminary procedures that will result in the «self-administration» of the Palestinian territories.
 11. My book entitled *I Geopolitiki ton Idaton sti M. Anatoli [The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East, Trochalia, Athens 1996]* was dedicated to the memory of Yitzhak Rabin. This dedication was accompanied by a quotation from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, in which, on the one hand the fratricide is made evident and on the other it is foretold that the truth and the «foul deeds will rise, though all the earth overwhelm them, to men’s eyes». I believe that this dedication now becomes more understandable.
 12. South Lebanon Army, under the Christian general Antoine Lahad.
 13. I. Th. Mazis, *The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East: Arab countries, Israel, Turkey*, Trochalia, Athens 1996, 44, 50, 54-56, 136, 167-175, 363-364. As is mentioned in the said book, the river supply is estimated at 930 million m³/yr., namely 18,9% of all running and filtered water of Lebanon.
 14. I. Th. Mazis, *The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East: Arab countries, Israel, Turkey*, Trochalia, Athens 1996, 44, 50. A quote by the Israeli general Raphael Eytan (Likud’s former Minister of Agriculture) explaining that Israel should not accept its withdrawal from S. Lebanon, given that loss of control over these territories equals loss of control over the water.

should -as a result thereof- the Golan Heights be turned over to Syria together with the Jordan River's sources, the Litani River -combined with Israel's sovereignty over S. Lebanon- could be a compensation for the loss of Golan's valuable water re-sources.

The opposite, that is to say the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the SLA from S. Lebanon, could constitute another solution that would be a far less diplomatic one. However, this solution brought upon Tel Aviv many different reactions resulting in a serious instability within the Barak administration, which is led -due to its persistence in the Peace Process- towards very dangerous elections. If one was to evaluate the American factor's stance vis-a-vis this situation, namely the American pressure and a certain tendency toward this type of solution, one would have to admit that Washington does not appear to be annoyed by the islamist Hezbollah's strengthening within S. Lebanon territories. This is a fact that may indeed be interpreted in many ways but cannot -under any circumstances- be overlooked. Of course, it cannot be considered as a loss on behalf of the Israeli army either, for this would be a most naive interpretation thereof.

So, a first conclusion would be that Washington considers feasible the manipulation of the «secular» Order-driven Sunnite islam, through which it will become capable of controlling the region's radical islam as well, to the benefit of the American national interests. In the conscience of some Washington analysts, this manipulation could be realised by certain financial centres that are in direct connection with mechanisms of the Turkish political elite -which is mostly acceptable by the USA. Consequently, when all else fails, it can be manipulated by its large Turkish promoters as well as by some Groups of Saudi Arabian interests (Ozal, Topbas, BID, Rabitat, Dar al-Maal, Al-Baraka and finally Aramco). However, such an American approach results in the non-legitimisation -in the eyes of the «Qintonian» establishment- of the military reactions to the Erbakan administration as well as to its substitutes, regardless of whether they are in power or not. Besides, President Clinton and his staff have never attacked Erbakan, who is a member and «creation» of the Order-driven «secular» islam. On the contrary, they have declared (and were later verified) that "Erbakan's islam is of a rather mild character and that it doesn't threaten the Turkish regime". Further, the USA still doesn't support the actions of part of the military and political elite concerning the violent suppression of islamic political, cultural or educational expressions in Turkey, probably because it considers that their aim is not to salvage the secular regime.

There is one more thing the US always appreciated about Turkey: the fact that it is a Muslim country with a (albeit of imperfect structure) Western-type democracy and could, therefore, constitute an example of modesty for all the other Muslim countries in the region. It is precisely this feature that determines the fate of unity among its principle social formations. This is the feature that creates the foundation for a common understanding of prosperity, national goals, national strategies etc. Expansions thereof are the first signs of the Erbakan administrations early steps. They are of original and revolutionary character -for what we are used to consider as Turkish foreign policy- yet to the same general direction of a “modernised” and at the same time “Muslim model-country”. These steps underline the existence of strong forces in Ankara that rebel and wish to stray from the course defined by Turkish foreign policy. The aim of his two trips abroad¹⁵ and his initiative to establish the D8 as an “anti-organisation” to the G7 is a characteristic, symbolical element addressed to the “clientele” of the Islamic Conference Organisation¹⁶ member states. This policy was the natural result of the Ozal approach that was used by Ankara in order to expand the sphere of its political influence and to implement what it considered as its “new role”. This “new role” was put to the test particularly in relation to the Turkish foreign policy towards Central Asia and it was one of many different political, financial and cultural aspects.¹⁷

