

ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

LA TURQUIE EN MUTATION TURKEY IS CHANGING

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Poètes Chypriotes / Cypriot Poets

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Lévendia, Philotimo, Kaïmos: Figures et Formes

Rebelles de la Musique Grecque

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La Turquie en mutation

Vivi Kefala*

Introduction

Le présent numéro spécial de la revue *Etudes helléniques/ Hellenic Studies* est centré sur la Turquie, un pays qui présente un grand intérêt pour plus d'une raison. En fait, la Turquie est un pays qui occupe une position charnière du point de vue géostratégique, géopolitique et géoéconomique, et qui est au voisinage immédiat avec des sous-systèmes importants et en ébullition, comme le Caucase et l'Asie centrale, les Balkans et le Moyen-Orient. Solidement ancrée dans le camp occidental, en raison de la tradition kémaliste, la Turquie est aussi un pays caractérisé par des clivages lourds de conséquences pour les équilibres en son sein, lesquels influencent aussi sa politique extérieure.

Si l'on accepte donc l'idée que la politique intérieure et la politique extérieure d'un pays sont étroitement liées, on peut alors formuler l'hypothèse que l'arrivée de l'AKP au pouvoir, un parti islamiste, n'a pas seulement modifié les données de la politique intérieure turque mais aussi la direction de sa diplomatie. En effet, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan dès 2003, semble avoir effectué un tournant de taille dans les orientations de base de sa politique étrangère au point que, selon certains, il semble qu'Ankara soit décidée à mettre en cause son alliance avec les Etats-Unis et l'Europe, et à se tourner vers le monde arabo-musulman où elle pourrait grâce à son capital géoculturel, se rapprocher des pays de la région avec lesquels elle partage, au-delà de la religion, un passé historique et culturel ottoman commun.

Est-ce que la Turquie va donc abandonner l'Occident? La réponse est plutôt négative: le gouvernement turc est beaucoup plus fort aujourd'hui que par rapport à 2002 quand il a gagné les élections parlementaires grâce à ses succès tant au niveau de la politique intérieure qu'extérieure: la lutte serrée du gouvernement avec les généraux turcs semble avoir été gagnée par l'AKP et la Turquie sous Recep Tayyip Erdoğan n'est plus un pays tiraillé par des problèmes intérieurs aigus du passé, exception faite de la question kurde. Qui plus est la Turquie a remporté des succès au Moyen-Orient et elle est devenue un membre du G20. Mais ceci ne signifie aucunement que la Turquie pourrait

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dès lors rompre ses liens politiques, stratégiques et économiques avec l'Occident. Alors, que signifie un tel changement dans la politique extérieure turque? Il s'agit plutôt d'une politique qui cherche à faire la synthèse des avantages dont dispose la Turquie pour faire respecter ses intérêts et son rôle. Le succès d'un tel effort aurait le double mérite de renforcer davantage la position de l'AKP sur la scène politique turque et d'obliger ses alliés occidentaux à lui accorder la position qui croit être la sienne, à savoir la position d'un grand pays et pas celle d'un allié indispensable, mais de «deuxième rang». Mais pour aboutir à ce point de confiance, la politique turque a beaucoup oscillé depuis 1991.

Depuis l'effondrement du bipolarisme et jusqu'à aujourd'hui le système international se trouve en mutation continue, fait qui se reflète parfaitement au Moyen-Orient: de l'euphorie de la première décennie de l'après-guerre froide on est passé à la peur semée par les attaques terroristes contre les États-Unis en septembre 2001 et par la suite à l'impasse auquel s'est heurtée la politique moyen-orientale de Washington à la fin de la première décennie du XXI^{ème} siècle.

Ces changements sont marqués par la multiplication des clivages et des conflits régionaux au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord. Par conséquent, à l'instabilité et à la fluidité générales provoquées par le changement de caractère du système international –successivement bipolaire, unipolaire et apolaire à l'heure actuelle, selon certains– s'ajoutent des antagonismes, des conflits et des enjeux nouveaux, comme c'est le cas du terrorisme islamique ou bien le jeu d'oléoducs pour le transport du pétrole et du gaz naturel vers les marchés mondiaux.

Dans ce contexte tumultueux la Turquie occupe une position spéciale. Selon une représentation géostratégique classique, ce pays se trouve en quelque sorte à l'épicentre de ces questions si graves en raison de sa position géopolitique charnière, déjà mentionnée. Si donc Ankara se sent toujours intéressée par les enjeux et l'évolution des conflits qui se déroulent à ses frontières, son intérêt pour le Moyen-Orient a grandi depuis 2003 et ceci pour plusieurs raisons.

Tout d'abord parce qu'en novembre 2002 la Turquie kémaliste est secouée par un séisme politique: un parti islamique, le Parti de la Justice et du Développement (AKP) sous Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, obtient une écrasante victoire électorale et accède au pouvoir. Quelques mois après, en mars 2003, le nouveau gouvernement islamique de la Turquie se trouve face à un grave dilemme: satisfaire les demandes américaines pour l'utilisation du territoire turc pour lancer une nouvelle invasion contre un pays voisin et à population musulmane, à savoir contre l'Irak, ou bien rejeter cette demande, ce qui

donnerait satisfaction à l'électorat de l'AKP mais qui provoquerait également des frictions dangereuses entre le gouvernement islamique et l'armée, garant de l'orthodoxie kémaliste. Par ailleurs, la politique américaine au Moyen-Orient en ce qui concerne des questions clés, comme celles de la Palestine, de l'Iran et de l'Irak, dont le volet kurde n'est pas le moindre, ou bien l'attitude de l'administrations de George W. Bush, face à l'Islam, vont à l'encontre des intérêts turcs, tels qu'ils sont au moins conçus par l'AKP.

Dans ce contexte, la Turquie se trouve dans une situation marquée par des contradictions importantes. D'une part, cet Etat est un allié stratégique des Etats-Unis car il est –avec Israël– l'unique allié stable de Washington dans cette vaste région pétrolifère, qui s'étend du Caucase au Golfe et connaît une instabilité chronique. Dans ce contexte, il va de soi que la Turquie est un allié régional indispensable aux Etats-Unis, étant donné que le contrôle de cette région est d'une importance capitale pour les intérêts américains. Qui plus est, la Turquie a sans doute besoin du soutien politique, économique et diplomatique que lui procurent les Etats-Unis. D'autre part, les sensibilités ainsi que les contraintes découlant de la politique intérieure pour l'AKP islamique au pouvoir se heurtent à la politique américaine surtout sous l'administration du Président George W. Bush, qui a déclenché une guerre totale contre le terrorisme islamique, identifiant d'une façon erronée l'Islam au terrorisme. Par ailleurs, la politique moyen-orientale de Washington va souvent, au moins selon Ankara, à l'encontre d'intérêts vitaux turcs, comme dans le cas de l'Irak du Nord, où la politique américaine a fait émerger la question kurde. Ce qui a alarmé la Turquie.

Dans ce contexte bouleversé, porteur de risques graves mais aussi d'opportunités, la Turquie a tout d'abord cherché à redéfinir son rôle régional et international dans un triple but:

- Renforcer sa position au camp occidental dont Ankara se veut un membre à part entière, pourtant menacée par la dissolution de l'Union soviétique.
- Confronter les dangers régionaux découlant de la situation conflictuelle et fluide régnant dans les sous-systèmes voisins.
- Protéger ses intérêts nationaux jugés en danger, comme dans le cas de l'autonomie dont jouissent les Kurdes en Irak du Nord voisin ou dans la question chypriote.

Pour accomplir ces objectifs vitaux Ankara a suivi une politique extérieure très active cherchant à faire valoir son poids géostratégique, géopolitique, géoéconomique et géoculturel. Dans le cadre de ces considérations, Ankara s'est tout d'abord orientée vers les Etats nouveaux à population musulmane,

émergés depuis l'effondrement du monde soviétique. La Turquie a donc cherché à présenter son modèle politique, la synthèse turco-islamique, comme un modèle approprié pour ces nouveaux Etats à la recherche d'identité et de développement. Elle a aussi cherché d'être présente par des moyens politiques et diplomatiques, et de jouer un rôle régional, en assumant des responsabilités, par exemple dans les Balkans, et aussi dans le cadre de l'OTAN, en nouant des alliances comme ce fut le cas avec l'Albanie, et en prenant des initiatives régionales comme ce fut le cas avec la création de l'Organisation de coopération économique des pays riverains de la Mer Noire.

En conséquence, la Turquie a essayé de s'imposer comme une grande puissance régionale dont les intérêts devraient être pris en considération. Dans un premier temps cet objectif était condamné à la faillite, d'une part à cause de la lutte entre l'armée, garante de l'orthodoxie kémaliste, et les forces politiques turques –surtout islamiques— et d'autre part, à cause de la faiblesse économique du pays, qui est arrivé au bord de la faillite au début des années 2000.

Mais cette image commence à changer à partir de novembre 2002 quand le Parti de la Justice et du Développement a gagné les élections parlementaires avec une majorité écrasante. Dès lors, Ankara, sous l'influence du ministre des affaires étrangères Ahmet Davutoğlu, semble avoir modifié l'orientation de sa politique extérieure en faisant valoir son poids géopolitique, géostratégique, géoéconomique et géoculturel. Ceci signifie que la Turquie se rapproche du monde arabo-musulman, qui l'entoure au nom d'une communauté religieuse et culturelle, ainsi qu'au nom d'un passé commun.

Dans ce contexte, les contributions comprises dans ce numéro spécial *d'Etudes helléniques / Hellenic Studies* sont axées d'une part, sur les efforts de la Turquie d'accomplir son itinéraire européen marqué pourtant par des dilemmes importants, et d'autre part, sur sa politique au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord, région conflictuelle par excellence. L'intérêt en est d'autant plus grand que la Turquie a procédé depuis la fin mai 2010 à une rupture de taille par rapport au passé, en ce qui concerne ses relations avec Israël. Il est certain qu'une telle rupture influence les équilibres stratégiques dans la région et tend à redessiner le rapport des forces régionales et locales.

Dans un monde en transition la Turquie, en transition elle-même, cherche donc un rôle nouveau, ce qui est l'objet de la contribution de Christodoulos Yallourides et d' Afendoulis Langides (*Turkish External Orientation and Political Culture*) qui examinent l'orientation de la politique extérieure de la Turquie et sa culture politique. Dans leur contribution Yallourides et Langides tracent les lignes directrices de la politique étrangère de la Turquie depuis les

premières années du kémalisme jusqu'à aujourd'hui et ils montrent les clivages qui caractérisent ce pays et les difficultés qu'il doit surmonter.

Par la suite, est examiné l'objectif d'Ankara de devenir un membre à part entière de l'Union européenne. Ainsi, Mersilia Anastasiadou (*Turkey's accession to the European Union: Dilemma and objections*) analyse les contradictions, qui régissent la politique européenne de la Turquie, dont la plus importante est son attitude face à la question chypriote. La contribution de Mersilia Anastasiadou se focalise sur la question de l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne comme membre à part entière, ce qui constitue un des objectifs principaux de la politique extérieure de ce pays, poursuivi avec insistance depuis les années 60 mais pas inconditionnellement. Au début, l'objectif européen d'Ankara pourrait être conçu dans le cadre de l'orientation générale de la politique turque, qui dictait comme une nécessité la participation de la Turquie aux principales Organisations internationales de l'Occident, dont l'Union européenne. Par la suite cet objectif répondait également aux besoins de développement politique et économique du pays, tandis que durant les années 90 l'Union européenne semblait comme un îlot de stabilité dans un monde en mutation rapide. Mais pour accomplir cet objectif la Turquie devrait procéder à des changements très profonds dans tous les domaines de la vie publique pour s'harmoniser avec les acquis communautaires. Dans ce contexte, la Turquie a procédé à des changements radicaux dans plusieurs domaines, surtout en ce qui concerne le rôle de l'armée dans la vie politique du pays et a spectaculairement amélioré ses performances économiques. Ceci étant, la Turquie se trouve encore assez loin d'une adhésion européenne complète, d'une part, en raison de sa démographie galopante, et d'autre part, en raison du déficit important qu'elle présente en ce qui concerne sa politique dans le domaine des droits individuels et politiques, les droits des minorités, etc. Par ailleurs, dans le domaine de la politique extérieure, Ankara se trouve dans une position très faible en refusant de reconnaître la République de Chypre, déjà membre de l'Union européenne, et en poursuivant une politique qui se trouve loin de la politique de bon voisinage par rapport à la Grèce.

De son côté Çiğdem Üstün (*Analysis of Turkey's Relations with the EU and the US in the light of the 2011 Arab Revolts*) analyse l'itinéraire européen de la Turquie ainsi que les relations entre Ankara et Washington à la lumière des révoltes arabes, d'où ont émergé des forces islamiques, qui se réclament du modèle politique turc. Çiğdem Üstün s'attache donc aux relations de la Turquie avec les deux pôles occidentaux, les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne, qui sont en même temps des alliés stratégiques pour Ankara. En effet, depuis la fondation de l'Etat turc moderne, Ankara sous l'influence du

kémalisme a poursuivi une politique pro-occidentale abandonnant son milieu immédiat moyen-oriental. Ceci étant, Ankara a dû affronter les soubresauts régionaux et agir aux niveaux politique et diplomatique. Par conséquent, la Turquie a cherché à harmoniser sa politique avec celles de ses partenaires occidentaux et à concilier des intérêts parfois contradictoires. L'analyse de Çiğdem Üstün comprend également la politique de la Turquie face aux révoltes arabes, qui ont profondément bouleversé les données politiques et stratégiques dans la région du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord et mis en danger les intérêts économiques et politiques turcs.

Les contributions qui suivent se focalisent sur la politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie. Tout d'abord Gencer Özcan (*Turkish-Israeli Relations in Crisis: Living with the Gordian knot*) étudie la crise profonde et ouverte, qui caractérise les relations entre la Turquie et l'Etat d'Israël, des relations en substance triangulaires, puisque l'alliance entre Ankara et Tel-Aviv servait uniquement les intérêts de ces deux pays mais aussi les intérêts stratégiques de Washington. Gencer Ozcan, analyse donc les relations entre la Turquie et l'Etat d'Israël, des relations privilégiées jusqu'à 2009 mais qui depuis vont de mal en pis. Les relations israélo-turques ont, en effet, atteint leur point de rupture, le 31 mai 2010, quand les forces israéliennes se sont attaquées au navire turc *Mavi Marmara*, qui faisait partie de la flottille internationale visant à briser l'embargo imposé par Israël à la Bande de Gaza. L'idée principale développée dans cet article est que durant les années 90 les relations de la Turquie avec Israël étaient considérées comme un sujet concernant exclusivement le domaine de la politique extérieure turque. Or, durant la décennie suivante, et surtout depuis 2009, les relations turco-israéliennes sont largement influencées par les développements propres à la politique intérieure de la Turquie et elles sont plutôt devenues un enjeu de la politique intérieure turque. Dans ce contexte, et vu qu'Israël s'obstine à ne pas présenter officiellement ses excuses auprès du gouvernement turc pour l'attaque sanglante contre le navire *Mavi Marmara*, il est très peu probable que les relations entre Ankara et Tel-Aviv vont s'améliorer. Le bouleversement provoqué dans les équilibres stratégiques moyen-orientaux par les révoltes arabes, l'insécurité régionale croissante, surtout depuis le départ des forces américaines de l'Irak, sont des facteurs importants, qui obligent les deux pays à reconsidérer leur attitude et à reprendre leur collaboration militaire. Ceci étant, une telle réconciliation restera introuvable, tant que la question des relations entre Ankara et Tel-Aviv continue à être conçue comme un enjeu de la politique intérieure turque.

Gulden Ayman (*Regional Aspirations and Limits of Power: -Turkish-Iranian Relations in the New Middle East*) analyse les relations turco-iraniennes et les

contradictions, qui en découlent tant par rapport aux relations de la Turquie avec ses alliés occidentaux, surtout les Etats-Unis, que par rapport à ses relations avec les monarchies du Golfe, qui se sentent menacées par le régime de Téhéran.

Ioannis Grigoriadis (*Matching Ambitions with Realities: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*) cherche à définir la nouvelle politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie en étudiant les avantages dont celle-ci dispose, ainsi que les problèmes auxquels l'Etat turc est confronté. Grigoriadis analyse la nouvelle politique extérieure de la Turquie, comme le résultat d'un double changement. Le premier changement concerne les équilibres politiques à l'intérieur du pays, marqués par l'accès au pouvoir d'un parti islamique, l'AKP, ce qui fait que la politique extérieure d'Ankara est profondément influencée par l'approche stratégique de la position charnière du pays formulée par le ministre des Affaires étrangères de la Turquie, Ahmet Davutoğlu. Par la suite, la nouvelle politique extérieure turque reflète les changements effectués dans le rapport des forces régionales. Grigoriadis observe que même s'il est vrai que la politique extérieure turque avait déjà donné des signes d'un changement d'orientation, ce n'est pourtant que sous le gouvernement de l'AKP que la politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie a radicalement changé. Ankara a spectaculairement amélioré ses relations avec l'Iran et la plupart de pays arabes, tandis que ses relations privilégiées avec Israël se sont dramatiquement détériorées. Un tel changement reflète, certes, le nouveau cadre stratégique prévalant à l'heure actuelle au Moyen-Orient ainsi que l'ambition de la Turquie de jouer le rôle d'une grande puissance régionale, d'autant plus qu'aucun autre pays dans la région n'est en position de revendiquer une telle hégémonie. En effet, la politique extérieure d'Ankara, renforcée par un développement économique important, qui fait de la Turquie un membre du G-20, cherche à rejoindre le club des puissances moyennes émergentes. Ceci étant, une telle attitude pourrait remettre en cause tout l'édifice de la politique étrangère de la Turquie, voire aliéner ses relations stratégiques avec l'Occident.

Vivi Kefala, (*La Turquie, le Moyen-Orient et les révoltes arabes*) cherche à évaluer la politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie ainsi que l'impact des révoltes arabes sur elle. L'idée de base de sa contribution est que la Turquie sous l'AKP, pour des raisons de politique intérieure mais aussi sous le poids des changements régionaux et internationaux, a tracé une nouvelle politique extérieure tous azimuts faisant valoir sa position géostratégique et géoéconomique. Sans abandonner ses alliés occidentaux et son projet d'adhésion à l'Union européenne, Ankara se tourne vers le monde arabo-

musulman cherchant d'y obtenir une position hégémonique ou bien de devenir le centre culturel de cet ensemble selon le modèle ottoman de jadis. Il s'agit d'un projet ambitieux dont la réussite donnerait à la Turquie un poids inédit à tous points de vue. Le succès d'un tel projet reste incertain, bien qu'au début des révoltes arabes celui-ci semblait réalisable en raison des forces islamistes émergées, qui se réclamaient du modèle turc et de l'AKP. Ceci étant, il est peu probable avec les dernières évolutions dans cette région que la nouvelle politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie puisse résoudre ses propres contradictions et surmonter la méfiance des pays arabes à son égard, qui ont leurs propres intérêts et n'ont aucun avantage à aider l'Etat turc à devenir un pôle régional à leur détriment. En conséquence il n'est pas certain que la politique moyen-orientale de Recep Tayyip Erdoğan soit à la hauteur de ses ambitions bien que celui-ci dispose d'une audience politique renforcée à l'intérieur de son propre pays mais aussi au sein du monde arabe et bénéficie d'un progrès économique très fort.

Je voudrais avant de conclure remercier mes collègues des deux rives de la mer Egée pour avoir bien voulu contribuer à ce numéro spécial et participer ainsi à un échange de vues informel mais essentiel sur le devenir de la Turquie, un pays en mutation dans un monde, qui change.

Turkey is Changing

Vivi Kefala*

This special issue of *Études helléniques/ Hellenic Studies* focuses on Turkey, a country that is of great interest for more than one reason. In fact, Turkey is a country that occupies a pivotal geostrategic, geopolitical and geoeconomic position being in close proximity with major and boiling subsystems, as the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Balkans and the Middle East. Firmly rooted in the Western camp, because of the Kemalist tradition, Turkey is also a country characterized by cleavages having heavy consequences for the equilibrium prevailing in its interior, which also influence its foreign policy.

So if one accepts the idea that a country's domestic and foreign policy are closely linked, then we can hypothesize that the arrival to power of the ruling AKP, an Islamist party, has not only modified the data of the Turkish domestic politics but also the direction of its foreign policy. Indeed, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, already in 2003, seems to have realized a major change in the basic directions of its foreign policy to the point that, according to some, it seems that Ankara is determined to jeopardize its alliance with the United States and Europe, and turn to the Arab-Muslim world where it could cash its geo-cultural capital, i.e. to come closer to the countries of the region with which it shares, in addition to religion, a common historical and cultural ottoman past.

Will therefore Turkey turn its back on the West? The answer is rather negative: the Turkish government is much stronger today than in 2002 when it won the parliamentary elections because of its success both in domestic and foreign policy: The tug of war of the government with the Turkish generals seems to be won by the AKP and Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is no longer a country torn by domestic acute problems, with the exception of the kurdish question. Furthermore one must take into consideration Turkey's success in the Middle East and the fact that it became a member of the G20. But this does not mean that Turkey could therefore break its political, strategic and economic ties with the West. So what does such a change mean in Turkish foreign policy? Rather it is a policy that seeks to synthesize the benefits available to Turkey and to enforce its interests and its role. The success of such an effort would have the double merit to further strengthen the position of

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the AKP in the Turkish political scene and force its Western allies to give it the position it considers its own, namely the position of a great country and not that of a vital ally, but one of a “second rank”. But to get to this point of confidence in its abilities, Turkish policy has severely fluctuated since 1991.

Since the collapse of the bipolar international system and up to date the international system is in constant change, a fact which is reflected perfectly in the Middle East: from the euphoria of the first decade of the post-Cold War era we moved to the fear sown by the terrorist attacks against the United States in September 2001 and thereafter to the impasse to which led the Middle East policy of Washington at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

These changes are marked by the proliferation of regional conflicts and divisions in the Middle East and North Africa. Therefore, the instability and fluidity caused by the general change in the character of the international system—turn bipolar, unipolar and apolar at present according to some—added antagonisms, conflicts and new challenges, as this is the case of Islamic terrorism or the game of pipelines for transporting oil and natural gas to the world markets.