On the other hand, in the Balkans, we witnessed the spreading of a network of financial and political relations with Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, the FYROM and Albania. These relations were particularly tight with the latter countries. Ankara also undertook initiatives in the issue of Bosnia by demanding the embargo to be lifted;¹⁸ while at the same time it followed

15. He visited Iran, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia as well as Egypt, Libya and Nigeria. Cf. *International Herald Tribune*, 12/8/1996; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), 14/8/1996; Briefing (Ankara), 14/10/1996, 10: «Libya Visit - A Test of Turkish-Arab Ties?».

16. «Developing Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Nigeria». Cf. *Turkish Daily News*, 6/1/1997.

17. Cf. Rainer Freitag-Wirringhaus, «Der Einflugbans an der Türkei in Zentralasien», in: Thomas Koszinowski/Hanspeter Mattes (Hg.), *Nahost Jahrbuch 1992*, Opladen 1993, 201-206; Udo Steinbach, «Die Entwicklungspolitik der Türkei», in: *Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit*, 36 (1995) 5/6, 146-147 and Aziz Alkazaz, «Die Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO): Strukturen eines neuen Wirtschaftstraumes», in: Thomas Koszinowski/Hanspeter Mattes (Hrsg.), *Nahost Jahrbuch 1994*, Opladen 1995, 207-212.

18. Cf. U. Steinbach (footnote 6), 301-312.

the international community trend (the sanctions imposed on Bosnia were implemented only to an extent admissible by the international community). In May 1994, the Turkish government sent its “blue helmets” to Zenica. This -in principio realistic- initiative on behalf of the Turkish foreign policy was constantly accompanied by efforts to consolidate new ideas. The Turkish establishment was soon to realise that in the future, it would not suffice simply to maintain the fundamental axes of the country’s foreign policy. It would take a new concept on foreign policy. One that would interconnect its loose foreign policy relations with Turkish interests in fundamental political issues, like for instance its close relation with NATO and its European orientation. However, the continuing interior crisis, namely the enhancement of alternative philosophical and political tendencies and powers especially that of the islamists- and the de facto attempted break-up in the European-Turkish relations contribute to the re-appraisal of Turkey as pertains its near or farther geopolitical environment.

With this background in mind, former Premier Erbakan’s foreign policy is no mystery. Although there was no consensus among the principle specialists on foreign policy,¹⁹ it denoted the new, excessive self-confidence of Ankara vis-a-vis the West. Ambassador Umut Arik, temporary president of the Turkish Agency for Economic Development of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, mentioned depicting this “excessive self-confidence” of Turkish foreign policy-that, in spite of the multitude of unsolved problems, “Turkey has evolved from its former status of a simple country in the southern wing of NATO to a focal point and a source for what we refer to as “the call rings” of Eurasian regional security. Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Black Sea and Caucasus, East Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia, all these security circles meet at the very location of Turkey. It is true that this rationale did spread to all neighboring countries. As pertains to Central Asia, the idea of a political unification of all Turkic countries was finally rejected as non-realistic -not to mention anti-creative. The building and enhancement of a political solidarity are now sought after. In the Middle East, though, the peace process brings up the possibility of a wide Turkish-Israeli cooperation without burdening any further the relations with the Arabs -these relations been blemished after 1990 by a

19. Since Erbakan came to power in July 1996 onward, there was a distinctive political and philosophical gap between himself and the Foreign Ministry. The diplomats belonging to the latter consider themselves the keepers of all “Kemalist” state beliefs and principles.