In this tumultuous context Turkey occupies a special position. According to a classical geostrategic representation, Turkey is in some way to the epicenter of these severe issues due to its pivotal geopolitical position, mentioned above. So, if Ankara still feels concerned by the issues and the evolution of conflicts taking place on its borders, its interest for the Middle East has grown since 2003 and for several reasons.

Firstly because in November 2002 the Kemalist Turkey was shaken by a political earthquake: an Islamic party, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wins a landslide election victory and rises to power. Some months later, in March 2003, the new Islamic government of Turkey is facing a serious dilemma: to satisfy U.S. demands for the use of Turkish territory to launch an invasion against a neighboring country with a Muslim population, namely against Iraq, or reject this request, which would satisfy the electorate of the AKP but also cause dangerous friction between the Islamic government and the army, guarantor of the Kemalist orthodoxy? Moreover, U.S. policy in the Middle East regarding key issues such as the Palestinian, Iran, Iraq, of which the Kurdish component is not the least, or the attitude of the administrations of George W. Bush against Islam, are against Turkish interests, at least as those put forward by the AKP.

In this context, Turkey is in a situation marked by significant contradictions. On the one hand Turkey is a strategic ally of the United States as it is—with

Israel-the only stable ally of Washington in this vast oil-rich region that extends from the Caucasus to the Gulf which is characterized by a chronic instability. In this context, it is obvious that Turkey is a vital U.S regional ally since the control of this region is of critical importance to U.S. interests. Furthermore, there is no doubt that Turkey needs the political, economic and diplomatic support provided to it by the United States. Moreover, the sensitivities and constraints arising from domestic politics to the ruling Islamic AKP bump against U.S. policy especially under the administration of President George W. Bush, who started a total war against Islamic terrorism, erroneously identifying Islam with terrorism. Moreover, the Middle East policy of Washington is often, at least according to Ankara, against the vital interests of Turkey, as in the case of northern Iraq, where U.S. policy has given rise to the Kurdish question, which has alarmed Turkey.

In this dislocated upset context, carrying serious risks but also opportunities, Turkey first sought to redefine its role regionally and internationally setting the three following goals:

- To strengthen its position in the Western camp of which Ankara wants to be a full member, yet threatened by the dissolution of the Soviet Union;
- To confront the dangers arising from the regional conflict and fluid situation prevailing in its neighboring subsystems;
- To protect its national interests considered in danger, as in the case of the autonomy of the Kurds in northern neighboring Iraq or in the Cyprus issue.

To accomplish these vital goals Ankara followed a very active foreign policy seeking to assert its geostrategic, geopolitical, geoeconomic and geo-cultural weight. In this context, Ankara has first turned to the new states with a Muslim population which emerged from the collapse of the Soviet world. Turkey has sought to present its political model, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, as an appropriate model for these new states in search of identity and development. It also sought to be present by political and diplomatic means, to the regional formation, assuming responsibilities, as in the Balkans within the framework of NATO, forming alliances as was the case with Albania, and taking regional initiatives like the creation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation of the countries bordering the Black Sea.

Accordingly, Turkey has tried to establish itself as a major regional power whose interests should be taken into consideration. Initially this goal was condemned to bankruptcy, partly because of the struggle between the army, guarantor of the Kemalist orthodoxy, and political forces - mainly Turkish-Islamic - and partly because of the economic weakness of the country, who

came to the brink of bankruptcy in the early 2000s.

But this picture is beginning to change since November 2002 when the ruling Justice and Development Party won the parliamentary elections with an overwhelming majority. Therefore, Ankara, under the influence of Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, seems to have changed the orientation of its foreign policy, highlighting its geopolitical, geostrategic, geoeconomic and geo-cultural weight. This means that Turkey is closer to the Arab-Muslim world that surrounds it, in the name of a religious and cultural community, and on behalf of a common past.

In this context, the contributions included in this special issue of *Études helléniques / Hellenic Studies* focus, on the one hand, on Turkey's efforts to fulfill its European itinerary, marked, however, by significant dilemmas, and partly to its policy towards the Middle East and North Africa, a conflictual region by excellence. The interest is even greater as Turkey has carried out since late May 2010 a big breakdown compared to the past, regarding its relations with Israel. It is certain that such a rupture influences the strategic balance in the region and tends to reshape the balance of regional and local forces.

In a world in transition, Turkey, itself in transition, is seeking a new role, which is the subject of the contribution of Christodoulos Yallourides and Afendoulis Langides (*Turkish External Orientation and Political Culture*) that examine the orientation of the foreign policy of Turkey and its political culture. In their contribution Yallourides and Langides trace the guidelines of Turkey's foreign policy since the early years of Kemalism up to this day and they show the cleavages that characterize it and the challenges it has to surmount.

Thereafter, is considered the goal of Ankara of becoming a full member of the European Union. Thus, Mersilia Anastasiadou (*Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Dilemma and Objections*) analyzes the contradictions that govern the European policy of Turkey, the most important of which is its attitude towards the Cyprus issue. The contribution of Mersilia Anastasiadou focuses on the question of Turkish accession to the European Union as a full member, which is one of its major foreign policy goals, persistently pursued with continued emphasis since the '60s but not unconditionally. Initially, the EU target of Ankara could be designed as part of the overall direction of the Turkish policy, which dictated a necessity for Turkey's participation in the major international organizations of the West, including the European Union. Subsequently this objective also corresponded to the needs of the country's political and economic development while during the 90s the European Union

seemed like an island of stability in a rapidly changing world. But to accomplish this objective Turkey should carry out dramatic changes in all spheres of public life to match the *acquis communautaire*. In this context, Turkey has made radical changes in many areas, especially regarding the role of the military in political life and has dramatically improved its economic performance. That said, Turkey is still quite far from full EU membership, firstly because of its rapid population growth, and secondly because of the large deficit that it has regarding its policy in the field of individual and political rights, minority rights etc. Moreover, in the field of foreign policy, Ankara is in a very weak position by refusing to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, already a member of the European Union, and pursuing a policy that is far from the policy of good neighborhood towards Greece.

For its part Çiğdem Üstün (*Analysis of Turkey's Relations with the EU and the U.S. in the light of the Arab Revolts 2011*) analyzes the European route of Turkey and the relations between Ankara and Washington in the light of the Arab revolts, from which have emerged Islamic forces which claim to follow the Turkish political model. Çiğdem Üstün therefore deals with relations between Turkey and the two western poles, the United States and the European Union, which are at the same time strategic allies for Ankara. Since the founding of the modern Turkish state, Ankara under the influence of Kemalism has pursued a pro-Western policy abandoning its immediate Middle Eastern milieu. That said, Ankara had to face the regional turmoil and act politically and diplomatically. Therefore, Turkey has sought to harmonize its policies with those of its Western partners and to reconcile itself sometimes with conflicting interests. Çiğdem Üstün's analysis also includes the policy of Turkey towards the Arab revolts that have profoundly changed the political and strategic data in the Middle East and North Africa which have in turn endangered the economic and political Turkish interests.

The contributions that follow focus on Turkey's Middle Eastern policy. First Gencer Özcan (*Turkish-Israeli Relations in Crisis: Living with the Gordian knot*) examines the deep and open crisis that characterizes relations between Turkey and Israel, relations essentially triangular, since the alliance between Ankara and Tel Aviv did not serve only the interests of both countries but also the strategic interests of Washington. Gencer Özcan, therefore, deals with relations between Turkey and Israel, special privileged relationship until 2009 but which has since gone from bad to worse. The Turkish-Israeli relations have indeed hit their nadir on May 31, 2010, when Israeli forces attacked the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara*, which was part of the international fleet aiming to break the embargo imposed by Israel on Gaza. The main idea developed

in this paper is that during the '90s Turkey's relations with Israel were seen as a matter pertaining exclusively to the field of Turkish foreign policy. However, over the next decade, and especially since 2009, the Turkish-Israeli relations are heavily influenced by developments in Turkey's own domestic politics and they have rather become an issue of Turkish domestic politics. In this context, and as Israel persists in not formally presenting its apologies to the Turkish government for the bloody attack against the ship *Mavi Marmara*, it is very unlikely that relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv will improve. The disruption caused to the strategic balance in the Middle Eastern Arab revolts, growing regional insecurity, particularly after the departure of U.S. forces from Iraq, are important factors that require both countries to reconsider their attitude and to resume their military collaboration. That said, as the question of relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv continue to be designed as an issue of Turkish domestic politics, such a reconciliation will not be found.

Gulden Ayman (*Regional Aspirations and Limits of Power: Turkish-Iranian Relations in the New Middle East*) analyzes the Iranian-Turkish relations and the contradictions arising both towards Turkey's relations with its Western allies, especially the United States, as compared to its relations with the Gulf states, which feel threatened by the regime in Tehran.

Ioannis Grigoriadis (*Matching Ambitions with Realities: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*) seeks to define the new Middle East policy of Turkey by analyzing the benefits available to it and the problems it has faced. Grigoriadis analyzes the new foreign policy of Turkey, as the result of a double shift. The first change concerns the political balance inside the country, marked by access to power of an Islamic party, the AKP, which means that Ankara's foreign policy is deeply influenced by the strategic approach of the pivotal position of the country formulated by the Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu. Subsequently, the new Turkish foreign policy reflects the changes made to the report of regional forces. Grigoriadis observes that while it is true that Turkish foreign policy had already shown signs of a change in direction, yet it is only under the AKP government that the Middle East policy of Turkey has radically changed. Ankara has dramatically improved its relations with Iran and most Arab countries, while its relations with Israel have deteriorated dramatically. Such a change certainly reflects the new strategic framework currently prevailing in the Middle East and Turkey's ambition to play the role of a major regional power, especially since no other country in the region is in a position to claim such a hegemony. Indeed, Ankara's foreign policy, reinforced by a major economic development which made Turkey a member of the G-20, seeks to join the club of emerging middle powers. Having said this, such an

attitude could undermine the whole structure of Turkey's foreign policy and possibly alienate its strategic relations with the West.

Vivi Kefala, (*Turkey, the Middle East and the Arab revolts*) seeks to assess the Middle East policies of Turkey and the impact of Arab revolts on it. The basic idea of her contribution is that Turkey under the AKP, for domestic political reasons but also under the weight of regional and international changes, outlined a new all azimuths foreign policy while arguing geostrategic and geoeconomic position. Without abandoning its Western allies and its prospects for joining the European Union, Ankara turns to the Arab-Muslim world trying to get a hegemonic position or become the cultural center of this set according to the old Ottoman model. This is an ambitious project whose success would give Turkey a unique weight to every point of view. The success of such a project remains uncertain, despite the fact that early Arab revolts seemed feasible because of the Islamist forces that emerged, which were proclaiming themselves as representatives of the model of Turkey and the AKP. Furthermore, with the latest evolutions in this region it is unlikely that the new Middle East policy of Turkey could reconcile its own contradictions and overcome the mistrust of Arab countries towards it, which have their own priorities and that have no interest in helping Turkey to become a regional hub, even to their detriment. Consequently, it is not certain that the Middle East policy of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is to meet its ambitions while it is reinforced with a large political audience inside his country but also within the Arab world and by a strong economic progress.

I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the Aegean for wanting to contribute to this special issue and therefore participate in an informal but essential discussion, on the future of Turkey, in a changing country, in a changing world.

Turkish External Orientation and Political Culture

Christodoulos K. Yiallourides*

Afendoulis Th. Langides**

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article s'attache aux défis auxquels la République turque est confrontée, les plus graves depuis son existence post-ottomane. En termes de culture politique la Turquie semble naviguer entre l'Occident et l'Asie, entre un Etat laïc et l'Islam. Le système politique montre des signes d'oscillation entre l'Islam et l'Europe, ce qui soulève des doutes sur les grandes orientations stratégiques établies par Mustafa Kemal et ses successeurs. La politique étrangère «néo-ottomane» ne peut pas être séparée de la forte influence de l'islam sur le plan interne. La politique de "zéro problèmes " à l'égard de son environnement immédiat, signifie qu'il faut mettre l'accent sur les problèmes avec les pays voisins, comme la Syrie, l'Iran et la Grèce ; cette politique inspirée par Ahmet Davutoğlu, un ancien universitaire et actuel ministre des affaires Étrangères semblait au départ prometteuse et devait porter ses fruits. Ce n'est plus le cas aujourd'hui et la Turquie doit se défendre contre les prétentions selon lesquelles celle-ci est , dans son essence, une politique néo-ottomane de domination régionale.

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the challenges the Turkish Republic is facing, the most severe to its post-Ottoman existence. In terms of political culture Turkey appears to be dithering between the West and Asia, between a secular state and Islam. The political system is showing signs of vacillating between Islam and Europe, raising doubts about the main strategic directions established by Mustafa Kemal and his successors. In terms of foreign policy a "Neo-Ottoman" foreign policy could not possibly be separated from the strong influence of Islam internally. A "zero problem" policy towards its immediate environment, which means de-emphasizing problems with surrounding countries, such as Syria, Iran, and Greece, inspired by Ahmet Davutoğlu, a former academic and the present foreign minister of the Turkish republic, initially seemed promising and bearing fruits. This is not any more the case and Turkey has to defend itself against the claims that in its essence, it's a Neo-Ottoman policy of regional domination.

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Introduction

Eighty-seven years after its foundation, the Turkish Republic is facing perhaps the most severe challenge to its post-Ottoman existence. The Turkish elite has begun to feel insecure and uncertain about the country's orientation and the direction it should be following.

The basic structure and main institutions of the state edifice today are being questioned. These had risen from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922, the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 and, most of all, cultural, social and political revolution of Mustafa Kemal (so-called Atatürk), to which the neo-Turkish state became irrevocably attached¹. Turkey now appears to be dithering between the West and Asia, between a secular state and Islam. The course of Kemal's state, which for decades assumed a decidedly statist garb, and, since 1947, an unequivocally pro-western strategy as regards its security and foreign policy, is no longer stable. The political system is showing signs of vacillating between Islam and Europe, raising doubts about the main strategic directions established by Mustafa Kemal and his successors.² Since the Islamist, Necmetin Erbakan became prime minister in June 1996, the country entered a period of crisis of uncertain duration and resolution. The results of the elections of November 2002 appear to have contributed to this crisis.

Uncertainty and insecurity with regard to the direction or external orientation of the state are not new to Turkey. This has been an ongoing theme in the country's foreign relations over the last half century. Due to the crisis in Cyprus, national interests dictated a tactical change or adjustment in Turkey's commitment to the West. Its leaders decided to make an opening to the Soviets, along with a turn towards the Arab and Islamic world in 1964.³ Later, during the seventies, Bulent Ecevit attempted to change Turkey's security perceptions and to widen the arena for its foreign policy. Internal unrest, which drove the country close to disintegration and the indirect, albeit succinct, changing trends in Turkey's security policy, once again in the name of Kemal Atatürk, led to the coup d'Etat of September 12, 1980. This military intervention, as with the previous ones of 1960 and 1971, was legitimized by reference to Kemal Atatürk's principles, i.e. the preservation of the secular, western-oriented Turkish state⁴. Today, however, the quandaries and anxieties about the situation are profound, and one might say not unreasonably so. The crisis of the Turkish political system, i.e. of Kemalism, is deep, complex and possibly incurable. For many, Kemalism has ceased to exist long ago as a social reality and philosophy⁵ and simply existed for the purpose of political and ideological legitimation by those in power. What we

have is an expression of divergence between East and West⁶, between Asiatic and European social behavior, between eastern and western development modes, while at the same time, there is a conflict between the European secular political and the Islamic theocratic cultures.

Until now the creation of the great founder has shown a unique ability to endure, to survive and to adapt to new conditions, despite the internal contradictions and conflicts, and despite external pressures and problems of the regional milieu.

To the founder of the Turkish Republic, Islam represented a backward concept, both as a form of social behavior and as an ideology.⁷

Western and European Aspirations and Affiliations

Europe represented for Turkey, according to Kemal, a civic and cultural measure of strategic importance; a political partner and a paradigm of economic success, which “ought to have been a model and an example for Turkey.”⁸ In the framework of this concept, Kemal attempted to westernize Turkish society in the cultural, social and economic sectors (where many established norms were in fact overturned), as well as to establish new institutions. At the political level however, he ruled in a rather autocratic way. After his death, and especially after the Second World War, a Turkish style democracy was set up.⁹ A democracy of this kind could never be identified with modern western-style democracies, since it was not founded on the principles of civil society, which are at the core of the democratic system. The Turkish Republic, moreover, has for over eighty years existed under the guardianship of the military, a kind of political hostage. The latter intervened when it decided that the unity of the state or its secular foundations were threatened, and justified its action in terms of a defense of Kemalism and of the survival of Kemal’s legacy, as well as of the unity of the state.¹⁰ The military thus have enjoyed to this day the political and institutional framework of legitimacy to intervene in a corrective or “remedial” role, nullifying even the constitution.

Turkish foreign policy during the first period of the Kemalist rule was oriented towards independence and neutrality. It was transformed, after the Second World War and in the environment and conditions of the Cold War, into an instrument of Western strategic and political security and formed a part of the comprehensive Nuclear Deterrence Strategy opposing the Soviet Empire. Turkey fully and freely acceded to the foreign policy of the West and the strategic perceptions of NATO from the first years after the Second

World War until the first major Greek-Turkish crisis over Cyprus, in 1964. Turkey's incorporation into the western fold was in harmony with Turkish interests, not only as these emerged after the Second World War, but also with Kemal's proscription for the political and cultural orientation of the Turkish political system.

As Kemal used to say, Turkey, as part of the West, feels safe in an area of stability, power and above all progress. This, as opposed to fundamentalist Islam, which breeds instability, uncertainty, and above all backwardness, elements which bring to the surface traumatic experiences of the Turkish elite and hark back to the Ottoman Empire and its late period of disintegration.¹¹

It is clear that the perceptions of the Turkish elite on the full and institutional integration of their nation into the European Union has as its justification the need politically and institutionally to ensure the survival of the secular, western-oriented Turkish state. This means that the Turkish national, homogeneous state today depends for its survival on advancing its institutional integration into Europe.¹²

For the Turkish elite, Europe and the accession to the European Union is to be taken for granted, as are the expected economic and political advantages, quite apart from questions relating to the interpretation of the real will of Kemal Ataturk. Furthermore, the Turkish leadership class sustains the notion and hope that its European accession also stands to influence Turkey positively with regard to cultural values and identity. The political leadership does not appear to have examined in depth the possible negative effects, on a number of levels, not only the social and economic, but also the domestic political, of a complete, or nearly complete, accession to the European Union.

The collapse of the Soviet Union spelled the end of the strategic clash between East and West, at the same time, bringing about a historic, stunning change of scenery in the wider region, pregnant with a series of major strategic challenges for Turkey's foreign policy.¹³

Turkey felt that its role, along with its ability to influence events, extends from the Adriatic and the Black Sea to the Long Wall of China. This carried the sense of a historic challenge to Turkey, and its efforts to become a great regional power or even play a hegemonic role over a wider fluid and unstable area.¹⁴

This hegemonic role that Turkey would like to play, conflicts with the great and to a certain degree impenetrable, domestic problems the country is facing. The disputes or conflicts witnessed in the Kurdish problem present Europe with a problematic and politically troubled image of Turkey, and represent an obstacle for its political legitimization as a European country.¹⁵ Islam on

the other hand, expressing another dimension of the crisis, also presents a potential of disorder, and creates the perception of a country in the grip of potential instability.

The AKP Period. A New Paradigm

The revival of Neo Ottoman ideas as expressed by Ahmet Davutoğlu harks back to the ideological discussions and arguments that began at the end of that century, continued with the Young Turk revolution, until the emergence of Kemal, i.e. to the founding of the modern Turkish state.

For this reason the Turks use the term “contiguous external region,” (which is reminding of Boris Yeltsin’s remarks on the role of the Russian Confederation in its own contiguous external region) or even “strategic depth”, in other words, its zone of control or sovereignty or even strong cultural and historical ties over not only the regions of the former Soviet Union but all along the territories that once belonged to the Ottoman Empire.

A “Neo-Ottoman” foreign policy could not possibly be separated from the strong influence of Islam internally. This of course is not only limited to the increasing strength of the Justice and Development Party. The process of Islamization has gripped a wide segment of the population, including party activists and sympathizers. This trend became particularly enhanced among certain social strata during the 90s as well as into the first decade of the 21st century.

It is obvious that a conflict is in progress between Secularists and Islamists that will have an impact on the fate of the very structure of the state, while at the same time, the old differences between Alevis and Sunnis also are being revived.¹⁶ The tide for the moment seems to have changed in favour of Political Islam, but the balance between the regime established by the A.K.P. after 2002, can, at any time change back, especially since the meteoric rise of the “Islam-Democrats” was to a very large extent, based on the charismatic personality of it’s leader, today’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

It is corruption across the largest part of the political spectrum of Turkey, along with the debilitating economic crisis of 1999-2000 that led to the landslide victory of the Justice and Development Party, in November 2002 and the virtual extinction of the traditional political formations and figures, since then.

The eighty seven year old Turkish state has, on a number of occasions, faced the dilemma between democracy and transformation of the regime on one hand, and preservation of the Kemalist status quo on the other. Every time

there arose doubt about the Kemalist creed, the military, as guardians of the principles and the heritage of Kemal, intervened to readjust or to redress the situation, forcing at times, as in 1960 and 1980, major constitutional-civic changes.¹⁷

What is important is that Turkey has managed to convince the international community that it is in a position to play effectively multiple roles as a hegemonic factor of stability in the unstable, fluid and geopolitically critical zone of the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus but lately also of the Islamic World at large.¹⁸

The conflict between the forces of the Kemalists and the Islamists climaxed, reaching dangerously tense levels, since the military and its leadership began to express concern over the fate of the secular state regime in various ways.¹⁹ Furthermore, the Kemalist political parties, such as they are, and the Western-oriented elite are seriously alarmed about the possibility of a structural transformation of the state, or some form of military comeback. This would cause great problems to the country's foreign relations, leading it at least to a temporary isolation of relations with Europe and unpredictable internal developments.²⁰ The military, which during the last fifty years have intervened three times in the political affairs of the "Turkish Republic" as a guardian of the principles of Kemal Atatürk and of the structure of the Turkish state itself, found its patience taxed. While contemplating a repetition of its old "modernizing" interventions, the military not only orchestrated a post-modern electronic coup and set down groups or plans, like "Ergenekon" and "Balyoz", but also have led to radical changes in the political system and the country's international standing. It appears however that, for the present, the military has chosen not to depart from constitutional or parliamentary norms.

It prefers to seek political solutions to the quandaries resulting from Kemalism and the Islamic turn taken by much of authority in Turkey, through manipulation and close supervision of the political system.²¹ Such was the case in the past, with the "solution" sought by the famous National Security Council Memorandum issued on February 28, 1997, which the Erbakan government was forced to accept in principle before being outlawed in January 1998.²²

This, however was not the case since 2002, when gradually but steadily, based on the substantial percentages it managed to gain in the subsequent elections, both Parliamentary and Municipal, the Islamic "Justice and Development Party", under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, achieved to confront the Military, and the rest of the Kemalist bureaucracy successfully, by way of infiltrating the structures of the state, and by "leaking" to the public all the military misgivings.

Thus, the Turkish Republic has come to a point, where a seemingly unchallenged government composed by politicians, considered to be the outcasts by previous standards, feels strong enough to detain and imprison a large number of former and acting military officials, on charges of trying to subvert a legally elected government, and of constituting what is widely known to be the “Deep State” within the State. Benefiting also from a steady upward trend in the economy, the AKP government has succeeded to muffle almost any opposing political party in the Turkish Parliament, a fact augmented by the lack of serious opposition leadership.

In terms of Turkey’s external orientation, much has happened since 2002. The AKP government, initially integrated into its program pro-European rhetoric, thus posing as a pro-European, political party, set to be the champion of human rights and promising the restoration of a state of righteousness and justice. Within a decade Turkey has found more supporters of its case within the E.U., some of them stemming from the newer member states. On the other hand, the shifting of political balance within large European states, such as France and Germany, deprived the Turkish European membership campaign of its most advent supporters. Proposals such as the “Mediterranean Union”, after 2007, were dealt with anger by the Turkish political leadership, which saw in these proposals, some measure of political scheming against an outright legitimate Turkish claim.

Regarding Turkey’s relations with the West in general, the Turkish denial to the American request of 2003 to open a “northern front” against Iraq, has set a new trend in the relationship between the two parts, heavily influenced, by the deterioration of the Turkish-Israeli relationship, from 2009 on. A “zero problem” policy towards its immediate environment, which means de-emphasizing problems with surrounding countries, such as Syria, Iran, and Greece, inspired by Ahmet Davutoğlu, a former academic and the present foreign minister of the Turkish republic, initially seemed promising and bearing fruits, projecting Turkey into a position of leadership within the region, but the recent changes in the Arab World, the West’s confrontational stance against Iran, and of course the fact that Turkey has not moved back an inch in its claims towards Greece and Cyprus, have outlined the febleness and weaknesses of such a policy, which has to defend itself against the claims that in its essence, it’s a Neo-Ottoman policy of regional domination.

Turkey’s crisis regarding its orientation and strategic direction is furthermore worsened and burdened by the refusal of the European states to recognize its “European status.” In other words, they refuse to accept the philosophical-cultural and political-economic place of Turkey within the

European entity, or to confirm its course to join it.²³ The stance of the Europeans vis-à-vis Turkey, with regard to its course towards joining Europe, is clouded and confused, since many members consider Turkey, economically and geo-strategically an integral part of Europe, but still feel equally concerned about the accession of a Muslim state into the European Union.²⁴

NOTES

1. R. Robins, "The Kurdish Factor-The Overload State," *International Affairs* vol. 69, no. 4 (October 1993): 657-676. Also, A. Kourkoulas, "Turkey Today" (in Greek), *Kathimerini*, December 28, 1996, 3.
2. *Financial Times*, May 2, 1995. Also, A. Kourkoulas, "Turkey Collapsing" (in Greek), *Kathimerini*, December 1, 1996.
3. F. Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy 1950-1975* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), 403-411, 413-416, 421-424.
4. W. Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994), 215-241.
5. A. Paresoglou, "The Turkish Political System," in *Turkey Today* (Athens: Papazisis-ELIAMEP, 1995) 104-109.
6. A. Mango, *Turkey: The Challenge of a New Role* (The Washington Papers) (London: Praeger, 1994), 1-4.
7. Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, 363-365.
8. Stephanos Pesmatzoglou, *Europe-Turkey. Reflections and Deflections. The Strategy of Texts* (in Greek), (Athens: Themelio, 1993), 194-196.
9. Neocles Sarres, *Foreign Policy and Political Developments During the First Turkish Republic* (in Greek) (Athens: Gordios, 1992), 41.
10. Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy*, 407-411.
11. Pesmatzoglou, *op. cit.*, *Europe-Turkey*, 101-155.
12. However, the large majority of Greek and foreign analysts maintains that, "Turkey, is not willing to make even minor concessions either in the field of internal democratization, or in the field of Greek-Turkish differences". See G. Kapopoulos, "The European Realism of Ankara" (in Greek), *Kathimerini*, July 12, 1998.
13. Mango, *op. cit.*, *Turkey: The Challenge of a New Role*, 94-109.
14. *Ibid*, 111-121.
15. Pesmatzoglou, *op. cit.*, *Europe-Turkey*, 80-89.

16. Pesmatzoglou, *op. cit.*, *Europe-Turkey*, 215-230. For a more up to date and detailed analysis of the Alevi issue see: Theodoros Tsakiris, *The Third Controlling Factor. Identity, Deflections and Development Potential of the Alewite Phenomenon in Modern Turkey* (in Greek) (Athens: EKOME, 1998).
17. Mehmet Ali Birand, *At Your Orders, Commander* (in Greek) (Athens: Floras, 1992), 335-337.
18. M. E. Ahrari, "The dynamics of the new great game in Muslim Central Asia," in *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 13 no. 4 (1994), 525-539.
19. H. Pope, "Turkey's Military Flexing its Muscle, Voices Concerns on Islamists, Greece," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 1997.
20. A letter by Suleyman Demirel, president of the Turkish Republic, to Prime Minister Necmetin Erbakan expresses, in a terse and succinct manner, concerns and fears over the emergence of "radical-retrograde tendencies" and warns him against allowing further erosion or change in fundamental Kemalist principles, on which is based the "Democratic, Popular and Social State of Justice," *Hurriyet*, February 28, 1997, 1. In the same context, the National Security Council of Turkey, in a special session held on February 28, 1997 and following long hours of deliberation with Erbakan, issued a twenty point memorandum, in which, among other admonitions, it was emphasized that "no deviation from the Turkish state's modern principles will be tolerated from now on." The famous Memorandum of the Security Council included a full paragraph on how important it is for Turkey to put an end to concepts, which "place in doubt its democratic status and tarnish its image abroad." See details of the twenty point Memorandum of the National Security Council, in *Hurriyet*, March 2, 1997, as well as in *The Wall Street Journal* (Europe), March 9, 1997.
21. *The Wall Street Journal* (Europe), March 9, 1997.
22. Sami Kohen, *Milliyet*, March 2, 1997.
23. *Kathimerini*, March 2, 1997, p. 6.
24. Celestine Bohlen, "Fragile Mosaic: In a Search for 'Turkishness', Turks Reveal Their Diversity," *The New York Times*, May 18, 1996.

Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Dilemma and Objections

Mersilia Anastasiadou*

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article mettra l'accent sur la relation entre l'Union européenne et la Turquie dans ses dimensions historiques, institutionnelles et politiques. La Turquie se qualifie comme un État sui generis par rapport aux États européens et occidentaux en raison des différences dans ses institutions sociales et sa culture politique. Il y a un déficit en matière de démocratisation et de primauté du droit. L'armée avait jusqu'à très récemment un rôle dominant dans le système politique. Il y a une interdépendance entre les développements politiques internes et le rôle auquel la Turquie aspire dans les affaires internationales, ce qui semble influencer sur son avenir européen. L'UE a fixé certains critères que la Turquie doit respecter, notamment en ce qui concerne la nécessité de symbiose pacifique, le respect du droit international et les règles en ce qui concerne la Grèce et Chypre et aussi, la démocratisation du système politique. Ce sont les conditions évidentes pour devenir membre et adhérer de façon définitive à l'Union européenne. Il y a aussi des craintes implicites dans les pays européens, principalement en Allemagne et en France, concernant la taille de la Turquie et sa démographie, ainsi que la légalisation du mouvement migratoire de masse dans l'éventualité où ce pays devrait faire partie de l'UE.

ABSTRACT

This paper will focus upon the relationship between the European Union and Turkey in its historical, institutional and political dimensions. Turkey qualifies as a sui generis state when compared to the European and Western states because of the differences in its social institutions and political culture. There is a deficit regarding democratization and rule of law. The army had until very recently a dominant role in the political system. There is an interdependence between internal political developments and the role that Turkey is projecting in international affairs, which appears to influence its European future as well. The EU has laid down certain criteria which Turkey has to abide by, particularly as they relate to necessity for peaceful symbiosis, respect of international law and rules that concern Greece and Cyprus and also, the changes in the political system concerning democratization. These are the obvious conditions for the membership and final accession to the EU. There are also implicit fears in the European Countries, mainly in Germany and France, concerning Turkey's size and demography and the legalization of the mass migration movement should it become part of the EU.

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1. Introduction:

Germany and France have principal institutional objections regarding Turkey's accession into the European Union, on the grounds that any country interested in joining the E.U. should unconditionally harmonize with E.U. values and principles and the *acquis communautaire*, effectively uphold fundamental principles, such as the rule of law, democracy, respect of international humanitarian law, the human rights declarations, minority rights, political asylum rights and civil liberties (Theophanous, 2008: 205 and Jovanovic, 2008: 123).

Democratic political stability and financial restructuring, the modernization of public administration and regulation of social and economic competition policies, constitute additional basic requirements (Joseph, 2006: 5-6). These are generally regarded among EU institutions and member states to constitute the foundations of democratic and sound political institutions and of a competitively functioning free market economy and as such, determined the institutional framework, of French and German objections, requirements or conditions to Turkey's EU accession.

Another key issue whose significance can hardly be exaggerated, and one of grave concern, mainly for Germany and France but also for other EU member-states, is demography: the high rate of population growth in Turkey (Chislett, 2008: 73) and the mass migration movement of the Turkish labour force, and its implications for the future national identity of individual E.U. countries, as well as for the internal EU political balance and decision-making process.

The former Social democrat German chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, depicted these concerns in his book "Germany after the Cold War and Europe", stressing that they are embedded in Franco-German political culture. Regarding the first issue of the rapid Turkish population growth, he maintains that it is or could soon become "threatening" to EU national and community balances. Simply put, Turkey is not any accession state candidate, but one which could become the largest state within the E.U. In 2050, Turkey will probably have twice the population of Germany and France combined (Schmidt, 1997: 266-267).

As a result, the voting power (that is based on the member country's population) of Turkey in various E.U. institutions, like the European Parliament, will be substantially larger than that of Germany and France, and thus, Turkey will be able to greatly influence and in some cases control or determine the decision making mechanisms of the E.U. (Güney, 2005: 314).

Currently Germany and France are the countries with the greater voting power within the EU.

The second substantial fear of the German and French elites and indeed the public at large, concerns the crucial issue of free movement of workers and other social groups between E.U. members (*Today's Zaman*, 21/11/2008). If Turkey joins the E.U., millions more of Turkish workers would be able to freely move into European cities. Free movement of labour is a defining characteristic of integration, an EU right and privilege from which no member country could be excluded from, via national and permanent derogations.

However, given the sheer size of Turkey, according to some EU officials (*Hurriyet*), the right of free movement for Turkish citizens could pose major additional problems for the national identity and social and cultural cohesion of EU member states, something that is outright undesirable to both their governments and public opinion.

The last concern of Germany and France concerns the relationship between Turkish civilization and European civilization. Could Islam become a pillar of European culture? Can the Ottoman heritage, be reconciled and integrated in European affairs? These are fundamental and difficult questions on European identity and future, which cannot be easily brushed aside with simplistic stereotypes and anything but problem-free ideological schemas of "multiculturalism", and which, consequently, continue to cause concern and controversy among politicians and intellectuals of practically the entire ideological spectrum all around Europe.

Equally crucial to Turkey's bid to join the EU, are the attitudes and policies of Greece (and, since its 2004 accession, of Cyprus too) (*Ifantis*, 2004: 263-265). Analyses of the position of Greece, often distinguish its strategic from its tactical aspects and point out that it was primarily on the tactical level that this position evolved in two broadly distinguishable periods or phases.

During the first period of EU membership, following its 1980 accession, Greece was firmly opposed to any prospect of Turkey's accession, because of the Turkish invasion in Cyprus (1974), the multiplying Turkish claims against Greek sovereignty and rights over the Aegean, which led the two countries to the brink of war in at least three occasions (the 1976, 1987 and 1996 crises) and the rivalry with Turkey for regional influence in the Balkans (*Brewin*, 2000: 114-115).

Overall, and at the risk of oversimplification, EU membership gave Greece a major comparative political advantage that balanced Turkey's military supremacy, whose clearest manifestation has been the continuing to date,

illegal occupation of well over a third of the territory of the State of Cyprus (the Republic of Cyprus) (Guerot, 2008: 165) and the permanent maintenance of a massive and heavily armed military force of well over 40.000 troops (The Economist, 19/4/2010) enjoying decisive support by the near-by based Turkish air force and reinforced by systemic Turkish colonization of the occupied area of the island.

The repeated Greek blockage of attempts to open the way for Turkey's EU accession, with continuing Turkish aggression remaining intact was maintained from 1980 to 1999, although a certain policy adjustment took place in March 1995, when Greece lifted a veto on Turkey's EU Custom Union in exchange for securing a firm timetable for the commencement of Cyprus' EU accession negotiations in 1998 (Christou, 2004: 132).

As these negotiations were advancing the point of successful completion, in December 1999, at the Helsinki Summit, Greece, without changing in essence its strategy, agreed at the tactical level with Turkey's candidacy status for EU accession, which included an "enhanced political dialogue, with emphasis on progressing towards fulfilling the political criteria for accession" (Helsinki European Council, 10-11/12/2009).

Two main political reasons led to this further adjustment of Greek strategy. In the first place, the Greek government realized that the refusal of the European powers to allow Turkey become an E.U. member, was mainly structural in nature, related to strategic concerns. In this context, Athens had no real reason of its own to want to be held responsible by other member states for standing in the way of Turkish membership (Kazamias, 2006: 138-149).

Moreover, Greece, by agreeing to Turkey's E.U. accession "candidacy", secured full and unconditional EU accession for the Republic of Cyprus (Kazamias, 2006: 138-149). Until 1999, the accession of Cyprus, was considered uncertain, not because Cyprus did not satisfy EU accession criteria, but because of the problem of the continuing Turkish occupation of part of the island republic (Christou, 2004: 86-87).

In 1999, Greece succeeded in making all its EU partners agree that Cyprus' EU future would no longer be held hostage of Turkish aggression, especially since successive Cypriot governments, with Greece's support, were committed to a peaceful UN-led negotiated settlement of the Cyprus problem, as the only way to terminate the Turkish occupation.

In short, the 1999 adjustment of the policy of Greece vis-à-vis the question of Turkey's EU accession was determined by realist considerations. Athens acknowledged and accepted a strategic Turkish objective or ambition, EU

accession, not as a national retreat but as a means to facilitate its own national policy objectives and future changes in Ankara's policies, in the context of their harmonization with EU values and principles.

2. Turkey's historical route to Europe

Turkey, in its Ottoman tradition, has been perceiving the West, as a destination of a long geopolitical journey, from central Asia to Constantinople and Europe. The Ottoman empire had a "special relationship", of great power competition to Western states, especially Great Britain ("the Eastern Question" (Polar, 1995: 10-16 and Wheatcroft, 1994: 133-197)) but continued to look up to the West and Europe, as an anchor of stability and prosperity, that was the main reason of the military route to Europe.

After 1648, when its armies were stopped outside Vienna, the Ottoman Empire experienced a protracted process that eventually came down to its dissolution. The peak point, in political terms, was the period of "Tanzimat" (1838-1866), (Caha, 2008: 86). The essential development of the Turkish route to Europe was the foundation of the Turkish Republic (Rocthus, 2008: 27-28).

Kemal Attaturk was strongly convinced that Turkey should become an integral part of European and western political culture (Saribay, 1986). To that end, he established revolutionary new Turkish political, social and cultural structures. He believed and declared that Islam had no place in the New Turkey of prosperity and progress (Caha, 2008: 87). His beliefs and principles were upheld by all the Turkish governments after his death, and especially the leaderships from the early 1960s until the end of 1990.

In 1963, Turkey, closely watching and following Greece, applied for association membership to the European Economic Community, and this objective was achieved through the Ankara Agreement in 1964 (Brewin, 2000: 18). Full accession, was -and remains since- the ultimate objective, one that posed an identity problem of Turkey.

In the years that followed, the Greek-Turkish conflict, over Cyprus and also, increasingly, the Aegean, intensified, decisively influencing both states' efforts to strengthen their international position (Athanasopoulos, 2001: 96-97). Europe became a rivalry area, in which Turkey sought to catch-up and balance Greece's presence. Ankara's European route was halted several times, because of the constitutionally legitimated military interventions in Turkish politics. The 1972 and 1980 military coups were cases in point (Kotsovilis, 2006: 48).

On the other side of the Aegean, Greece succeeded in becoming a full EEC member-state, in 1980. In the late 1980s, the Turkish Ozal government emphasized its European orientation, but did not succeed in convincing the European Community to accept a Turkish candidacy for accession (Tibi, 1998: 5).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military and political elites of Turkey believed strongly that its loss of traditional geopolitical importance for NATO and the USA, through the neighborhood to the ex-imperium, could be recovered through its growing influence in central Asia. Turkish Prime Minister Ozal declared, in his book "Turkey and Europe", that Turkey aspired to become - and, also, to be internationally acknowledged as - a guiding model of western state and society to the new emerging states in the former Soviet Union, as well as to Middle Eastern states (Yiallourides and Langides, 2010: 151).

3. The position of Greece concerning the European orientation of Turkey

Reinforcing its national-state security, as a fundamental prerequisite of upgrading its overall international position, was as crucial a motive for Greece's EU accession, as were its domestic modernization and prosperity. *Vis-à-vis* Turkey, Greece used its EC/EU membership to bargain Turkey's candidacy status for a change of Turkish policy in Cyprus issue and the Aegean (Athanasopoulos, 2001: 96-97). For their part, other European states had an interest in pushing Greece to the front, to wash their own hands on the issue of Turkey's EC/EU orientation. Greece paid a cost for that, while at the same time failing to persuade Turkey to make concessions in Cyprus, an international problem of invasion and occupation, and/or the bilateral front, in main areas of the Greek-Turkish conflict.

One possible explanatory factor for Turkish intransigence - and, indeed, one of the main arguments against accepting Turkey's accession candidacy - was that Turkey was not a typical example of a western political system (Oguzlu, 2002: 59-63), in which internal social interests and demands and public opinion has considerable influence restricting the autonomy of the National Security Council military-dominated elite over foreign policy matters (Çalış, 2001: 53-75 and Robins, 1993: 657-676). In this, structural sense, of foreign policy "Black Box" (Hudson and Mershon, 1995: 209-238 and Singer, 1961: 77-92), Turkey was more similar to the former Soviet Union than to western states.

In the mid-late 1990s, the change of political leadership in Greece, led to a change of Greek approach and policy to the Turkish-EU question (Theodoropoulos, 1988: 9, 16, 338 and Ligeros, 2004: 4). This was a functional phenomenon, whereby leadership is the decisive policy variant. The New Greek leadership chose the 1999 Helsinki EU Summit as the new field of trying to persuade Turkey using new tactics and methodology in the art of political communication and dialogue and offering more carrot than stick (Churchill, 1951: 24) adopting the choice of acceptance the Turkish candidacy under the condition of the full membership of the Republic of Cyprus.

This was a double strategy of the twin Simitis-Papandreou, aspiring to resolve a zero sum game. On the one hand, Turkey was given the potential of a candidate for a future membership in the EU (Timmerman, Rohtus, Mels, 2008: 19). On the other, the full membership of Cyprus was secured.

4. The Helsinki Summit and the turn of Germany and France

Greece's great turn vis-a-vis Turkey, its acknowledgement of Turkey's European "candidacy", was instrumental in the two 'great powers' of the European Union, France and Germany's projection of their own reservations, for the first time officially, on this issue. These reservations concerned not the candidacy itself, but its context and duration. Every EU candidate country usually has a fixed time framework in which it should become member of the EU. France and Germany insisted that Turkey should be treated as an extraordinary case (Brewin, 2000: 18), with no time framework (Akcali, 2008: 53-54).

France and Germany, in different tones and with different arguments projected their position for a permanent postponement of Turkish accession, mostly because of the problems of Turkish integration in European societies, and of the question of the compatibility of western European values to those of the Ottoman, Islamic, Turkish society (Davutoğlu, 2008: 77-96 and Minagias, 2010: 36-40). This is a case underlining the vitality of cultural foundations in the theory and actual process of integration of structures and political systems. In this vein, President Sarkozy declared that the special role and position of Turkey is unique, at once outside and inside the EU. He initiated a special project, called "Mediterranean European project" (Bennhold, 10/5/2007 and Goldirova, 18/5/07 and Today's Zaman 12/7/2008), to accommodate Turkey and other non-EU Mediterranean countries, which may become the EU's "Near Abroad" (Yiallourides and Langides, 2010: 45).

5. The Dialectic Relationship between Fears, Expectations and Political Expediencies of the Great Powers and the Turkish Multifaceted Specificity

A central topic of discussion is the one concerning the progress of Turkey in its route to join the EU. That discussion is ultimately focused on the issue of European integration, the institutional framework and the program of Europe in its route to achieve the goal of political union and federation of the European political building. This requires social, economic and political convergence and integration of the parts of the European system into a unified sum of autonomous EU states.

The fears of Europeans, as mentioned before, consist of the size of Turkey and the diversity in accordance to the political philosophy of the structure of powers and the implementation of the democratic principle. Also, the socio-economic and cultural deficit of Turkey compared to Europe. For those reasons the reservations and concerns of the European political and institutional groups have increased, in reference to the road and the participation of Turkey to EU.