series of issues.²⁰ Regarding security policy in the Mediterranean, Turkey -as a member of NATO and a connected member of the WEU- demands an equal role. As far as the Balkans are concerned, Ankara considers itself responsible for the safeguarding of stability in the region, as well as for the “protection” (in a neo-Ottoman way) of all Turkic and Muslim people residing therein. Most unfortunately for Ankara, however, the relations it is struggling to create with most Balkan countries on this basis cannot succeed, for they create a great deal of fear and instability. So, one thing is for certain: the position of Turkey, at a geopolitical level, has changed. After the end of the conflict between East and West, there was a change in the coordinates within which are placed the country’s foreign and security policies. The new “geopolitical” perspective of Ankara discovers a Eurasian dimension as regards the space within which Turkey must reposition itself.²¹ On the other hand, it is estimated -in a very vague and indefinite way- that “Turkey opens the North to the South, the South to the North, the East to the West and the West to the East”.²² In other words, this means that Ankara considers that the geopolitical position of Turkey is at the meeting point of US, CIS, EU and Middle Eastern interests. So, here we have a direct insinuation of something that re-emerges in each and every article that exists on issues of Turkish foreign and security policy, i.e. to the aforementioned inflated Turkish self-confidence. Umut Arik described the general political direction of Turkey in the following words: “The objective is to bring back balance and stability in the Balkans, the Black Sea, Caucasus, East Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia”.²³

The co-existence (until today) of the Kemalist establishment with the “secular”, Tarikat Sunnite islam is, therefore, understandable -at least in the form it was revived in the days of the second and third coups as well as the Ozal government. And it’s more than mere reality that leads Turkish secular governments to co-exist with Islam. It’s also

20. Cf. Ramazan Güven, «Patterns in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour towards the Middle East», in: *Foreign Policy* (Ankara), 10 (1995) 1-2, 70-100. M. Cf. Seyfi Tashan, «MENA Region -A Perspective from Ankara», in: *Foreign Policy* (Ankara) 10 (1995) 3-4, 39-47.

21. For the use of relevant terminology, Cf. Suat İlhan, «Geopolitical Developments and the Turkish World», in: *Eurasian Studies* 2 (1995) 3, 23-37.

22. Suat İlhan, «Geopolitical Developments and the Turkish World», in: *Eurasian Studies* 2 (1995) 3, 25.

23. Umut Arik, «Turkey and the International Security System in the 21st Century», in *Eurasian Studies* 2 (1995/96) 4, 8.

the results of this reality when it must be taken into consideration so as to draw the new hegemonic and neo-Mackinder American foreign policy in the region of the Caspian Sea. Given that the raw material for this reality is islam, one -let alone Washington- has little choice but to take it under advisement. All of the above become even clearer should one study the opinions of analysts who declare that today's islamist expansion is mainly due to US actions, that identified in islam -then- the most convenient and cheap weapon against communism and -today- for the interception of Russia which is soon to re-emerge in the most crucial area of the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Basin.

This is the exact framework in which we will have to examine the fact that since 1978-79, the CIA in cooperation with the Turkish and Saudi Arabian intelligence agencies has been building entire networks of islamist propaganda wishing to infiltrate the mechanisms of Central Asian nationalist movements as well as the local Sunnite clergy in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Namely those countries that possess the richest oil and natural gas deposits in Central Asia but also the ones in the sights of today's Anglo-American - Turkish business activities in the field of oil deposit management. For instance, according to Umut Arik, three thousand Turkish enterprises (each of over ten employees) have already been founded in Central Asia since 1989. By October 1994, the Turkish private sector had invested a total of more than \$4 billion in the Turkic republics of Central Asia, not inclusive of the \$ 1,2 billion in loans granted by Turkish Eximbank.²⁴ In addition, in the field of attracting the future local elites, Ankara spared for no effort: in October 1992, 10,000 students from Central Asia were admitted in Turkish universities with Turkish grants. Carrere d'Encausse, in view of this Turkish activity, discovers that Russia is afraid and "worried about the increasing influence of Turkey on the regions that -not so long ago- used to be under the control of Moscow). And she ascertains that these fears are not unfounded given that Turkey, "instead of limiting the shadow of islam that is spreading over Russia [...], is rather combining its interests with the said increase".²⁵ These discoveries lead us to the conclusion that the geopolitical role of Turkey, as an islamist go-between, in the "annexation" of the Caspian Sea region and its detachment from Russia, was -and still is- a most important one for all "neo-Mackinderians" both in Washington and London, given that their views on the subject have

24. *Le Monde*, 20 October 1994.

25. Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Victorieuse Russie*, Fayard, Paris 1992, 292-293 and 296-297.

taken the form of an entire theory and enormous amounts of money have been spent in order to perfect the described mechanism.

In conclusion, we have the following outline:

a) The Anglo-Saxon policy reinforces Turkey -its islamic side in particular- so as to avoid an eventual continuity breach of the “islamic security zone” of Anglo-Saxon interests in the Mediterranean in order to intercept (in a risk-free manner) any Russian projection of influence and power in this particular geographical region. One can also profess that Turkey, strategically speaking, will not be in a hurry for a rapid expansion of the NATO alliance eastward, which would gravely degrade it (as a strategic factor) in the region, given that the US will no longer fear the “re-emergence” of Russia in the international limelight with the claims of a metropolitan power. Ankara’s warning that it would veto NATO in case Turkey is not accepted as a full member of the EU reflects a mixture of incertitude and overestimating the specific weight of Turkish foreign policy, thus stressing the fact that its actions are completely unpredictable. Unless it considers, realizing the deeper European objections regarding its accession as a full member of the EU, that playing along in an American-European collusion will be rather beneficial. Namely, 1) it keeps the Cyprus issue open, i.e. a thorn in the side of Greco-Turkish relations, hoping for the consolidation of the existing situation on the Island; 2) it relieves Europeans from the possibility of facing Ankara determined to be accepted as a full member of the European Union, demanding financial and political favors in return for such an attitude; 3) it renders the possibility of its accession to the European family improbable, serving on the one hand an anti-European Anglo-Saxon policy and on the other the aspirations and privileges of a long-standing military elite; 4) it attempts to incriminate for every denial on behalf of the EU, Greece which -unfortunately- does not possess the necessary courage in its foreign policy so as to overcome the existing stiffening and to promote the full accession of Turkey to the EU. This would, of course, put an end to Greece being used to justify European policy, one that -in this particular case- is hypocritical.

It is my personal opinion that Turkey must become a full member of the EU as soon as possible and without any further delay or pretense on behalf of the European states that wish to charge Greece with their empathy and negative stance towards a “European Turkey”. It is absolutely clear that the resolution of Turkish problems in the field of human rights, political freedom and rights, the rights of national, religious and language minorities as well as the burning Cyprus issue, would have significant re-

sults that would be appreciated both by the European/Greek side as well as by the Turkish one. These results would be beneficial for peace, friendship, stability and security throughout the NE Mediterranean.

b) The “modernized” islamic face of Turkey enhances -according to the Americans- this policy, for it allows talks with Tehran, allowing the latter to be “towed” towards the USA rather than ending up with Russia -its natural ally. A process, which is carried out with the least internal cost possible for Khatami. Of course, the benefit is considerable for the Anglo-Saxon side that will regain the ground it had lost with the oil investments in Iran and also by cutting off Russia from its most powerful geopolitical ally in the region, which is -again-Iran (together with India).

c) Except for the strategic depth into Syrian territory granted to Israel by the Defence Agreements with Turkey, they also offer proof to the public opinion within the Muslim states in the region that Israel is not ideologically malicious towards Islam and so the signing of similar bilateral agreements between Arab Muslim countries and Tel Aviv is more than feasible. These bilateral peace agreements are of utmost importance to Israel’s “Palestinian policy”, given that they allow an isolation of the PLO from its Arab supporters and Israel will be capable of imposing its own terms. Turkey benefits in many ways from these Agreements but it essentially allows itself to proceed to a dominant water policy without annoyance from Syria. It is also mainly able to move freely in N. Iraq, in the vicinity of Mosul without the fear of Iraqi retaliation.

d) Maintaining the balance of Mackinder’s model of a “Turkish -Islamic security zone”, does not allow for “clumsy” actions on behalf of “fanatic Kemalist” generals, which -in my opinion- will not be greeted by the State Department with intent of full support.

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