Until very lately it was a regular phenomenon in Turkey's political life to rely on the principles of Kemal Ataturk (Steinbach, 1996: 140-142 and Karpath, 1974: 176-208). Especially, the military circles used those principles in order to "legalise" in this way, diverse and multidimensional interventions to the Turkish political system (Yiallourides and Tsakonas, 2002: 13). In the past, it's been said that "Ataturk governs his country from the mausoleum" (Yiallourides and Langides, 2010: 115). It is no exaggeration to say that for many decades that phrase had a specific amount of correctness. Of course it is very difficult to analyze, how much truth lies on that phrase or how the principles of Ataturk influence the management of the country's social, political and economic life and in what degree. What is more interesting is the verification that proves that the modernization and democratization "never were in Turkey a single procedure" but, in contrary, divided into different levels and periods (Ronneberger, 1981).

The existing problems are economic and social. Already it seems that the European partners began to worry because of "the great population, the large size of the country and the great poverty", as the former president of the European Parliament, Josep Borrel, mentioned. The interesting point is that in the same, exact domains there are huge cultural, economic and social gaps. Many Turkish intellectuals remark that "Turkey is a huge Bangladesh with small districts/islets of Belgium, France, Netherlands and Italy" (Yiallourides and Langides, 2010: 13).

That gap also proves the conflicting and contradictory perspectives of those who fervently wish and strive for Turkey to join the EU. On the one hand, the holders of the Kemalist ideology and the hardened supporters of the west reforms, long standing opponents of the delay that Islam implies, and on the other hand the Kemalist themselves. The first believe that the Turkey's integration to the EU will inhibit the Islamism and strengthen the Atatürkist "secularistic" state. The others are of the opinion that the unobstructed implementation of the Islamic principles or the Islamic type of behavior that the Kemalist military-bureaucrats impedes, would be enabled in the name of the democracy and the protection of human rights that the EU expresses.

The trend currently prevailing in the EU is to place Turkey in a special status, opinion mainly and actively supported by Paris and Berlin. As referred in Turkey, the partners would like Turkey to become "a member which won't be exactly a member" (Manisali, 8/10/2004 and Arcayurek, 9/10/2004). For that reason the same EU member states always were suspicious to their country's road towards European integration, integration that they wouldn't be in the position to control. Those states by setting from the start their terms, would want the EU to admit that Turkey has a "specific character" that is inherent to its national independence. Some analysts have been to the point of seeing the Turkey's road towards the EU as a continuation of the Greek-Turkish war in 1920-1922 (Toker, 2003: 403).

The following report from media reports in the kemalist/western oriented Turkish media indicates the current concerns related to the Turkey's road to Europe:

...In the meantime, the EU will continue showing the bat under the overcoat: Place the Kurdish people in a minority status, recognize the Armenian massacre, give Cyprus to the Greeks, abandon Greeks in the Aegean, distinguish the Alevi community, call the Jewish, criticize the military leaders... (Som, 8/10/2004).

Atatürk did not let any alternative solution in the structure and orientation of the Turkish state, rather than that of Europe and the West. That was the choice of progress, a choice that for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a strategic one way road and could stand alone, without any other choices (Scharplipp, 1992: 13). Islam was for the founder of the Turkish Republic a retrograde step (Ahmad, 1977: 363-365) as a social behavior and as an ideological approach.

Today, the political Islam appears revolutionary pro-European, claiming a protagonist role in the country's European orientation as well as the overthrow of the Kemalist structure of power with an internal and international strategic

opening to Islam, choosing in that way the conflict with the “former regime”. Europe was for Turkey according to Atatürk’s perception, of a strategic significance cultural size, a political partner and an economic model of success that should become “a model for imitation for his country”, that is necessary to rise into “modern level of culture” (Pezmazoglou, 1993: 194-196).

Today, since Turkey is a candidate country, the views converge on the issue of setting a date for Turkey’s EU membership. The accession could be considered as just “a ten-year opaque mortgage in reference to the final positive outcome” for Turkey. It is common sense that “a new page opens for the history of Turkey. But also at the same time starts the main phase that would determine the Turkey’s fate” (Bila, 6/10/2004).

The question that emerges from the European perspective of Turkey focused not on the Turkey’s future form rather than on the shape of the European Union itself. It is widely known that only two possible versions could emerge. On the one hand the European Union would move towards a federal structure which is extremely difficult as is already proved by the unexpectedly negative outcome of referendums from the European people such as the French. On the other hand, the European Union would function in the framework of a fragile confederation orientation, a more political and economic alliance (Aktar, 2001) and less a Political Union. It is obvious that the US and the United Kingdom would wish the second version. (United Kingdom, as is said, sites less from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean than of the opposite coast of the Channel. The distance that separates United Kingdom from continental Europe is greater than that, which separates it from the US).

Turkey certainly expects the second development. It is not irrelevant the fact that the US insists Turkey to be included as a full member of the EU. As United Kingdom is situated in the one side and Turkey in the other, the US could feel safe that is not going to be created another pole that may challenge their global hegemony.

The decision of Helsinki is a perspective for Turkey. The historic goal of Turkey, from the last century until today, is linked with the willingness of the Turkish state to be part of a stable area and to acquire a European passport.

6. The Helsinki as the starting point of the EU-Turkey venture

Helsinki is not only a challenge for Turkey but also a vital issue. It is a challenge in the way of danger and not only of opportunity. The decision of

the Summit clears a very difficult way for those who wish to join the EU and especially for Turkish state's authoritarian structure. Turkey is a state which is considered a violator of Human Rights and Rule of Law (Selahattin, 1998: 85 and Zurcher, 2004: 402-409). The state, therefore, is not democratic and enters a phase in which it should prove in practice that it is transformed from an authoritarian to a democratic state (Kosebalaban, 2002: 130-136 and Bir, 2000: 30-32). A state, which complies with the European political culture.

The structures of the state could be reformed without a revolution, which means a procedure of internal adjustments and structural changes that may not necessarily be peaceful. Even if Turkey reaches the level of accession, it should recognize through its competent bodies and its institutional framework that a real and essential progress is necessary in its internal policy. Especially on the topic of Rule of Law, democratization of the parliamentary system, respect of human and minority rights, free, without constraint, universal function of the democratic principle. Turkey should walk a huge distance in order to show in practice some signs of European maturity.

The Helsinki Summit was undoubtedly a great Ankara's diplomatic success that ensured in a way that Turkey earned the desired "identity" of a potential European country. That diplomatic success, which was supported by many, would imply Turkey's automatic geostrategic upgrading to the status of the member of the western stability and security. The role and the involvement of Turkey increase because of the dangerous Middle East and increased essentially since the 11th of September 2001.

That analysis is however, misleading. In actual fact, the tactic benefit for Turkey is almost forfeit by its intense dispute with Union on the topic of NATO-"European army" during 2000-2002. The substance of the matter lies on the implementation of the Copenhagen criteria (1993). According to the estimation of the French top diplomat and historian, Eric Rouleau "implies the substantial decomposition of the Turkish state system" (Rouleau, 2000: 102).

The confrontation between Turkey and the European Union -France had a protagonist role - in reference to the "availability" of the NATO's force for KEPPA (Udum, 2002: 87-97), showed to the Franco-German core/axis that if Turkey joins the EU it would behave as a second and also loyal Albion sided with the US. By this it means that Turkey would internally prohibit the diplomatic and defensive emancipation of the EU.

Ankara did not hesitate to destroy twice, in December 2000 and in November 2001, the integration of the completion of the EU-NATO negotiations. It requested to participate -and indeed with the right of veto- in

the decision making process of the European Council, related to the EU's mission of Rapid Reaction Force (RRF). Turkey also demanded to exercise the same rights as a member state of the EU in any case concerning the function of KEPPA. The EU wasn't at all pleased with that demand and wasn't prepared to accept or satisfy it (Udum, 2002: 87-97).

The Commission of the EU, according to the report dated October 6th, 2004 (Council of the European Union, 21/9/2005) and the Council Conclusions on 11th December 2006 (Council Conclusions 11/12/2006), at first gave the green light to Turkey for the start of accession negotiations to the EU and the mark out of a long and rocky road of Turkey, for the route which will lead to the final accession.

A variety of terms and conditions are set in the report, Turkey should comply with most of them, in order eventually to integrate the European family. The most striking part of that report is that for the first time in the history of the Union, it is alleged a strong possibility of discontinuation or non-completion of the negotiation process. At first glance it means that the EU cannot be ascertained that Turkey is capable of proceeding to those deep and extremely difficult for its political system, structural changes which would transform the kemalist state and convert it into a democratic state governed by law, according to the European standards.

The report expects from Turkey fundamental and radical changes in the political system, concerning the human rights and the personal freedom. Also it demands a change in the wider social and political institutions, the function of democracy, the economic modernization and the rural economy (more than half of the country's population is engaged in agriculture), the wider system of law but also in more specific topics of foreign policy concerning the neighbor countries like Greece and Turkey (Imbros, Ecumenical Patriarchate, reopening of the theological academy on the island of Halki, solution to the Cyprus problem) (Council Conclusions 11/12/2006).

It is clear and transparent not only from the report but also from the declarations of the European politicians that the European wish to promote, having exhausted all possible options that derive from the legal system, the institutional and legal culture of Europe, to "impede" to the highest possible level the accession road and mainly the final accession of Turkey's to the EU. Many of them deeply wish to be aligned with the German Christian Democrats who insist to a strong NO in Turkey's accession and a forceful YES to the special privileged partnership between Turkey - EU (The Economist, 21/10/2010).

The Europeans are not afraid of Turkey just because it is a Muslim state or a violator of human rights and freedoms but above all because Turkey is an emerging population giant that could continue growing rapidly and may eventually be the most powerful and dominant factor of the EU.

After the finalization of the route and the accession framework of Turkey at the Hague Summit in December 2004, a game of strategic confrontation between the Europeans and Turkey is being played. A virtual reality appears presenting the Europeans wishing Turkey to join the EU. The reality yet is totally different. The Europeans have a hidden hope that the Kemal's Land won't be able to adjust to the European standards, to the hard terms and conditions it had to meet and eventually will become bogged down in its negotiations.

7. Conclusions:

The great European powers like France and Germany, as well as also the governments and people of Europe (Schmidt, 1997: 296-297), don't wish at all a full accession of Turkey to the EU because they feel that this country will function as a threat for their national composition, their national identity and their population dynamics. Most of the Europeans strongly approve the case of the special relationship of the EU with Ankara, where the economy and geostrategic importance are the main criteria for the choice of that institutional framework.

The paradox in the triangle Ankara - Brussels - Nicosia consists of the fact that Turkey is a candidate for accession country to a potential con-federal state, to an international organization like the EU, where Cyprus is a member. How can a country that denies the existence and occupies the territory of an EU member that means a European territory, could enjoy the status of candidate for accession country to the EU?

Finally, there is a unique phenomenon in the international politics, where a country refuses to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, which is a member of the EU. Turkey should recognize institutionally, politically and contractually Cyprus and to accept the implementation of the Ankara Protocol that impose to the member states a minimum degree of cooperation between the accession countries and those who are contracting parties with the Union, with the member states of the EU.

That period but especially after the referendum of 12th September 2010, Kemalism shows a rapid and rising tension of shrinking. The Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is according to the outcome of the

referendum, the dominant ruler and triumphant of the “Ankara political scene” game. Now what remains is to crystallize its policy with reference to the relationship of the Islamic government with Democracy, Rule of Law and its willingness to realize the institutional obligations of the Turkish state in many EU levels.

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Analysis of Turkey's Relations with the EU and the US in the light of 2011 Arab Revolts

Çiğdem Üstün*

RÉSUMÉ

Les révoltes arabes ont créé un nouvel environnement politique pour la Turquie, dans une région où elle a tout juste commencé à être un acteur plus dynamique et plus actif avec des objectifs multilatéraux. Les problèmes économiques, le chômage, l'oppression politique et la corruption ont créé des troubles sociaux chez les voisins de la Turquie, et ont mis en péril ses liens financiers et économiques établis avec ces pays. Avant ces révoltes, il y avait eu des débats sur l'orientation de la politique étrangère de la Turquie, se tournant vers l'Est tout en abandonnant son héritage historique de partenaire loyal de l'Ouest. Mais il a été observé que bien qu'il y ait eu des différences entre l'UE, les politiques américaines et turques, les méthodes et les attitudes envers les pays de la région, la Turquie a déployé des efforts pour équilibrer sa position, à la fois comme un pays de la région et comme un partenaire occidental de l'OTAN, tout en montrant une harmonisation avec la politique de voisinage de l'UE. Cet équilibre a exigé la coexistence des efforts économiques, politiques et militaires dans l'application des politiques à l'égard de la région, l'UE et les Etats-Unis. Cet article résume les héritages historiques des relations de la Turquie avec ses partenaires occidentaux et les analyse en liaison avec les soulèvements dans son voisinage proche.

ABSTRACT

Arab revolts have created a new political environment for Turkey, in a region where it has just started to be a more dynamic and active player with multilateral aims. Economic problems, unemployment, political oppression and corruption created social unrest in Turkey's neighborhood, and jeopardized its established financial and economic ties with these countries. Before these revolts, there had been debates on the orientation of Turkish foreign policy, about Turkey turning to the east while abandoning its historical legacy of being a loyal western partner. But it has been observed that although there have been differences between the EU, American and Turkish policies, methods and attitudes towards the regional countries, Turkey has put effort into balancing its position, both as a regional country and as a western partner in NATO, while showing harmonization with the EU's neighborhood policy. This balance has required economic, political and military efforts' coexistence in the application of policies towards the region, the EU and the USA. This paper summarizes the historical legacies of

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Turkey's relations with its western partners and analyzes these in relation to the uprisings in its near neighborhood.

Introduction

From the 1830s until the foundation of the Turkish Republic, modernization in the country has been associated with westernization. Since the Republic was founded, after the Independence War, Turkey has been a part of western-originated international organizations, and a number of social, economic, and political reforms took place since the 1920s to enable the country to reach the level of contemporary civilization. In its foreign policy direction, Turkey emphasized its memberships in the United Nations (UN), NATO, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Especially during the Cold War, Turkey acted as the buffer zone against the communism threat and as an important partner for Western Europe and the USA. By the end of the 1980s, Turkey had applied for full membership to the European Community (EC), but the European Union (EU) did not grant Turkey candidate status until the end of the 1990s. During this period, Turkey experienced a number of ups and downs in its relations with the EU, while continuing to act as a partner of the USA after the Cold War. In the 1990s, Turkey continued to perceive the West as a combination of the EU and the USA. However, in the 2000s this perception started to change.

The EU member states' full support of the USA in the fight against terrorism came to an end when the USA began contemplating war with Iraq. It has been observed that EU member states were in disaccord in supporting the USA. Some member states, i.e. the UK and Denmark, supported the 2003 war and sent troops; other member states, i.e. France and Germany, did not accept military intervention in Iraq without a UN resolution on the issue. In addition to the United Kingdom, the Central Eastern European countries were pro-American, as future members to the Union. There was an obvious discontent between pro-Americans and pro-Europeans in the EU. All these developments brought back the old argument about Turkey's place in world affairs. Where does it see itself? As Robert Kagan puts it, Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus, where is Turkey from?¹

The 2000s have been problematic years for both US-Turkey and EU-Turkey relations. On March 1, 2003 the Turkish Parliament voted down the Turkish government's motion to allow American troops to be deployed from Turkey

and to open a northern front into Iraq, thus creating problems in the strategic partnership. Also, Turkey was announced as a candidate country at the EU's Helsinki Summit in 1999. Since then, Turkey focused on reforms, in order to achieve the Copenhagen Criteria to open the accession negotiations. The negotiations started in 2005, after a long rocky road, but the accession of Cyprus to the EU created another problem and, in December 2006, the negotiations on 8 of 35 chapters were frozen.

In this paper, the relations between these three actors are analyzed in regards to the increasing importance of the Mediterranean and the Middle East due to the 2011 Arab revolts. The first part of the paper gives the background of the EU's Mediterranean policies and Turkey's reactions to these, followed by Turkey's perceptions on American policies in the second part. The final part of the paper explains these three actors' changing relations and perceptions due to the uprisings in the region.

Turkey-EU relations and the Mediterranean region

Turkey applied to the European Community (EC) in 1959. The application (on 31 July) was based on a wide range of political reasons, such as the application of Greece, the East-West conflict, and the political vacuum in the Eastern Mediterranean. The EC had its political and economic reasons to accept Turkey's application, as well. The Community wanted to give the impression that it was neither a closed shop nor a rich man's club, but also wanted to expand its sphere of influence through Turkey. In economic terms, cheap labor and the chance to get into the Turkish market were counted as the positive economic reasons in considering the applications.²

On 12 September 1963, the Ankara Agreement was signed and it came into force on December 1, 1964. This agreement envisaged the progressive establishment of a Customs' Union, which would bring the parties closer together in economic and trade matters. In the meantime, the EEC would offer financial assistance to Turkey. The process for the Customs Union was finally completed on March 6, 1995 and came into force on January 1, 1996. Meanwhile, Turkey had applied for full membership in 1987. In 1997, although the EU reconfirmed Turkey's eligibility for membership, the Commission excluded the enlargement process in its report entitled Agenda 2000. While the report conceded that the Customs Union was functioning satisfactorily and that it had demonstrated Turkey's ability to adapt to the EU and made no reference to Turkey's full membership objective. The Commission did not recommend accession negotiations with Turkey.³ The

Turkish government responded by criticizing the EU's attitude, and stated that Turkey's goal of full membership and association would nevertheless be maintained, but that the development of bilateral relations depended on the EU's honoring its commitments and that it would not discuss with the EU issues remaining outside the contractual context of the bilateral relations as long as the EU did not change its attitude. The Helsinki European Council, in 1999, produced a breakthrough in Turkey–EU relations. At Helsinki, Turkey was recognized as a candidate country. After its candidacy was recognized, Turkey started reforms in order to open the accession negotiations. Until the accession negotiations started in 2005, priority was given to the EU reforms and the accession process. In this period the Iraq War began, and anti-American attitudes in Turkey increased. The March 1, 2003 decision against deploying US forces helped to move Turkey closer to the position of the Franco-German alliance that naturally constituted the dominant force within the EU bloc.⁴

However, the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004 has been a crucial obstacle in the relations between the EU and Turkey. The Mediterranean has been an important topic in Turkish foreign policy and Cyprus had a considerable weight in this policy. Turkey felt betrayed, since the Turkish government took risks in convincing the Turkish Cypriots to accept the Annan Plan. In the referendum process, both the American and EU partners of Turkey repeatedly emphasized that there would be negative consequences for any side that rejected the plan and rewards for those who supported it⁵, but the Greek Cypriots became EU citizens and Turkish Cypriots were left out. Therefore, after 2004 there has been a clear negative attitude towards the EU due to the delay in admitting Turkey to the Union. Turkey's conviction that the EU is stalling membership, together with the feeling of betrayal, created an angry nationalism directed at the west in general.⁶

The EU's attitude towards Turkey and the region focused on moral values rather than strategic interests and, thus, issues such as human rights, freedoms and protection of minorities, and the role of the military in politics have been manifested in negotiations.⁷ The EU has emphasized the importance of the democratic rule of law in the region since the middle of the 1990s, via the Barcelona Process, and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) since 2004.⁸ The issues that the EU focuses on are universal suffrage; free elections; multiparty structures; participatory decision-making; human rights; freedom of speech, assembly and religion; and an independent and effective judiciary⁹ in the region's democratization process. In addition to the ENP, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), as a much smaller

policy area than the ENP, aims to foster the democratic rule of law and respect for human rights, mainly by dealing with civil society organizations.¹⁰

The EU's interest in the region was first revealed through Euro-Arab Dialogue after the OPEC oil embargo in 1973. The EU drew attention to both bilateral and multilateral relations, with an aim to strengthen its ties with the region, but Euro-Arab relations did not precede any further due to mistrust caused by the legacy of European colonialism in the region.¹¹ The EuroMed partnership (a.k.a the Barcelona Process), initiated in 1995, has been perceived with suspicion as well, since it is seen as a containment policy by the EU to keep immigration originating from the region at a minimum level. The partnership foresaw political, economic and social cooperation and creation of a Free Trade Area (FTA) by 2010. However, the FTA goal could not yet be realized.

Since 1995, the EU's Mediterranean policies have evolved, and in 2004, the Barcelona Process became a part of the ENP which covers the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Eastern neighbors, and in 2008, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was launched, foreseeing the League of Arab States' participation in the meetings; co-presidency system to be applied; co-ownership to be provided; and south-south multilateral relations to be supported. During the establishment of the UfM, Turkey had its criticisms over the original Mediterranean Union idea of French President, Nicolas Sarkozy. The Union for the Mediterranean was perceived as a substitute for Turkey's EU membership, and Ankara objected to the creation of this kind of a Union. Certain EU member states i.e. Germany also objected, on the grounds that it would damage the Barcelona Process and the ENP, into which the EU had put much economic and political effort. After negotiations, the Mediterranean Union idea became a part of the ENP of the EU and Turkey agreed to participate. But these efforts of Sarkozy created a negative attitude towards the EU, both in Turkey and in the region. The Turkish public's support for Turkey's membership to the EU has fallen from 75% to 50-55% during these debates on Cyprus and the UfM.

The EU has been seen as fostering these suspicion-raising debates, and as an actor which preferred to distance itself from the conflict zones that surround it; this has negatively affected Turkey's security perceptions vis-à-vis the EU, as the EU's disengagement from the Middle East could potentially put Turkey in limbo regarding its European aspirations.¹² It has also been argued that Turkish and EU definitions of, and priorities for, the region have differed. The EU has conceived the region as a whole¹³ and has created policies towards the general issues arising from the region's lack of democracy

and fully functioning liberal market systems. Turkey, in the 1990s until recently, focused on specific issues on a bilateral basis in its relations with the regional countries. Most of its relations were associated with perceived security threats (i.e. the PKK, Syrian support of Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish separatist groups in Northern Iraq, fundamentalist Islamic threats from Iran), the geopolitical importance of Cyprus and the continental shelf, and territorial disputes with Greece. Changes brought to the ENP and funding schemes after the uprisings in the region in 2011 once more demonstrated that the EU conceives the region as a whole. In May 2011, the EU revised its policies and this revision foresaw that the countries which made more democratic reforms would receive more EU funding, that the total funding budget was increased to 1.2 billion, while increasing their relations with the Union.¹

In debates over differences between the EU and Turkish perceptions of the region, Turkey has been portrayed as a country more closely aligned with American policies. However, similar to the EU, the US has started to underline democratization and rule of law and has created a program, USAID, for technical assistance and support for reform minded governments and nongovernmental actors in the region. Such programs promote the rule of law and human rights, transparent and fair elections, competitive political process, free and independent media, stronger civil society and greater citizen participation.¹⁵ Also, USAID prefers civil society capacity building, in order to increase societal and political will for reform, and emphasizes decentralization,¹⁶ different from the EU model of funding programs for the region.

Turkey-US and the Mediterranean Region

Close relations with the USA have always been important for Turkey. During the Cold War years, the USA was seen as the guarantor of Turkish security, but Turkey wanted to play a role in providing security to the west as well. Therefore, Turkey was one of two countries (the other being Italy), which accepted American missiles on its territory during the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹⁷ Since the end of the Cold War, relations between Turkey and the USA have altered. In the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the great threat to western security, but in the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the threat became the Middle East, Caspian region, and Balkans.¹⁸

It was argued that in the 19th century the USA became interested in North Africa, the Mediterranean region, and the Ottoman Empire because of economic interests more than political, strategic, humanitarian or militaristic interests.¹⁹ However, political relations as a result of the economic interaction

between the USA and the Ottoman Empire increased as the USA tried to protect the rights of its own citizens living under the empire's rule.²⁰

On the other side, the Ottomans were under the economic and political pressures of the European states. The USA, especially in the second half of the 19th century, became an ally for the Ottoman Empire against the Europeans. The Ottomans and the French were arguing over Egypt, and there was continuous Russian pressure on the empire. Thus, the Ottoman Empire wanted to develop military and political relations with the US.²¹ In the 19th century, despite concerns over American schools and missionary works, Ottoman-American relations developed in a friendly manner because there was no direct threat from each other.²² Due to their positive perception of the USA, some Turkish intellectuals supported the American mandate after the First World War, since the USA seemed more idealist and understanding than the Europeans in terms of rights and freedoms.²³ After the Second World War, as the USA became a world power, Turkey became a prominent element of American global strategy. In 1952, Turkey became a member of NATO and in 1957 it accepted the Eisenhower doctrine.²⁴

However, in 1963-64, Cyprus became a problem between the two countries. President Johnson sent a letter to Prime Minister Inonu, telling him not to use American weaponry against the Greeks, otherwise the 5th article of the NATO agreement would be void in a threat from the Soviet Union. Inonu's response - "A new world would build up and Turkey would take its place in this world" - made the relations tense, and Turkey's efforts in the aftermath of this letter to normalize relations with the Soviet Union has been perceived as one of the most serious backlashes in Turkish-American relations.

When the 1980 coup d'état in Turkey damaged relations with the EU, the USA became the main western power that Turkish foreign policy emphasized. Turkey and the US signed a Defense and Cooperation Agreement on March 29, 1980, which aimed to maintain a strong bilateral defense relationship and preserve American utilization of military facilities in Turkey. This agreement was followed by the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force in the east of Turkey, to prevent the increase of the Soviet Union's influence in the region and to maintain a watchful eye on the oil lands, i.e. the Persian Gulf region and the whole Middle East.²⁵

Just after the end of the Cold War, the Desert Storm operation against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait further developed the relations between Turkey and the USA, and Turkey became a central country of interest for the USA, bordering three areas of instability: the Balkans, Caucasus and the Middle East. During the Gulf War, Bosnia and Kosovo operations, Turkish airfields were used, and

in the 2000s the same bases were used to support American operations in Georgia and Afghanistan.²⁶ Turkey has been concerned about the transformation of NATO's western defense identity into a political and global collective security identity after the collapse of communism, since Turkey perceived NATO as a confirmation of its western and European identity.²⁷ Therefore it has been eager to open its military airbases in NATO operations in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus, since it wanted to reemphasize its role as a security provider for the western allies even after the Soviet Union collapsed.

In 2003, after the American administration's decision on war in Iraq, relations between Turkey and the USA began to change and the strategic partnership began to be questioned. During the Gulf War, closure of the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline, sanctions and the impoverishment of Iraq's economy affected cooperative economic relations between Turkey and Iraq. Also, promises that were made by the US administration on compensating Turkey's war losses were not kept after the Gulf War. Thus, fear of the same consequences and of the possibility of the disintegration of Iraq and increased Kurdish uprisings were major concerns of Turkey.²⁸ On March 1, the Turkish Parliament said "No" to the motion to permit deployment of more than 60,000 U.S. troops from Turkish bases and ports in the event of a war with Iraq.

Turkey's "no vote" was not because of any sympathy the Turkish government felt for Saddam Hussein; it was due to the Parliament's anxiety over Turkey's military, economic, and strategic concerns over what an attack against Iraq might mean for its own national interests.²⁹ It has been argued that any intervention with regard to Iraq was likely to suffer from a lack of legitimacy. Neither UN Security Council Resolution 687 (S/RES/687), nor 1441 (S/RES/1441) gave the US the right to intervene. Besides, Article 2.4 of the UN Charter forbids states, including the permanent members of the Security Council, to use force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any country. Secondly, the Turkish constitution permits the Turkish parliament to accept war only when there is international consent, where international law accepts it as a legitimate war. In this case there was not legitimacy on the basis of international law, thus the parliament rejected the motion. Consequently, the instability in the region due to the war in Iraq increased concerns over the rise of terrorist attacks. Turkey, as the only western looking country in Iraq's neighborhood, was concerned that the attacks from the region would target its own soil. However on March 20, 2003 the Turkish parliament gave permission to the Turkish army to enter Northern Iraq, and over-flight rights were granted to the US. Nonetheless, it

must be remembered that although the March 1 “no vote” prevented American access to the northern flank from Turkish soil, Iraqi Kurds offered their soil to the US forces and Americans relied on Iraqi Kurds more than Ankara would ever have desired.³⁰

Another problem between Turkey and the US occurred when the American army arrested a Turkish army Special Forces Team in Suleymaniya in July 2003 for allegedly conspiring to assassinate the Kurdish governor of Mosul. This has been perceived as payback for the rejection of the March 1 motion. This period is unusual, in that Turkey’s relations with the USA and the EU were seemingly deteriorating at the same time.³¹ In the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s, the US had been a strong supporter of Turkey’s EU membership, with an aim to anchor Turkey more firmly to the West³², but after the 2003 War in Iraq, there has been a more aloof attitude of the US administration over Turkey’s EU membership bid.

In addition, the confrontation in May 2010 between Israeli commandos and Turkish citizens on the ship Mavi Marmara³³ in the Mediterranean increased the tension between Turkey and the US, and augmented the negative feelings toward the USA.³⁴ As the feeling of mistrust increased, it has been argued that a real estate agent’s view of strategy (“location, location, location”) has not served well in relations among Turkey and the USA.³⁵ Nearly 80% of the Turkish people thought that Turkey and the US were not allies at the time³⁶ and the Turkish-American strategic partnership was starting to be questioned.³⁷

Turkey’s potential to be a role model as a secular democratic country in the region has been debated both by the EU and the USA in the 2000s.³⁸ On the one hand, this has been perceived as a positive matter, demonstrating Turkey’s regional characteristics together with western orientations. On the other hand, some Turkish observers were not content with the US perception of Turkey as an Islamic model, and the Turkish government did not share the US goal of isolating Iran, Syria, and Sudan. Also, on the one hand Turkish government’s political relations with Hamas created concerns in the EU and the US, on the other hand, Turkey criticized the EU and the US’ isolation policies towards Hamas.

However, in 2005, several high level contacts between the Turkish government and American administration started, and, in 2006, the “Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-US Strategic Partnership” was announced, aiming to increase cooperation, including intelligence sharing.³⁹ In 2007, both countries started to focus on more common issues rather than differences, issues such as stability in the region,

energy security, the enlargement of NATO and, last but not least, the fight against terrorism.

Effect of the Arab Revolts on Turkey-EU and Turkey-US Relations

When the Turkish Republic was founded, relations with the West were prioritized, but the relations with the Middle East and the Arab world were also balanced. In 1947, Turkey was one of the countries that rejected the UN decision on the partition of Palestine, and in the Cold War era, Turkey acted differently than its NATO allies during the Arab-Israeli War, by declining the use of İncirlik base on the behalf of Israel and recalling its Israeli ambassador.⁴ However, Turkey was a member of NATO, and with an increase in Arab nationalism, non-Arab Turkey was seen as an outsider in the region.⁴¹ After the Cold War regional conflicts, border disputes and ethnic clashes increased Turkey's security shield towards the region.

After (PKK leader) Öcalan was expelled from Syria and the Adana Agreement was signed, relations with Syria started to prosper. In 2004, the two countries signed a free trade agreement, and in 2007 the Turkish-Syrian Business Council was established. Cultural exchanges between Turkey and Syria began, and trade volume increased to 2.3 billion €. ⁴² Turkey's relations with Syria were not the only case where Turkey and the regional countries got closer. The share of trade with regional countries increased to 19% in 2008 from 9% of the 1990s. ⁴³ Therefore, by 2010 Turkey had established the "Close Neighbors Economic and Trade Association Council" with Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which aimed to establish a FTA among these countries. Also, similar to the EU policies towards its neighbors, Turkey emphasized flows of people, trade and ideas to establish a more stable, interdependent and integrated region. ⁴⁴

Since the 2002 elections in Turkey, Turkish foreign policy has been based on 5 principles: a balance between security and democracy, a zero problem policy towards neighbors, increasing relations with neighbors, multi-dimensional foreign policy and rhythmic diplomacy. ⁴⁵ The main concerns of Turkey in the region have been security, dialogue, economic interdependence and cultural coexistence. Hence, foreign policy has not been a series of bilateral relations only, but mutually reinforcing and interlocking processes. ⁴⁶ In the 1990s, due to the political vacuum in the region, Turkey was a supporter of the status quo protection policies. In the 2000s, a policy focused on balance and diversification through active engagement in the region was accepted. This change of course

was a result of the change in government in 2002, but regional political changes facilitated Turkey's dynamic policy towards the region as well. Among these perceived regional changes were a decrease in Arab nationalism, political and economic crises, a decrease of legitimacy of governments in these neighboring countries and an increase in political Islam.

It must be mentioned that both the accession process of Turkey to the EU and the Turkish Parliament's rejection of the March 1 motion increased the prestige of Turkey⁴⁷ among the regional countries. It has been argued that the Arab world began to take a closer interest in Turkey after Turkey started its accession negotiations in 2005. A number of public opinion surveys and statements of regional leaders underlined the importance of Turkey-EU relations in order to create a stable and developed region.⁴⁸ It is believed that Turkey's increasing positive perception in the region, which falls under the ENP, can be used as a positive tool by the EU. 80% of the respondents in a TESEV survey have positive views on Turkey's role in the region and 66% believe that Turkey can be a model for the Middle Eastern countries.⁴⁹ This has been an important change since the 1990s regarding Turkey's role in the region. Also, these changes created some concerns over Turkey's position as a NATO ally and questions on Turkey's orientation towards the East or the West began to be asked. Although some American and European observers argued that Turkey is turning away from its historic western orientation⁵⁰, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu clearly argued that the more Turkey strains its bow in Asia, the further its arrow will extend into Europe.⁵¹

In this period Turkey also manifested its intentions to act as mediator in the regional conflicts, i.e. Israel and Syria. Turkey has been involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also, through economic, social and humanitarian projects. This has been another change in Turkey's non-intervention policy in the region. Some regional actors, i.e. Egypt, Abbas and Iran, did not welcome these changes in Turkish policy towards the region. However, especially after the *Mavi Marmara* incident, Turkey's role as a mediator has ostensibly failed.

In 2010 and 2011 the region went through crucial times once more. On the one hand, Arab revolts have complicated regional politics and relations among the actors have become more polarized. On the other hand, the ballistic missile shield to be built under the NATO umbrella has become an issue in not only Turkey's neighborhood but also between Turkey and its western partners. Following long debates and hesitancy, during the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, Turkey accepted the concept of a NATO missile shield to be built mainly against threats coming from the Middle East. Although the document on the missile shield did not specify names of countries or groups

perceived as threats, most of the commentators on the subject have concluded that this shield was especially thought to protect the west against possible Iranian missiles. Therefore, Turkey's prospering relations with the regional countries and its attachment to the western organizations and security complex created questions on drifting foreign policy. Turkey's attitude during the War in Iraq was seen as more compatible with that of some EU member states, which also wanted no part in the armed conflict. The EU has emphasized the importance of creating a region without dividing lines. Turkey's policy over Iraq was seen as leaning toward this method. However, NATO's member, Turkey, by accepting the missile shield, opted for a policy that potentially creates dividing lines between the region and the west.

As demonstrated in the previous sections, there has been a difference between the EU and US attitudes, in the choice of multilateral or bilateral policies towards the regional countries. Before the Arab revolts, American and European perceptions on the region were diverged widely due to the different perceptions of the method, means and ends of democratization policies of the American and European sides.⁵² Turkey, as a candidate country to the EU and as a member of NATO, tried to converge these different policies into one policy and create a more stable and secure neighboring region for itself, which proved to be a difficult policy to maintain.

Turkey perceived the chaos and anarchy in Iraq as negative consequence of foreign intervention, but it finds the revolts in Northern Africa as important processes for the democratization of the whole region. The Arab revolts started due to the economic inequalities, political corruption and coercion in Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt, among others. Turkey presented itself as a role model in the region, and emphasized the importance of democratization, prosperity, human rights and freedom for regional countries. However, Turkey also emphasized the importance of a bottom up approach in this democratization process, and rejected international intervention for some time. Turkey's policies in this sense were perceived as closer to those of the ENP, and Turkey argued that the intervention in Iraq created chaos and anarchy since there was an externally imposed democratization process. Turkey's thesis has been that there is a need for democratization in the region; however, these processes should arise from domestic bottom up approaches rather than international interventions.

As it can be seen, there were increased differences in the regional politics of Turkey, the EU and the USA, which affected the relations among these three actors negatively. However, as the revolts started and the leaders of the North African countries were challenged by the masses and forced to step down,

Turkey and the US started to coordinate once more.⁵³ During the revolts, leaders such as Mubarak, Qaddafi, Ben Ali, Abdullah Saleh - the very political leaders with whom the Turkish government had set up bilateral political, economic and social relations - had to step down, and Turkey, while supporting democratization, had to make contacts with the new leaders of these countries. In this environment, the relations with the USA have been crucial once more, due to its historical leverage in the region.

Libya has been the first case to test Turkey's policies, since Libya is essential not only in terms of political relations but also regarding the economic and financial investments of Turkish business people in that country. It has been argued that 18.4 million dollars worth of projects and 100 million dollars in cash in Libyan banks were threatened⁵⁴ during the revolts. Initially, Turkey opposed NATO intervention in Libya, in line with its position on non-intervention by foreign forces in the region, but approved of humanitarian aid. As the international reaction increased in line with UN Security Council resolution 1973 on March 17, 2011, authorizing countries to take measures to stop the violence against civilians, Turkey agreed to participate in NATO operations.

Following Libya, Turkey supported a UN Security Council resolution condemning the Syrian regime.⁵⁵ In the Syrian case, Turkey puts efforts into facilitating the stepping down of Assad while simultaneously establishing a political relation with the opposition groups. As the crisis continued and Assad did not step down, Turkey's rhetoric approached that of the Americans. These developments have complicated Middle Eastern politics⁵⁶ and the international system, historical memory, systemic influences and domestic political changes⁵⁷ affect both positively and negatively the relations among the states in the region. This has not only been a problem for Turkey, but also for the EU countries. The EU was divided over the conflict and intervention in Libya. France and the UK supported the intervention; Germany kept its distance.

The spread of unrest in the region caused some questioning of the dynamic and multi approach Turkish foreign policy. As an ally of the US and a candidate of the EU, Turkey has emphasized democratization and human rights and has aligned itself with western policies.⁵⁸ Some observers argued that this alignment put Turkey back into western circles and forced it to leave behind the new policies adopted in 2002. However, it must be emphasized that although Turkey's relations with the US became more visible, Turkey did not turn its back on its neighbors, which are going through a transition period, and definitely did not return to its non-intervention policies of the 1990s. Especially in Syria, Turkey established close relations with the opposition and

hosted the Syrian opposition groups when the unrest started. This has been in line with Turkey's argument that there has to be a democratization process originating from the people of the region.

Yet, it needs to be highlighted that although Turkey is a supporter of a domestic bottom up approach towards democratization of the regional countries, it lacks the conditionality aspect in its foreign policy. Therefore, it has been argued that the cooperation between Turkey and the EU, who holds the conditionality stick⁵⁹, would be instrumental in Turkey's relations with the Mediterranean countries. Since the region is proved to be prone to revolts, conflicts between regional countries and clashes among groups, Turkey's zero problem policy with its neighbors was tested and demonstrated constraints. Analysis of Turkey's regional policies in relation to its westernization process surfaced once more, since the USA and the European countries have been a part of the regional politics for a very long time; therefore Oğuzlu argued that there is a need for a new version of the zero problem policy, one that includes the western actors, especially the EU.⁶ As a country, which highlighted its strategic position through its history, Turkey has tried to balance its relations with the EU, the USA and the region. Thus, the debate over whether Turkey's orientation is towards the west or the Middle East has proved to be an inefficient means to analyze Turkish foreign policy matters.

Conclusion

Turkey, as a part of the western allies, opted for a more dynamic and multilateral foreign policy toward its Mediterranean and Middle East neighborhoods since the beginning of the 2000s, not only due to domestic changes in Turkey but also to changes in regional politics. However, the region had another shaky development in 2011, as civil unrests and revolts started to force leaders of some regional countries to step down. This has been a test case for Turkey's newly introduced policy towards the region, but also towards its western allies in NATO and in the EU. Both the US and the EU emphasized the necessity for democratization in the region and applied different policies in this regard. The EU treated the region as a whole and created neighborhood policies, but the USA focused on a more bilateral approach in its relations with the regional countries. Turkey, on the other hand, had status quo-oriented bilateral relations with the regional countries in the 1990s, but changed to more multilateral relations on the basis of increased economic relations. In this framework, Turkey's dynamic policy towards the Mediterranean and the Middle Eastern regions has been

perceived as closer to the EU's method, but the Libya case reminded us once again that Turkey is a NATO member with close relations with the USA. Turkey established important economic and financial ties with the economic and political actors in these regional countries, and especially the revolts of 2011 jeopardized these newly founded links. It has been observed that during the unrest in the region, Turkey did not turn its back on its neighbors, but did not reject the American or (some) European policies either. As a country located between the west and the region, it had to find a balance in its foreign policy, not only between the West and the region, but also between the EU, the USA and the region, due to the differences among the policies of the EU and the USA. Thus, although there has long been a debate that Turkey is leaning towards easternization rather than westernization, these Arab revolts demonstrated that Turkey continues to be a western partner while trying to help establish a more stable, secure and dependable neighborhood in a fragile and complicated situation.

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Turkish-Israeli Relations in Crisis: Living with the Gordian Knot¹

Gencer Özcan*

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article s'attache à la crise profonde des relations turco-israéliennes résultant de l'opération mortelle, le 31 mai de l'année précédente, contre la flottille venue apporter de l'aide aux Palestiniens et dirigée par le navire turc *Mavi Marmara*, au cours de laquelle huit citoyens turcs et un turco-américain sont morts. En outre l'article va tenter de mettre en évidence les raisons qui ont conduit le gouvernement du *Parti de justice et de développement [JDP]* à délaissier les relations avec Israël, et fait valoir que, si les perceptions politiques en vigueur envers Israël ne sont pas profondément changées, il sera difficile de mettre fin à la présente impasse.

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the deep crisis the Turkish-Israeli relations entered, in the wake of the deadly assault on May 31st previous year on the aid flotilla led by the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* during which eight Turkish citizens and a Turkish-American died. Furthermore the article will attempt to highlight the reasons that led the current *Justice and Development Party [JDP]* government to downgrade relations with Israel, and argue that unless prevailing political perceptions of Israel are profoundly changed, it would be difficult to end the stalemate.

In the wake of the deadly assault on May 31st previous year on the aid flotilla led by the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara* during which eight Turkish citizens and a Turkish-American died, Turkish-Israeli relations entered a deep crisis. Turkey withdrew its ambassador declaring that he will not return to Tel Aviv unless Israel offers its apologies and pays compensation to the relatives of the victims. The Israeli Foreign Ministry although on several occasions it came close to striking a deal with Ankara, refused to accept the conditions Turkey put forward for the normalization of the relations between the two countries.²

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The controversy stiffened and reignited in the aftermath of an exchange of harsh messages between the two countries when the *Palmer Report* was leaked. The Israeli obstinacy to extend a formal apology led Turkey to downgrade the diplomatic representation to the lowest level. Prospects of breaking the deadlock now seem to have been further away. In a stark contrast to the nineties when Turkey's relations with Israel were to a large degree excluded from internal politics and came to be regarded somehow an untouchable affair, since the early 2009 the relationship has been internalized and turned into a domestic battleground on which all parties blame each other of not doing enough against Israel. Thus, in addition to regional parameters, stalemate is hardened by political discourse geared for domestic needs. Being the part of domestic debates in Turkey, relations with Israel seem to fall prey to domestic politics, and an improvement in the foreseeable future is not within the realms of possibility. This paper will attempt to highlight the reasons that led the current *Justice and Development Party [JDP]* government to downgrade relations with Israel, and argue that unless prevailing political perceptions of Israel are profoundly changed, it would be difficult to end the stalemate.

Although unique in the history of bilateral relations, the current crisis was the last of several mini crises reflecting the changing mood in both capitals. The relations had been exposed to a new set of internal and external dynamics that were different than those that shaped the alignment almost twenty years ago. The pressure brought by regional developments, which gained momentum after the second intifada, was already strangling the relations. Despite the suffocating pressures, the alignment sailed through these mini crises. Until the *Freedom Flotilla Raid*, the alignment seemed to have developed a sort of immunity to these challenges and miraculously survived these crises.³ However, the *Freedom Flotilla Raid* had an impact of unprecedented magnitude.⁴ First and foremost, having caused civilian casualties, the crisis left deep scars in the minds and hearts of people in both countries. The crisis also shook the very foundations on which the alignment has been standing. Despite the fact that the relations had always been buttressed by the strongest institutions in respective countries, i.e. the militaries and ministries of foreign affairs, the Israeli Defense Forces [*IDF*] came to the fore as the main actor which precipitated the crisis. The multidimensional regional dynamics that surrounded and reinforced the relationship were transcended by a unilateral intervention carried out by the IDF. The irony was that it was Israeli Minister of Defense, Ehud Barak, who had played a key role in begetting and cultivating the alignment throughout the nineties who eventually took the

final decision to use fire arms against those on board.⁵ Furthermore, in the aftermath of the crisis, the constituencies that previously bolstered the alignment were ostracized.

Alignment with Israel was devised to meet a number of strategic requirements that Turkey aimed to satisfy at the turn of the nineties.⁶ In the nineties Turkey's regional outlook in the Middle East was overwhelmed by its struggle with the Kurdish separatist movement that used Northern Iraq as a rear base and received support from Syria and Iran. Therefore, the regionalization of Kurdish separatism compelled Ankara to formulate an assertive policy for which Israel appeared to be a suitable partner. Furthermore, Israeli readiness to respond to Turkey's procurement of military supplies served as another element in the making of the alignment. Intelligence sharing and cooperation on other security related issues were key elements of the rapprochement and therefore major actors who played a key role in the making of the alignment came from the security establishments. However, in the 2000s, the US occupation of Iraq began to change the strategic landscape in the region and therefore decision makers in Ankara started seeing Turkey's vicinity through different lenses than those used in the nineties. Coping with a multi variable regional context emerged after the occupation of Iraq; Ankara's foreign policy has increasingly become more multi focal and diversified.

As of the beginning of the 21st Century, Turkey transformed itself from being a sort of introverted country strained by manifold internal problems, from ongoing political strife to occasional financial crises, into an outward looking one with more diversified regional prospects. First and foremost, Turkey's relations with its neighbors are steered by economic motivations rather than security considerations. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu laid the foundations of Turkey's new foreign policy dubbed as "*Zero Problems with the Neighbors Policy*". The new policy emphasized "intense economic interdependence" as the major mechanism through which Turkey can cultivate "a substantial trust in its relations with its neighbors".⁷ Therefore, many observers branded the change as one of transformation from a national security state to a trading state. The JDP governments instigated official contacts with neighboring countries involving all levels and devised various frames of cooperation to increase mutual trade with the neighboring countries. Reflecting Turkey's growing self-confidence, lifting visa requirements with many neighbors is also related with this transformation. In a marked contrast to the situation during the period of tight visa regimes of the nineties, now figures of incoming and outgoing tourists from and to the neighboring

countries are in steady increase. Moreover, Arab markets are flooded with Turkish goods while Turkish TV serials are becoming popular across the Middle East.⁸

Another tendency that became conspicuous in Turkish foreign policy was Ankara's growing engagement with sub state actors. JDP governments were extremely diligent in cultivating good relations with local parties and organizations such as *Hamas*, *Hizbullah*, *Ihvan* or Iraqi groups.⁹ Therefore, many sub-state actors seeking Turkish diplomats' good offices for the local crises they try to cope with, turned Ankara into a sort of diplomatic *Mecca*. Ankara's name was spelled among the destinations that *Hamas* considered moving its basis from Damascus after the riots went out of control in Syria. Turkey's engagement policy reached to an unprecedented scale when Ankara decided to support, at least some elements of *Free Syrian Army* fighting to oust the Assad regime. The JDP government played active role to get the Syrian opposition united, set refugee camps along the border and hosted the second conference of the *Friends of Syria* in Istanbul.¹⁰

The change in foreign policy discourse in Turkey is also remarkable. While threats to use force or of "drawing red lines" were part and parcel of the official discourse in the nineties, Ankara de-securitized its language of foreign policy. In order to complement the policy of *zero problems with the neighbors*, the JDP governments attached special importance to soften the official foreign policy discourse. Even the discourse used in documents such as *National Security Document* was desecuritized through cleansing all clauses of animosity towards neighbors.¹¹ This was also true at the level of actors. While the military were enjoying a powerful position in foreign policy decision-making process until the end of the 1990s, it paled into insignificance by the mid 2000s.¹² Last but not least, the military, the major institution that propped the alignment up has no longer called the tune in conducting Ankara's relations with Tel Aviv.¹³ The new perspective is reflected in the new *Law on the Duties and Organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs* that laid a new set of principles which Turkey's foreign policy should comply with. Furthermore, the law founded a department within the Ministry, *Directorate on Global and Humanitarian Issues*, duty of which is to deal with human rights violations in other countries, an unprecedented duty to be performed by Turkish diplomats.¹⁴ The new responsibility marks a sharp contrast with the duties the diplomats of earlier generations of eighties who used to spend much of their time in fending off criticisms of human rights violations committed in Turkey.¹⁵

Having diversified its content, Turkey's policies appear to correspond better to the changing realities of the Middle East. As many observers noted, the

recent Arab uprisings vindicated JDP's endeavors to diversify its foreign policy towards the Arab Middle East. To put this into perspective, it is helpful to take a closer look at Turkey's policy towards the Kurds of Iraq that made a dramatic *volte-face* after 2005. Since Iraq remained in a state of quagmire in the nineties, Turkey's policy in Northern Iraq had focused on the suppression of the PKK activities there. The Turkish Armed Forces' continual cross border operations in Northern Iraq were the embodiment of Ankara's policies there. Notwithstanding limited occasional deals with KDP and PUK, Ankara deliberately refrained from recognizing the *Regional Government of Kurdistan* [RGK]. Yet after 2005, Ankara improved its relations with the Kurdish groups and ended its policy of enmity towards the RGK. Beyond Iraqi Kurdistan, Ankara cultivated and retained good relations with all political groups active on the ground and offered its good offices for them if and when necessary. In the 2005 elections in Iraq, Ankara played key role in convincing the Sunni parties not to turn their back to the political process. The visit to Iraq by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan that took place in late March 2011 displayed the changing content of Turkey's foreign policy. He became the first Turkish Prime Minister to pay an official visit to Iraqi Kurdistan as well as Shiite shrines in Najaf including Imam Ali's shrine, and to held talks with Great Ayatollah Sistani there. In a clear departure from earlier state centered diplomatic practices, the visit indicated Turkey's determination to diversify its regional policy. However, it does not necessarily mean that the Ankara's active engagement policy in the Middle East would attain its declared goals. In changing power configuration around the Gulf seems to perplex all actors including Turkey, Iran and Iraq. In spite of intensive efforts to cultivate good relations with all parties involved, JDP leaders' close engagement with the domestic developments in Iraq appears to have run into trouble in the wake of the withdrawal of the US troops in December 2011. All actors active in the Iraqi politics have now become susceptible to increasing Iranian influence there. The stalemate between the Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and vice president Hashimi, who were respectively supported by Iran and Turkey, illustrates the extent of difficulties that Ankara is to face in Baghdad. Despite Ankara's strong backing, Hashimi was forced to flee Baghdad when an arrest warrant on terrorism charges was issued. The ensuing exchange of harsh statements between Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and Prime Minister Erdoğan made it clear that both leaders will walk a tightrope in the foreseeable future.

Against the background of Ankara's changing policy, now we can move to making some observations that are relevant to understand the ongoing crisis in Turkish-Israeli relations. It goes without saying that every aspect of the

transformation that Turkish foreign policy has undergone has its bearing on the Turkish-Israeli alignment. While Turkey's trade with regional countries rose to an unprecedented degree, trade with Israel became relatively less significant. Accordingly, Turkey's need for military rapprochement with Israel to counterbalance regional rivals shrunk. As was the case with engaging *Hamas*, in spite of Israeli reprimands, Ankara maintained its contacts with influential sub state actors. Ankara's growing interest in diversification of its relations with all players of varying degree of influence and activity is not confined to *Hamas* and *Hizbullah*. The crisis in Syria has also witnessed an unprecedented Turkish intervention that armed opposition groups which were fighting against the regime were welcomed and given sanctuary within Turkey. This single example alone indicates the sea change in Turkey's position *vis-a-vis* Syria.

The inevitable implication of Turkey's increasing regional activity is the relative decline of Israel's weight in Ankara's policy configurations. However, the decline is also attributable to the changing perceptions prevailing in Turkey of Israel's relations with the United States. Since many in Turkey began to perceive the United States as a sunset power, they anticipate that Israel's pivotal position in the Middle East would also be eclipsed. Furthermore, Israel is now considered to be a security consuming country that fails to produce relevant policies to address regional problems. Such perceptions are of significance since they indicate that Israel has lost its position in the eyes of many Turks as a country of military prowess. One of the events that led to a sharp decline of Israeli image was the infamous "armchair crisis" in January 2010. Since Israeli diplomats attempted to humiliate the Turkish ambassador Oğuz Çelikkol by seating him on a lower armchair, Turkish public opinion was shocked and the media qualified the act as "a medieval practice".

The bilateral relations are soured as a result of consecutive regional crises. When we remember the last decade, it is remarkable that three major wars broke out in the region -the occupation of Iraq in 2003, the war in Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza in 2008- while the Palestinian-Israeli peace process could not come out of the coma. The crises of the 2000s stand in stark contrast to those we had in the nineties. First and foremost, neither the civilian casualties nor political complications they caused were by any means comparable with those that took place in the nineties. In the 2000s, each crisis decreased the public's support for the alignment; created loss of trust on both sides; weakened other social actors that supported the bilateral relations.

Nevertheless, despite these regional dynamics, bilateral relations remained on a cooperative basis and were successful in coping with the fallouts of the

mini crises that broke out during the 2000s. During the process of foundation, the *JDP* leaders had made it clear that they would cultivate good relations with Israel.¹⁶ After the bombings of two Istanbul synagogues in November 2004 which killed scores of Muslims and Jews, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Israel stood side-by-side and vowed to fight terrorists together. Turkey appointed its best diplomats as ambassadors to Tel Aviv. Ankara overlooked the use of Turkish airspace by Israeli fighters when they bombed Syrian nuclear facilities in September 2007. Until the Gaza War, Israel joined the *Anatolian Eagle* drills carried out in Konya. Even more strikingly, even after the Davos incident, the *JDP* government made special legal arrangements to grant the bill for Israeli companies to demine the large land strip along the Syrian border. Despite strong opposition against the bill, both from within and without the Party, the government insisted that demining work should be given the Israeli companies without a public tender. Only after strong public reaction and nullification of the bill by the Court of State, demining issue was shelved.¹⁷

Right before the Flotilla crisis broke out; Turkey in May 2010 did not veto Israel's admission into the *OECD*.¹⁸ Cooperation on security affairs went on even after the Flotilla Raid. Turkish Armed Forces kept receiving training for *Heron* UAV's, and used them in Northern Iraq. Diplomats of both countries worked hard to contain the crisis. With the exception of some remarks by Prime Minister Erdoğan, party officials deliberately refrained from making provocative remarks; therefore cautiously avoided further escalation. Another important point was that the *JDP* did not let its supporters demonstrate after the Raid. The government's spokesperson Hüseyin Çelik claimed that Prime Minister's harsh reactions were geared towards the people that the government's reactions were strong enough so that they need not to demonstrate on streets.¹⁹ Only a week after the raid, the warnings that State Minister Bülent Arınç gave indicated how the extent of the damage wrought by the incident worried the party's top brass.

There is a need for a reliable country to contribute to the better orientation of the State of Israel, whose existence, no matter we like or dislike, has been recognized by the World. Now, they say: "Abolish everything! Do not leave any agreement! Expel the Ambassador! Easy to get divorced for a bachelor! Should you abandon all, you end up in mess. I do not want to put myself as example, yet it takes a statesman to rule the state in sobriety, rationality and patience. Even in my own milieu, there may be those who prefer to strike, fight and punish them by delivering what they deserve. I, too, emotionally and wholeheartedly support them. But we need to see

*realpolitik in the World, so that we can continue our own way. I want to reach hearts of those who say "Let's set out the second, the third, and the fifth ship", and ask: do you have enough power to stop them if such an event [the raid] occurs again? Do you have enough wisdom to repair the damage caused by such an event? Did you make a calculation of the cost that you have to compensate? You need to bring the wisdom to the fore.*²⁰

For a long period, high level contacts were sustained and many channels were kept open until the downgrading. Turkey assisted Israel by sending two planes to extinguish the forest fire that broke out in *Mount Carmel*. There were also other signals that both sides are careful not to let the relations slide any further. Furthermore, some other overtures made by the government are also remarkable. Despite the severe reprimands by both sides following the Flotilla crisis, diplomatic relations were not downgraded or broken for long. In January 2011, the first *Holocaust Day* was commemorated in Istanbul. The government sent messages and the governor of Istanbul alongside some *JDP* members were present in the commemoration. The absence of *JDP* representatives in the welcoming ceremony given on the occasion of the return of the flagship *Mavi Marmara* to Istanbul was also noticeable. In the wake of the military operations in Gaza and the suicide bomb attack in Jerusalem in March 2011, the Foreign Ministry notably took a balanced approach condemning both incidents.

*We are deeply concerned with the re-escalation of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the past days. In this context, we condemn the disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks launched by the Israeli military on 22 March 2011 against the Gaza Strip, in which civilians, including children, lost their lives and many others were injured. Furthermore, we also condemn the bomb attack on 23 March in Jerusalem against passenger buses, which, according to initial reports, caused the death of one person and the injury of more than 30 persons.*²¹

Even after the *Palmer Report* was leaked, Ankara preferred downgrading rather than breaking diplomatic relations. Although the diplomatic staffs, save second secretaries, were reciprocally withdrawn from respective embassies, the staff working in the consulates of Istanbul and Jerusalem remained intact. Although its diplomatic status significantly differs from that of Istanbul, the Turkish consulate in Jerusalem keeps functioning as was before. Given the importance of both cities, it is significant that the level of representation in these consulates was maintained. Another significant development also needs to be highlighted. Despite some announcements that a new flotilla would be

sent to Gaza, the initiative was not allowed to take place. Ankara commemorated the *Holocaust Day* again in 2012. On 27 January 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on the *United Nations International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust* that Turkey remembered and honoured the memory of more than 6 million Jews and members of other minorities, who lost their lives during this human tragedy.” The statement also underlined the 67th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, emphasizing it as “an occasion to reminisce on this unprecedented cataclysm of human history and strengthen the efforts to raise the awareness of the new generations.”²²

The JDP government displays great deal of sensitivity lest anti-Semitism go rampant in the country. Two events need to be elucidated to understand the government’s sensitivity on this issue. As mentioned above, in February 2012 when Turkey officially observed *International Holocaust Remembrance Day* in Istanbul, Turkish official broadcasting agency *TRT* aired Claude Lanzmann’s 1985 biographical film of the Holocaust era, *Shoah*. The nine-hour film was aired to help build understanding between Muslims and Jews, and to combat denials that the Holocaust occurred. Lanzmann said that the broadcast marked the first time a predominantly Muslim country has shown his film.²³ The official broadcasting institution, *Turkish Radio and Television Institution (TRT)* nominated Can Bonomo, young Turkish singer Jewish by origin, as the country’s representative in the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest. Instead of holding a national competition, *TRT*’s decision to nominate Bonomo has been perceived as a careful step to indicate that the government stands against anti-Semitism in Turkey.

Last but not least, the bilateral trade, despite all the negative factors, kept its upsurge and reached to the highest levels after the financial crisis of 2008 and reached USD 3.5 billion in 2010. It is also interesting that “Turkey’s exports to Israel have steadily followed an upward trend, exceeding the \$2 billion mark for the first time in 2010.”²⁴

Notwithstanding these signs, it is obvious that the current deadlock will remain insurmountable as long as the given political circumstances prevail in both countries. There is no room for creative solutions. Both sides keep their initial positions on the issue making any significant concession impossible. Unless a sort of unconditional apology and reasonable compensation is offered by Israel, Turkey will not accept returning to the *status quo ante*. Israeli Foreign Ministry, on the other hand wrecked at least two initiatives that came near to yielding a sort of compromise. It is therefore difficult to strike a balance between the two parties in the foreseeable future. There are other reasons

that make any compromise difficult, if not impossible. Turkey benefits from protracting the crisis. As an observer commented, for the government the crisis turned into “a hen that laid golden eggs”.²⁵ This is particularly true that the more Turkey lambasts Israel, the more its prestige rises in the Arab street where nowadays the heart of the Arab politics beats.

In order to salvage the relations, a strong external intervention is required. There were and still are two actors that are able to break the deadlock: the United States and the European Union. The latter failed to exert influence during the crisis. On the European Union’s part, there has been no determined initiative of any kind. Being embroiled in their problems, the leading European countries saw the affair as an out of area contingency, and by the same token, turned a blind eye to the crisis. In stark contrast to European indifference, Washington was alarmed with the flotilla incident and displayed decisive leadership during the initial phases of the crisis.²⁶ The Obama administration played a crucial role in securing the return of the bodies of victims as well as safe passage for those who survived the raid. Furthermore, Washington probably intervened through back channels and used its influence on *Fethullah Gülen*, the leader of an influential Islamic community in Turkey who currently lives in Pennsylvania. In a carefully given interview, *Gülen* criticized the IHH and told an American journalist that those who organized the Freedom Flotilla should have struck a deal with Israel beforehand. It was also important to see that *Gülen* criticized the activists who “disobeyed the authorities”, alluding to the Israeli Navy, stressing that such behavior would do no good.²⁷ The only actor that has significant leverage and political will, Washington, can and should spare more time and energy to convince Tel Aviv to meet the conditions that Ankara put for the normalization.

However, should there be a compromise ending the crisis, there is still little room for optimism. Even if Turkey is offered the apology; the regional dynamics that undermined the alignment will continue to be at work. The strategic landscape in the Middle East which had been shaped by the Gulf War has been changing by the Arab uprisings. The regional center of gravity has been moving towards the Gulf. Domestic social and political dynamics unleashed after the Arab uprisings undermined the regional order that had been formed and maintained by Israel after the 1967 War. The Camp David Accords, the corner stone of the current *status quo* are increasingly challenged by new political groups that are getting closer to power in respective Arab countries. As was the case with *Ihvan* in Egypt, new groups have already made it clear that the political price that Israel will have to pay for Egyptian

compliance will be higher. The same argument will be valid for Jordan and Syria. It is still difficult to foresee parameters of the new regional context in which the bilateral relations will be formed; it is obvious that the new conditions will not be conducive to create a favorable setting for the amelioration of bilateral relations. The new regimes will still keep demonizing Israel for all bad things happening in their country.

As far as the perceptions of Israel is concerned, domestic scenery in Turkey is no exception. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan already discovered the high dividends of getting criticizing Israel in public. “*One-minute*” has become a motto or trade mark that Erdoğan seems to get benefit of it for years to come. In the 2011 Elections, “*One minute!*” was used extensively as one of the pivotal slogans in party brochures, propaganda leaflets and billboards. In the election manifesto, under the title of “Turkey said ‘no!’ to the injustice”, the Davos incident was depicted as an event marking the rise of Erdoğan as an international leader. “When our Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rightfully pronounced the Palestinian question, the bleeding wound for many years, he captivated public attention across the World. “*One Minute!*”, our Prime Minister, who already became the voice in the international arena for those who had been silenced and intimidated for years, launched an international social campaign that became the symbol of peace and brotherhood in the East and in the West.”²⁸

The JDP government also moved the Palestinian question to the centre of the mundane political discourse and portrayed the plight of Palestinians in Gaza as an internal issue.²⁹ The identification with the Palestinians became increasingly evident in speeches that Erdoğan delivered during his campaign for the general elections of June 2011. One of the remarkable speeches that he gave in *Konya* on the eve of the elections indicates the degree of internalization of the Palestinian problem:

*Now once again I give utterances from Konya to the entire Turkey and to the entire World; the fate of Jerusalem is not separated from the fate of Istanbul. The fate of Gaza is not separated from the fate of Ankara. The fate of Ramallah, of Nablus, Rafah, Jenin, Bethlehem is never separated from the fate of Konya. Even if the entire World remained silent, we shall not be so. Even if the whole World closed its eyes to it, we shall not do so. If the World merely spectates to the bloodshed, we shall not merely watch and remain indifferent to what is happening. If the World turns its back to Palestine, we shall not do so to the Palestinian people, to Gaza, to Jerusalem.*³⁰

By the same token, demonization of Israel gathered speed after the *Freedom Flotilla Raid*. Prime Minister Erdoğan's polemical speeches illustrate the extent of demonization and the way Israel is attached to Turkey's domestic politics. Prime Minister often lambasted Israel and, if and when he was criticized by the opposition for not being tough enough with Israel, he branded them as Israel's advocates or simply pro-Israeli. During the JDP's campaign for the 2011 elections, references to the Palestinian problem gained a remarkable frequency. In a speech he gave in *Kayseri* in January 2011 he blamed Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of the main opposition party, Republican People's Party, [RPP] of advocating Israel. "RPP Chairman had received the attorneyship of Israel. Is it your business? Leave it! There are already many [in Israel] who want to hit Turkey. Are you doing the same? Do you think that your votes will increase when you advocate Israel? Do you think that this is going to make you stronger?"³¹ In September 2011, another rhetorical quarrel broke out when the *IHH* announced that preparations to send the second *Freedom Flotilla* to Gaza were underway. When RPP's leader Kılıçdaroğlu declared that "should there another flotilla or torpid boats be sent to Gaza, he will congratulate PM Erdoğan by kissing him on the forehead." Prime Minister Erdoğan's response was despising: "Save your dirty lips for Israel! I won't let your dirty lips touch onto my clean forehead!" Furthermore, he added: "When the opposition parties look at Gaza or Kayseri, they look through neither our eyes nor martyr *Furkan's* eyes. They do view Gaza, Somalia, Syria, Libya, Turkey and the whole world through glasses made in Tel Aviv or ideas of 1940s. That is the difference between them and us! They miss no opportunity to belittle Turkey. While we defend the rights of *Mavi Marmara*, of Gaza, of Hama, of Somalia, they are busy to unveil statues in *Kuşadası*."³² Even after the elections, Israel and the plight of Gazans continue to be subjects of bitter quarrels between the *JDP* and other parties. When writer Paul Auster announced that he will decline visiting Turkey in protest for journalists detained on flimsy charges, Prime Minister Erdoğan criticized Auster for having previously visited Israel. "Supposedly Israel is a democratic, secular country, a country where freedom of expression and individual rights and freedoms are limitless. What an ignorant man you are! Aren't they are the ones that rained bombs down on Gaza? They launched phosphorus bombs and used chemical weapons. How can you not see this?"³³ When RPP leader Kılıçdaroğlu invited Auster in protest against Prime Minister's reaction, Erdoğan continued his critics: "If he [Auster] does come to Turkey, they [Auster and Kılıçdaroğlu] should also go to Israel together afterwards. Otherwise that visit will be incomplete. They should have a picnic on a hill overlooking Gaza. They should repeat that there are no jailed journalists in Israel."³⁴

Two intertwined dynamics, the Arab uprisings and increasing Iranian influence in the Gulf, will likely bring out different sets of impact on the Turkish Israeli relations. Although invoked by different social and political motivations varying from one Arab country to another, uprisings paved the way for underprivileged sociopolitical groups aspiring to play more significant role in politics. Under such regional circumstances, the JDP's "*One Minute*" policies correspond with what is dubbed as the Arab street. Under the given regional political climate, the prospects that the two countries would dovetail their regional policies look grim. However, given the changing strategic landscape in the region, the need for balanced relations between Turkey and Israel is becoming more conspicuous. First and foremost, the regional context after the US withdrawal from Iraq has been becoming more conducive for the normalization of the relations. The NATO's missile radar facilities installed in Malatya is an embodiment of increasing need for better relations between Turkey and Israel. Despite the statements made by Turkish authorities that Turkey would not let Israel get intelligence from the *Kürecik* radar, the installation will serve the interests of both countries. Therefore, it is likely that the strategic necessity highlighted by the radar installation will continue to exist in the foreseeable future. However, since the bilateral problems between the two countries have now been perceived through the lenses of domestic politics and became part of the mundane political discourse in Turkey, these dynamics will not permit the relations to go back to what they used to be in the early 2000s. Therefore, unless the JDP government starts paying attention to the changing strategic landscape, it would be profoundly difficult to end the stalemate.

NOTES

1. The article was adapted from the paper titled "Turkish-Israeli Relations in Crisis: How to Cut the Gordian Knot?" presented at the conference titled "The Impact of Turkey-Israel Relations on EU Policies in the Mediterranean", organized by *Israeli European Policy Network* and *Fundació CIDOB* in Barcelona, 11-12 April 2011.
2. Turkey's initial demands were as follows: "Israel must apologize to the international community and to the families of those who have been killed and wounded in the attack; an urgent inquiry must be undertaken; appropriate international legal action must immediately be taken against the authorities responsible for and perpetrators of this aggression; a severe sense of disappointment and warning must be issued by the United Nations. Israel must be

- urged to abide by international law and basic human rights; the countries concerned must be allowed to retrieve their deceased and wounded immediately; the ships must be expressly released and allowed to deliver the humanitarian assistance to its destination; the families of the deceased, wounded, NGO's and shipping companies concerned must be compensated to the full extent; the blockade of Gaza must be ended immediately and all humanitarian assistance must be allowed in; Gaza must be made an example by swiftly developing it, to make it a region of peace. The international community must be invited to contribute." Address by H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey at the United Nations Security Council, 31 May 2010, New York, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/anasayfa-3105-un.en.mfa>, [Accessed on 28 March 2011]
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 6. Yasemin Çongar, "Üç Silahşörler' Hazır", *Milliyet*, 7 May 1997.
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http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=175520, 17 May 2009, [17 April 2011]
 18. "İsrail OECD'de", *Hürriyet*, 12 May 2010.

19. Devrim Sevimay's interview with Hüseyin Çelik, "Başbakan Bu Tavrı Koymasa Anti-Semitizm Daha Çok Artar", *Milliyet*, 14 June 2010.
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Regional Aspirations and Limits of Power-Turkish-Iranian Relations in the New Middle East

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article vise à mettre en évidence la relation entre les problèmes de sécurité et les aspirations régionales de la Turquie et l'Iran avec un accent particulier donné à la concurrence accélérée entre les deux pays voisins après les deux développements suivants: La décision des États-Unis de se retirer de l'Irak et le printemps arabe. Les questions principales posées dans cet article sont les suivantes: Quels sont les facteurs fondamentaux qui motivent l'Iran et la Turquie de vouloir dominer la région? Comment les deux parties abordent-elles la situation du Moyen-Orient? Quel est leur type de bases de pouvoir? Quel type de stratégies a été adopté par les deux pays? Quelle est la nature de leurs relations avec les États-Unis? Comment les acteurs régionaux et externes affectent-ils la concurrence turco-iraniennne? En analysant le cas turco-iranien l'article montre que l'un des facteurs les plus importants qui motive les États à rechercher l'hégémonie est le besoin de sécurité perçu qui est censé être rempli principalement par l'amélioration des capacités de puissance. Il souligne le fait que ce qui différencie la quête turque de diriger la région par rapport aux aspirations iraniennes n'est pas le besoin de sécurité, mais les conditions dans lesquelles cette quête est pensée pour être accomplie.

ABSTRACT

This article aims at highlighting the relationship between security problems and regional aspirations of Turkey and Iran with a special emphasis given to the accelerated competition between the two neighbors after the two developments: The US decision to withdraw from Iraq and the Arab Spring. The leading questions of the article are as follows: What are the fundamental factors that drive Iran and Turkey to lead the region? How both parties approach the current state of the Middle East? What type of power bases they have? What type of strategies have been adopted by both countries? What is the nature of their relations with the US? How regional and external actors affect Turkish-Iranian competition? Analyzing the Turkish-Iranian case the article shows that one of the most important factors that motivate states to seek hegemony is the perceived security needs that are thought to be fulfilled mainly through enhancement of power capabilities. It underlines the fact that what differentiates Turkish quest to lead the region from Iran's aspirations is not the need of security but under what kind of conditions it is thought to be fulfilled.

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Defining the Concept of Hegemony

In Greek, hegemony (*hēgemonia*) refers to authority which itself comes from hegemon (*hēgemōn*) meaning leader, ruler. It is often used in the sense of domination of one power or state within a league, confederation, etc., or of one social class over others. In modern times there is no common definition of the term. The debate around hegemony revolves around two separate through related meanings: dominance and leadership.¹ In the first sense hegemony refers to the “dominance of one state over others.”² In the same vein, Gilpin describes hegemonic system as one manifesting “an unequivocal hierarchy of power and an unchallenged dominant or hegemonic power.”³

Power Resources

Broadly speaking hegemony entails a preponderance of material capabilities and the willingness to use them. It should also be noted that domination in the modern sense does not require territorial annexation. Economic and military superiority of a given state is often viewed as a prerequisite for constructing hegemony.⁴ Capability to dominate is measured both by the aggregate resources possessed by a hegemon across a wide range of capabilities, and also by the degree of concentration of these resources in terms of their international distribution. Most of the contemporary authors focus primarily on economic capabilities. For example according to Keohane, military capabilities cannot meaningfully be applied to resolving economic crises, and too much of a military budget undermines long-term economic growth. Therefore he argues that:

*Hegemonic powers must have control over raw materials, control over sources of capital, control over markets, and competitive advantages in the production of highly valued goods.*⁵

Gilpin also argues that hegemonic states should have control over raw materials, sources of capital, markets and acquire competitive advantages in the production of highly valued goods. He considers hegemony as leadership in an international environment in which the hegemon supplies public goods, such as a secure status quo, free trade, and a stable monetary backbone in exchange for revenue and deference. Gilpin points out that American hegemony has fostered free trade and freedom of capital movements, supplied the key reserve currency, and managed the international monetary system. He states that the system works because:

*While bringing benefits to themselves... the policies of the hegemonic powers were also beneficial to those other states that desired to and could take advantage of the international political and economic status quo.*⁶

Hegemony as a Relation

Hegemony is also viewed as a relation entailing political and ideological leadership. Hegemony does not rest alone on coercive power; it requires consent⁷, active willing and engagement of the subordinated units that would be obtained through gaining legitimacy.⁸ In this regard, hegemony involves the success of the dominant powers in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that it is accepted by the subordinate states as 'common sense'. As underlined by Gramsci:

*The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'" and "The 'normal' exercise of hegemony ... is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent.*⁹

When measured in terms of its outcomes rather than capabilities, hegemony as one type of order requires the powerful state to create rules and institutions in inter-state relations.¹⁰ Accordingly, a hegemonic power is defined as one that is 'powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations, and willing to do so.'¹¹

It is important to note that hegemony denotes a goal besides being an end. In this regard making a clear distinction between regional order and strategy of the aspiring state, because not all states are willing to build an order, could succeed to do so.

Regional Hegemony

The definition of regional hegemony more or less shares the same traits as world hegemony. Regional hegemony are seen as states possess power sufficient to dominate subordinate states' system. As in the world hegemony material power factors and ideational factors interact in the exercise of regional hegemony.¹² However, the power base of a regional hegemon is also a matter of the given states' relations with the global actors. Interference of external actors can either empower or destroy regional hegemonic projects.

Fundamental Motives

Hegemony is not only a matter of capabilities launching; such a project requires willingness. The drives behind hegemonic aspirations often involve a complex mixture of domestic and international factors. The case of Iran shows us that one of the most important factors that motivate states to seek hegemony is the perceived security needs that are thought to be fulfilled mainly through enhancement of power capabilities. What differentiates Turkish quest to lead the region is not the need of security but under what kind of conditions it is thought to be fulfilled.

Identity and Foreign Policy Roles

As Ilya Prizel argues, perceptions of identity are of importance as a psychological frame of national identity, of a nation-state's place in the world, its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. William Wallace goes much more further to assert that, foreign policy is about national identity itself, about the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad.¹³

It is possible to bridge perceptions of identity with foreign policy orientations by focusing on role conceptions that are defined as “the policy makers’ own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, rules and actions suitable to their state and of the functions”.¹⁴ Role conceptions suggest how norms and values become operationalized in terms of verbal statements about expected foreign policy behavior offering a ‘road-map’ that foreign policy makers rely on to simplify and facilitate understanding of complex reality.¹⁵

Security Needs and Regional Aspirations of Iran

The definition of the foreign policy identity of a state and the roles associated to it do not occur in a vacuum. They are closely related with a certain interpretation of history, lessons driven from it and the power resources acquired. It is possible to approach to the construction of identities focusing on the chosen glories and chosen traumas.¹⁶

Regional ambitions of Iran are not something new. Historically, Iran was an empire until the 19th century. The direct and indirect interference of the Great Powers in Iranian affairs in the 19th and 20th centuries provoked Iranian quest to become a regional power. History gave Iranian people both a sense of national grandeur and victimization that are mutually reinforcing. Excessive admiration of self hides a vulnerable psychology marked with self-

preoccupation while victimization leads to unconscious deficits in self-esteem that necessitates the satisfaction of security needs boosting power aspirations.

As Gahramanpour noted, the treaties of Golestan (1813) and Turkomanчай (1828) between Iran and Russia, and the Treaty of Herat (1857) between Iran and Great Britain, are all perceived as attempts to break up the territorial unity of Iran and weaken its geopolitical importance. In the public memory of Iran modern history begins with losing territory in wars against Russia in the 19th century. According to the prevalent perception, the greatness of Iran challenges external powers' interests that lead to attempts to weaken the country and divide into pieces. Since this danger is always present, Iran has to empower itself in order to counter foreign dominance and realize its identity. It is largely believed that when Iran is secure from foreign interference it would naturally become a regional power and when it is powerful it can assure its security in a better way.¹⁷

In line with these thoughts Mohammad Reza Shah wanted to restore ancient Iran and make it the fifth greatest power in the world. One of the declared policies of Mohammad Reza Shah was to transform Iran into a regional power in the Persian Gulf that led to accelerated efforts to acquire modern and sophisticated weapons' technologies. These efforts also included the development of a nuclear power program, which was initiated in the 1960s. Iranian aspirations became a reality to a large extent in the early 1970s in the context of the two-pillar policy of US President Nixon that supported Tehran's ambitions since the shah provided a bulwark against both communist and radical Arab nationalism. During the final years of the old regime, Iran was a rising power in the region thanks to its oil revenues, and, of course, western technological and political support.

However due to his close relations with Washington, the Shah was also accused of being a puppet of the United States that played a critical role in fomenting the 1979 revolution in Iran. As a result of the 1952 coup d'état against Prime Minister Mussadiq, and Washington's overwhelming support for Mohammad Reza Shah in the 1960s and 1970s the role of the West was also regarded as a negative one. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution anti-imperialism became a founding element of the identity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in the foreign policy arena this was manifested in the emphasis on the doctrine of exporting the revolution which was adopted in 1980s.¹⁸

During its war with Iraq, the Western Powers' indifference to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in 1980 and to the usage of chemical weapons against Iranian people deepened the trauma and the feeling of isolation. Iran's experience of an existential struggle for survival strengthened the drive of the

Islamic regime to embark upon a series of military projects initiated during the hostilities and find ways to secure its interests in the international arena to break its isolation.

Discourse and Practice

Iranian foreign policy discourses are grounded on cultural values and confrontation with hegemonic tendencies of great powers. As underlined by Dehshiri and Majidi, Islam forms the dominant ideological discourse of Iranian foreign policy:

Iran rejected alignment with both the East and the West. Instead, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Article 11, exhorts the government to achieve unity with other Islamic countries to establish an Islamic world order founded on solidarity.¹⁹

In international affairs Iran has not accepted the status quo and advocated a 'value based' approach in shaping its policies. In this regard Iran could be defined as a "mission oriented" state to set goals compatible with Islamic precepts to attain ethical objectives of social justice; confronting hegemony; making efforts to realize a 'just order' in international relations.²⁰ The Islamic Republic's stance against the current world order and its demands to realize a 'just' one, materialized in the regional context through its non-recognition of Israel, support given to Hamas to establish a state in Gaza Strip and to free Jerusalem.

However this does not mean that Iran rejects cooperating with non-Muslim states. In fact many Iranians share the image of their country as a crossroads for different civilizations believing that ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity in Iran is the heritage of cultural interchange with other civilizations and an imperial state. In fact the former President of Iran, Mohammed Hatemi heavily invested in the dialogue among civilizations. He established the International Institute of Interreligious and Civilizational Dialogue in 2006 and visited the U.S. to promote his ideas on the improvement of interreligious and civilizational dialogue.

Tehran attempted to expand its horizon beyond its borders not only by advocating a liberation ideology based on Islam; it focused on external efforts as well. As Edmund Herzig explains, Tehran tried to develop its ties with neighbors and with other nearby and Muslim states, and with possible alternative major power centers (USSR, then Russia, China, Europe, India). One of the constant themes of Iranian statements on regionalism has been

self-reliance among regional states and the exclusion of extra-regional powers (meaning the United States). In this vein, Iran insisted on the formation of a new regional structure for the Persian Gulf states to replace the GCC and use all possible international settings to exclude the US. However, Iranian efforts proved ineffective. While Gulf states were seeking compliance with the extra-regional hegemon as an effective way to maximize their security in relation to regional powers including Iran, other neighboring states like Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia were keen on developing and strengthening their strategic ties with the US. Iran also sought to use regional and inter-national organizations that were not susceptible to western domination-for example, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)-for the same purpose.

Iran's relations that developed with the USSR from the mid-1980s became critically important for its arms' acquisitions. After Rafsanjani's Moscow visit in 1989, long-term economic and trade agreements worth of US \$15 billion were also signed.²¹ The dissolution of Soviet Empire that marked the end of the bipolar world order not only presented the Islamic Republic with special difficulties, that are shared with only a select few other states identified by Washington as 'rogues', dangerous proliferators, sponsors of terrorism and points on 'the axis of evil', but also offered some possibilities to Tehran to create spheres of influence. While Tehran's commitment to promote the Islamic Republic as a revolutionary vanguard state declined, its aspiration to expand its influence beyond its borders, in Central Asia and Caucasus increased. That was also the goal of Turkey which therefore led to a competition between the two neighbors at a time when several new regional initiatives were launched. Iran's regional projects-ECO, the proposed Caspian Sea Cooperation Organization and the Association of Persian-Language Speakers were partly responses to the Turkish-sponsored Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Turkic Summits. However this competition ceased by early 1993, after both parties realized the fact that neither could be a "model" for the new republics and they would better seek cooperation to share the common benefits rather than continue to compete. That hardly meant that Iran enjoyed cooperating fully with Turkey. Iranian policy towards Turkey also included the trilateral cooperation among Iran, Armenia and Greece that driven by a geopolitical rationale and the support given to PKK. No matter whether they compete for regional influence or not Iran evaluated Turkey as a potential threat to its regime because of its democracy and more importantly due to its close ties with the US, therefore

employed non-conventional and asymmetric strategies to curb its power.

In spite of the fact that Iran's strategic predicament is not shared by any of its regional neighbors, its state-led trade promotion and infrastructure projects, the functional approach well received by the regional states, is giving it the character of development integration. Iran which was in search for markets for non-oil exports, for partners in energy development, for help in integrating into the global economic system, easily found partners in the Persian Gulf with the GCC countries, for the construction of roads, railways, pipelines and power grids to link its infrastructure with that of the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Afghanistan, for programs to remove trade barriers in all directions and for environmental protection in the Caspian Sea. Such areas of functional cooperation constitute the core of the activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization, the only multilateral regional organization of any significance of which Iran is a member.²²

Especially during Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran has also pursued a coordinated diplomatic, economic, and military strategy to expand its influence in Latin America and Africa, to create anti-American blocs in those regions and increasing global power projections. These efforts are focused on countries like Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia that represent an important anti-hegemonic pattern of politics in world affairs.²³

Iraq's Occupation and Iran

Iran opposed the American invasion and subsequent occupation. Despite the fact that it regards Saddam regime as a brutal one thus deserved to be overthrown, it was fearful to see a pro-American regime established in Iraq.²⁴ From Tehran's point of view, Iran is a "status-quo country,"²⁵ which seeks to contain the threats posed against it. According to this perception the US's military forces in the Persian Gulf, Iraq, Turkey, Central Asia, and Afghanistan already surround Iran on all sides.²⁶ The Iranian leadership worries that if the tensions with the U.S remain high, an Iraqi state, which becomes a strong ally of the US, would elevate the threat level against the Iranian Islamic regime.

Ironically, Iran's two biggest enemies - the Taliban and Saddam Hussein - were toppled from power by the US. Moreover, the US failures both in Afghanistan and in Iraq showed Tehran the weakness of the US despite its superpower status. The window of opportunities that were presented as a consequence of the US' failures in Afghanistan and in Iraq were expressed by Ahmadinejad with the following words:

The political power of the occupiers is collapsing rapidly. Soon, we will see a huge power vacuum in the region. Of course, we are prepared to fill the gap, with the help of neighbors and regional friends like Saudi Arabia, and with the help of the Iraqi nation.²⁷

Main Pillars of Iran's Iraq Policy

Tehran aspires to see a stable Iraq. However, what is more important is whether the government in Iraq would be an ally or an enemy of Iran. In order to resist to the US and assure its role in shaping the future of Iraq, it pursued a multi-dimensional approach to create a sphere of influence.

Iran has supported its Iraqi allies in their ongoing de-Ba'athification efforts and the fragmented and unregulated nature of Iraqi politics has allowed Iran to provide campaign financing, media support and mediation to Iraqi political lists. While one important aspect of Iran's policy in Iraq is the support given to Iraqi Shiite factions, another important aspect of its policy encompasses Iran's ties with Iraqi Kurds.

Iran has been materially assisting and influencing major Shiite Muslim factions in Iraq, most of which have ideological, political, and religious ties to Tehran. It is important to recall that the ISCI's (The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq) leaders, including Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer Al Hakim, had spent their years of exile in Iran and built strong ties to Iranian leaders. "Badr Brigades" which were recruited, trained, and armed by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps burrowed into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), particularly the National Police unit of the Iraqi police force during the same period and since 2007, the militia has become integrated into Iraq's political process and security forces. Developing close relations with Sadr's faction that won 30 total seats in the 2006-2010 parliaments and built an estimated 60,000-person "Mahdi Army" (Jaysh al-Mahdi) after Saddam's fall, was also regarded as an asset by the Iranian leadership. Mahdi Army militiamen and Badr fighters in and outside the Iraqi Security Forces were alleged to commit sectarian killings of Sunnis, accelerated after the February 2006 bombing of the Al Askari Mosque in Samarra.²⁸

Iran's influence in Iraq is not limited to its ties with the Shiites but includes its multi-faceted relations established with Iraqi Kurds. Many of Iraq's current leaders who were in exile in Iran or materially supported by Iran during Saddam's rule, today accept Iran as an influential actor in Iraq. In parallel with the inception of the Islamic revolution in Tehran, close ties had been established between Iran and Iraqi Kurds, mainly due to their mutual Baathist

enemy, Saddam Hussein. Iraqi Kurds, who were fighting persecution and a nationalist legacy of their own in Iraq, played a key role in the conflict between Iran and Iraq by siding with Iran. In 1992 the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) were created after the US imposed no-fly zone in Iraqi Kurdistan had allowed the Kurds to develop their own governing institutions. Iraqi Kurds enjoyed good relations with Iran that offered them its political and economic support during the period between 1991 and 2003. While the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) struggled for supremacy in Iraqi Kurdistan, the support taken from Iran and Turkey gained critical importance in their search for power and influence. In the post-Saddam era the existing relationships between Iran and the Kurdish leaders was fostered and strengthened. Iran was the first country to open a consulate in the region. In 2005, Iran extended Iraq a \$1 billion credit line some of which is being used to build roads in the Kurdish north and a new airport near Najaf, a key entry point for the Iranian pilgrims.²⁹

Iran seeks to expand its trade and establish economic dependencies in Iraq's economy. Iran's economic initiatives are strengthened by the diplomatic and military agreements between Iran and Iraq. Two countries have developed a free trade zone around Basra, which buys electricity from Iran. Maliki's visit to Iran in September 2006 resulted in signing agreements on cross border immigration, intelligence sharing, and commerce. In March 2008 Ahmadinejad visited Iraq, for the first time since the 1979 Islamic revolution. During this visit Iran announced that it will extend a \$1 billion in credits for Iranian exports to Iraq, and the two sides signed seven agreements for cooperation in the areas of insurance, customs' treatment, industry, education, environmental protection, and transportation. They also agreed to renovate water and land border posts. Iraq's eastern provinces rely on Iranian provision of vital civilian fuel products, such as cooking gas, heating oil, and vehicle fuels, as well as Iranian support to the Iraqi electricity grid.³⁰

In the security field we see that during Maliki's visit to Iran in August 8-9, 2007, while Iraq declared its intention to expel the 3, 400 members of the Iranian opposition group People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, Iran pledged to curb aid to Shiite militias. Other defense agreements to cooperate on mine clearance and searches for missing Iran-Iraq war soldiers were signed in the course of Maliki's visit to Iran in June 2008.³¹

However, Iranian influence in Iraq is not without limits. The limits to Iran's influence were evident when Iran failed to derail the forging of the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement that authorized the U.S. military presence beyond

December 31, 2008. Yet Iranian leaders' criticisms seem to have contributed to the insistence of Iraqi leaders on substantial U.S. concessions to a final draft agreement. The U.S. agreement to an Iraqi demand to set a timetable (end of 2011) for a full withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq diminished Iranian opposition but Tehran continued to warn Maliki that the United States cannot be trusted to implement its pledges under the pact. However, it should also be mentioned that not all Iraqi citizens accept the growing Iranian weight in Iraq as a positive development for their country. Still, Iran is keen on influencing senior Iraqi political leaders. To this end it offers humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people to help pro-Iranian leaders justify their relationships with Tehran. In fact, the most pro-Iranian factions got poor results in the January 31, 2009 provincial elections and again in the March 7, 2010 national elections. But the winner, former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's bloc was unable to form a government. Hence, both Iran and the U.S backed the formation of a new government headed by Nouri Al-Maliki. However, while the U.S. had hoped the prime minister would form a government in partnership with Allawi, Iran brokered an alliance between Maliki and the movement led by the powerful Shiite cleric Muqtada Sadr. These developments confirmed Iran's continued role as a major powerbroker in Iraqi affairs since all political blocs consulted with Iran to try to gain its support for their inclusion in or dominance of any new government.³²

Turkey's Self-Perception and the Middle East

In Turkish identity construction while the War of Independence that resulted in formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 emerged as a chosen glory, the regression of Turkish society under the Ottoman Empire and the European intervention in domestic Ottoman affairs in support of different ethnic and religious minorities constituted a chosen trauma. According to the lesson derived from history in the 1920s it is necessary not to trust any state but rely on its own strength. However the attitudes of the Republic vis-à-vis the foreign powers were not only motivated by suspicion but with a great admiration of Western modernity as well. Thus, instead of preaching revenge, the enemies' ideals were pushed as a solution for Turkish people's progression. Considerable attention and energy were devoted to become a Westernized country that was equated to a civilized world. This understanding paved the way towards Turkey's membership to NATO and its aspiration to become a member of the EU while Turkey's relations with the Muslim Middle East, especially with the Arabs, were largely kept limited to security considerations.

For a long time the Turkish foreign policy elite tended not to believe that Turkey was able to change or control the course of events in the Middle East. Non-involvement was a product of the fears to get drawn into the regions problems. This attitude was also related to the perceived historical sensitivities of Arab nations related to Turkey's Ottoman past. Turkish elite also regarded Turkey's involvement to the region a challenge to the countries that compete for regional leadership as well as Western allies' policies. Turkey's power status and its approach with regard to Western countries constituted the most important ingredients of its attitude towards the Middle East. Moreover it was advised not to create an impression to the outside world that Turkey supports the autocratic regimes that could be changed in the near future. It was also believed that 'Turkey has to maintain a balance between her relations with Israel and the Arab countries. Naturally these thoughts hardly included a 'leadership' role. Believing that Turkey has neither enough resources nor any support, the Turkish elite advocated that Turkey should concentrate on its domestic problems and consider exerting its power only if Turkey was faced with visible threats. In other words, the only area in which Turkey's immediate involvement might be expected was that of security.³³

Turkish Response to Iraq's Occupation

While Turkey's hopes to become a member of the European Union (EU) disappeared, Turkey's perception of security risks were multiplied with the War in Iraq. As Iran has found itself encircled with American troops and bases with the American invasion of Iraq following Afghanistan, Turkey that refused to allow US troops to transit into Iraq from its soil, felt abandoned by the US in front of the growing relations between the US and Iraqi Kurdish groups. Sectarian violence in Iraq and growing Kurdish separatism that could spill over, urged Turkey to focus more on the Middle East in an effort to prevent the establishment of a Kurdish state and contribute to peace and stability in Turkey's neighborhood. Faced with the overwhelming power of the US in its neighborhood Turkey expanded its economic, diplomatic and military ties with Iran and focused on the regional relations in order to avoid potential acts of United States that may undermine its interests. What distinguished Turkey's behavior from Iran which it openly opposed to American policies, was its employment of "soft balancing" instruments that are defined as actions that do not directly challenge US military preponderance, but do delay, complicate, and increase the costs of using American power. As argued by Pape the most important advantage of such efforts policy is to prevent undesired actions and policies of the US via a combination of economic,

diplomatic, and institutional methods while leaving enough room to collaborate with it as long as it is beneficial.³⁴

Accelerated Cooperation between Turkey and Iran

It is in this atmosphere of mutual security concerns that the two countries called for Muslim countries acting together to solve the Iraq crisis peacefully and came together under the Turkish initiative to hold regional meetings with the participation of foreign ministers of regional countries to find a solution to Iraq crisis before and after the war.

Following mutual official visits Turkey and Iran decided to carry out joint efforts against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), an offshoot of the PKK terrorist organization that also included sharing intelligence and coordinating military operations. Between Turkey and Iran the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on security cooperation was signed on July 29, 2004.³⁵ This agreement was reinforced on April 17, 2008, by a new MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) which foresaw the broadening and deepening of security cooperation framework between the two countries. Furthermore during Ahmadinejad's visit in August 2008, the two countries' presidents signed five memorandums of understanding on security cooperation, combating organized crime, economic cooperation, and education.³⁶ Over the past years, Turkey and Iran have gradually increased their cooperation in economic and energy fields, deepening their relationship through growing trade and bilateral investment. Despite the economic sanctions wanted by the United States and the UN – intended to halt international investment in Iran's energy sector – Turkey considered the possibility of building a pipeline that would deliver Iranian gas across Turkey to Europe (Nabucco Project). In 2009, Iran and Turkey also signed a memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation on air, land, and sea transportation as part of an effort to raise the two countries' bilateral trade. Turkey aimed at increasing trade exchange with Iran from \$10,6 billion to \$30 billion.³⁷

Different Priorities in Iraq

However Ankara and Tehran differed with respect to their priorities in Iraq. While Turkey attached utmost importance to maintain the territorial unity of Iraq, and to have a strong and stable government in Baghdad that would restrain Kurdish dreams of independence, Tehran's major concern has been its relationship with the United States that is perceived as an existential threat.

From the Iranian standpoint, Turkey may not be perceived as a fully reliable partner because of its institutional ties with the US, whereas, US-Iran conflict limited Turkey's desire to extend the relations to all fields. The two countries' differences were visible during Iraq's parliamentary elections. While Tehran threw its weight behind a Shiite bloc led by Maliki, Turkey backed the secular Iraqiyya alliance of Allawi, which narrowly won the most votes due to its emphasis on the "Iraqi identity" rather than any religious or ethnic identity.³⁸

Yet, Ankara's remedy to Tehran's rising influence in Iraq has not led to anything that could be thought within the context of traditional balance of power politics through defensive alliances. Turkey's new Iraq policy which started to become visible beginning in 2006 avoids intimidating Iran. Ankara has not assumed an antagonistic stance against Iran. Moreover, Iran seems to have inspired Turkey to launch multi-dimensional efforts to develop cooperative relationships with different segments of Iraqi society. Following the Iranian example Turkey also started to establish dialogue with all the religious and ethnic groups in Iraq in addition to its efforts to integrate Turkmens and Sunni Arabs into the Iraqi political processes. It opened consulates in Mosul, Erbil, and most notably Basra; it established a high-level strategic cooperation council jointly with the Iraqi government; and signed a military cooperation accord with Baghdad as well as deals on energy cooperation and water sharing. Trade between the two countries amounted to about \$6 billion in 2010, almost double what it was in 2008. Turkish companies became the top investors in hotels, real estate, industry and energy in the northern Kurdish region, and increasingly in the Shiite south where Iranian influence had been almost unchallenged.³⁹

Redefinition of Turkey's Identity

While War in Iraq required Turkey to focus its attention on the Middle East more than ever, Justice and Development Party's coming to power in 2002 created a favorable environment for Turkey's re-definition of its place in the world and the roles it aspires to assume.

Ankara displayed an assertive foreign policy and willingness to pursue an independent stance encouraged by increased self-confidence due to its growing economic power, leading it to become the 15th largest economy in the world, and the 7th in Europe, which consequently elevated it to be a member of G-20 Group.⁴⁰

Turkey that has long been indirectly mirroring Western values to its surrounding regions by constituting an 'example' was not only ready to reflect

the Islamic civilizations' values and Muslim concerns to West, but also eager to be accepted as a role model.

As Erdoğan claimed Turkey has believed to have one face to the West and one to the East'. The new understanding of the bridge role explained by the Turkish Minister for EU affairs and Chief negotiator Egemen Bagis with these words:

Turkey is the most Western country in the orient and the most oriental country in the West... We were the bridge between the West and the Orient for centuries but we attached more importance to West. However in order to have a strong bridge which really provides the connection between civilizations through communication, transportation and dialogue, it should have strong piers on both sides. In no where in the world a bridge, the piers on one side which are weak can be called a sound one.⁴¹

Turkey was believed to have its own capacity of setting its own position. For Ankara it was not a matter of changing Turkey's pro-Western orientations. According to the Prime Minister, Turkey cannot designate its foreign policy in line with someone else's directives but on its own".⁴²

Still it is important to note that not all elements of Turkish foreign policy discourse were in harmony with each other. In fact a hidden controversy exists between the advocated 'bridge role' and the negative connotations associated with the role of Western countries in the Middle East.

The negative image of the West was instrumentalized by the Turkish leaders whenever they feel that Western powers try to impede Ankara's influence in the Middle East. However these references were not made openly. For example while commonalities between Turks and Arabs were mentioned besides cultural affinities, the stress was also put into the fact that they have fought wars against the same enemies.⁴³

Convergences of Discourse between Turkey and Iran

Similar to Iran Turkey has also acquired a critical approach to international order. Turkish leaders have been asserting that United States could no longer shape global politics on its own, and should begin sharing power with other countries. For example, Turkish President Abdullah Gul asserted that

I don't think you can control the entire world from one centre. There are big nations. There are huge populations. There is unbelievable economic development in some parts of the world. So what we have to do is, instead

*of unilateral actions, act all together, make common decisions and have consultations with the world. A new world order, if I can say it, should emerge.*⁴⁴

Like Iranian leaders Turkish leaders also put emphasis on moral and ethical concerns.⁴⁵ According to Ankara's view when Turkey assumes a role in the remaking of the global order, it is expected to distinguish itself from other powers by emphasizing moral and ethical concerns. In Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan words:

*We considered the pain of the people of Iraq, of the Afghan people and Pakistan as the pain of ourselves. When any organ of a body feels pain, the whole body feels pain. Likewise, when children in Gaza were massacred, we felt their pain as if our own children went through a massacre. Jerusalem's problem is our problem. Gaza's problem is our problem. We defend justice for all regardless of their language, religion or skin color.*⁴⁶

Furthermore, the 'Alliance of Civilizations' Initiative that is co-chaired by the Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero and Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan like the 'Dialogue of Civilizations' proposed by Hatemi, aimed at reversing the environment that created the rise of Islamophobia in the West after 9/11 and overcoming the anger against USA and its allies especially after the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu used to underline the need to design a "just" and "inclusive" global order that is not perceived separated from the question on how to reform and restructure regional orders. In his view, Turkish state as the 'successor state of the Ottoman Empire that has responsibilities toward neighboring regions' should be 'among the countries that will lay the foundations of this order'.⁴⁷ In this vein, again similar to Iran, Turkey's efforts to be active in international organizations like the non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council, as well as in many international and European institutions, have been regarded as important assets.

In dealing with regional order and responding to several regional questions, four principles are often highlighted: First the need to secure Turkey's neighborhood. Accordingly Turkey is expected to re-engage all neighboring areas and look at neighboring regions through a common security perspective. Secondly, to contribute to the solution of regional problems employing all diplomatic means. Thirdly, to establish economic interdependencies in surrounding regions that is considered as the best instrument of peace. And fourthly, to create conditions for multi-cultural, multi-sectarian coexistence that is perceived as a prerequisite to establish peace.⁴⁸

Expressed by a desire to reproduce the historical integration of the region Turkey set the goal of achieving maximum cooperation and minimum problems with its neighbors within the context of its 'zero problems policy'. The efforts launched by Turkey included growing number of high-level visits and cooperation pacts being signed on a variety of issues ranging from culture to security. In fact, lifting visa obligations facilitating the flow of people across borders and expanding communication constituted the most important parts of Turkish policy.

Like Iran Turkey also aspired to promote soft power elements in its foreign policy⁴⁹, but contrary to Iran it found more favorable environment for its initiatives to mediate conflicts which also included attempts to de-escalate the nuclear crisis between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the West and the United States.⁵⁰ In spite of the fact that Iran's regime was not recognized by the US within the context of a Turkish initiative, Iraq's Neighbors Meetings with American and Iranian envoys came together several times.⁵¹ Ankara has not only maintained that Iran's nuclear program is of a peaceful nature, it also criticized the international community for its 'double standards', ignoring Israel's purported nuclear arsenal.⁵²

With the Tehran Declaration⁵³ Turkey together with Brazil actively involved themselves in finding a solution to nuclear crisis too. According to the Declaration, Iran agreed to deposit 1, 200 kg of low-enriched uranium in Turkey in exchange for receiving 120 kg (264 pounds) of 20% enriched uranium to fuel the reactor used for medical purposes from the Vienna Group (United States, Russia, France, and the IAEA) within one year. The Declaration was rejected based on the belief that Iran possesses in excess of 2,000 kg of uranium, it thus would still have enough resources to produce a bomb after the deposit in Turkey.

Again similar to Iran the Palestinian issue became critically important for Turkish policy towards the Middle East. Erdoğan gained much prestige at home and in the Middle East as a result of his personal stance against Israel's actions. Ankara's criticism of the atrocities against Gaza and cancellation of Israel's participation in an annual NATO military exercise in October 2009 praised by Iran and created a bridge between the two neighbors.

Yet though it is argued that the two countries' roles complete each other on the Palestinian issue, it has become an issue of competition as well, since both target the same public – the 'Arab and Islamic street' offering different political models to shape and spearhead change in the region, especially after the start of Arab upheavals.

Turkey-Iran Relations in the Post-US Invasion Era

Turkish-Iranian relations have entered into a new era following the two developments: the US withdrawal from Iraq and the Arab uprisings. Both developments led to the emergence of new areas where the balance of power between the two countries is perceived to be reset.

In the post-US invasion era, Ankara has lobbied intensively to establish a representative government in the Iraqi capital that would have reflected all colors in Iraqi society. The al-Iraqiya bloc, a loose cross-sectarian alignment led by Iyad Allawi, was claimed to be set up at Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's residence in the Turkish capital. The effort eventually failed when Iran pushed hard for the pro-Iranian Shiite-only bloc led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki despite strong Turkish protests delivered at confidential meetings. According to Turkish government's arguments Iran that has aggressively worked for Maliki's State of Law coalition aimed to establish Iraq as a buffer zone against Western and Sunni Arab encroachment. However this did not automatically lead to an observable worsening of the two countries' relations.

The environment that fostered multi-faceted cooperation attempts between Turkey and Iran started to be replaced by an accelerated competition over Iraq's future as soon as the Americans left the country on Dec. 18, 2010. According to Turkish perception, in an effort to consolidate his power by striking his Sunni rivals, Maliki accused Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi of running death squads and started to dismantle the Al-Iraqiya bloc, using power, position, employment and money, eroding Turkish influence.

Arab Uprisings

Justice and Development Party (JDP) government has long been asserting the need to initiate reforms in Islamic countries about the governance of their societies.⁵⁴ However pursuing a policy that rejected democracy imposition, Ankara never dealt with the regime problem in the region directly. Moreover in its attempts to restore the 'historical integrity' of the Middle East, Turkish government has sought to maintain a very delicate balance between its vision of democracy and its interests, which dictate cooperation with the authoritarian regimes in the region. As a matter of fact, despite JDP's stress on democracy and freedom, Erdoğan was among the first to congratulate Ahmadinejad for his victory in the unfair presidential elections held in 2009.

Libya as the Turning Point

Libyan case brought into the fore the differences of interest between Turkey and some European countries, especially with France. Erdoğan waited Russia and China to stop the developments happening in Libya, while openly opposing NATO intervention by making statements that referred to the West's image, though indirectly, as colonial powers.

Turkey's position was reflected by Erdoğan who argued that a military intervention to Libya would be both useless and dangerous with the following words:

*I would like to underline one crucial thing: Turkey will never be a side that would point a weapon on the Libyan people. Our relations with Libya are not driven by hunger for oil or mere interests.*⁵⁵

Turkey's determination to follow an independent stance as well as its capabilities has undergone a serious test by the rapid course of events. In spite of Ankara's endeavors to strengthen its relation with the regional states through building institutional ties, these efforts remained only in the field of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) that are not ready to play comprehensive roles to assure security and stability in the region. Soon after the French air attacks on Libyan ground forces, Turkey changed its position in a way to assist to the implementation of the arms embargo.⁵⁶

Moreover the Libyan case constituted a turning point in Turkey's discourse and its strategic behavior concerning the Middle East, paving the way to a sharp departure from the principle of non-interference to other countries' domestic affairs advocating a regime change. Yet, Turkish assertiveness to guide the transformations in the Middle East leaves out Gulf monarchies due to strategic reasons and Iran because of Ankara's cautious policies not to provoke its neighbors furthermore.

While Ankara assumed a determined stance not to loose any opportunity to lead the developments in other countries setting to carve itself a primary role in shaping the Middle East it tended to prioritize its relations with the US more then any other time. In this vein, it would be incomplete not to draw attention to the linkage between Turkey's concerns in Iraq and the situation in Syria. In fact what encourages Ankara is the belief that Turkey could negotiate its needs with the US in a more equitable basis because Turkey's actions would influence the direction of the developments in the region in a manner either to harm or to protect the US interests in the Middle East.

Turkish-Iranian Competition for Role-Modeling

While Iran was quick to proclaim that the Arab Spring was part of the 'Islamic revival' and overlooked no opportunity to describe the Arab uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Bahrain as an extension of the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, Ankara was eager to become a 'role model' successfully combining Islam and democracy, while ushering in significant economic developments.

Opposing Positions

The Arab uprisings in general accelerated the competition between Turkey and Iran, but what strained their relations the most has been the clashes in Syria that grow in intensity and scope.

Iran and Turkey have major stakes in Syria. For its part, Turkey is mainly concerned with the Syrian situation because it shares the longest border with Syria. Turkey's major concern about Syria is watching the country disintegrate. The risk that Turkey would like to avoid in Syria is a massive wave of refugees. Turkey would not like to see an increase in Kurdistan Workers' Party's (PKK) activity along the border, the emergence of an independent Kurdish state, the reappearance of the Turkish-Syrian disputes over Hatay province or the sharing of water resources. For Iran the possible fall of the Assad regime would increase Iran's isolation and cut direct links between Tehran and its Hezbollah ally in Lebanon.

According to the worst scenario if the bloodshed cannot be stopped at once, Syria may also be dragged into a more comprehensive civil war, in which the country may be divided along sectarian lines and the clashes may spread to the entire region. Ankara and Tehran failed to adopt an agreement and pursue a common approach to the crisis. Ankara made all its plans in accordance with the expectation that Assad's regime would be thrown in a short time. In order to avoid possible competition of power and interest between Turkey and Western powers like the one that happened in Libya, Ankara acted pre-emptively. However this did not happen because of Russian and Chinese vetoes and Ankara was faced with a situation in which Assad's hold on power could mean a near-total loss of its investment in Syria.

Ankara and Tehran have preferred to follow different prescriptions to deal with the situation in Syria. While Iran continues aid to Syria, despite the ongoing oppression, Ankara hosted the establishment of an opposition group, the Syrian National Council (SNC), and provides logistical support to the rebel Syrian Free

Army which has a camp on the Turkish side of the border. Moreover, although it was initially reluctant to take severe measures against Damascus, Ankara is also planning to impose a new set of sanctions while preparing to intervene militarily to establish a safe haven in northern Syria for refugees and Syrian military defectors. The risks of such a decision are high. Some experts even argue that if Turkey conducts a military operation against Syria, it has to risk a collective war against Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon at the same time. This atmosphere explains, for instance, why Turkey wanted the NATO anti-ballistic missile radar to be deployed in Turkey and why the head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard's air division threatened that Iran will target these installations if its nuclear program is attacked by the United States and/or Israel.

So far neither Tehran nor Ankara is publicly assaulting the other, but both governments have deep concerns and suspicions of each other. Iranian criticism of Turkey emanates from the religious establishment and the conservative press, while the Iranian leadership is currently refraining from joining in, but several objections posed to Ankara's behavior are expressed in statements published in the state-sponsored media. Iran accuses Turkey of collaborating with Western efforts to overthrow the Syrian regime⁵⁷. It blames Turkey for exploiting regional developments to further its own interests by promoting "liberal Islam" and for their attempts aiming at reviving the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸

Ankara that seems disappointed by Tehran's preference of Bagdad for the next round of nuclear talks⁵⁹ is still careful not to incite Tehran with harsh statements but poses criticism to Maliki who is believed to collaborate with Tehran in pursuing a sectarian approach in domestic affairs and continue to support the Syrian regime.

In a very clear reference to an arrest order for al-Hashemi, Erdoğan expressed Ankara's reactions in a speech delivered on Jan. 24, 2012, to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) parliamentary group, with these words:

*Mr. Maliki should know this: If you engage in a violent process amid a sectarian conflict in Iraq, it will not be possible for us to keep silent about that.*⁶⁰

While Erdoğan accuses Maliki of stoking tensions between Iraq's Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds with "self-central ways", Maliki complains about Ankara's interference in Iraqi internal affairs" arguing that if "Turkey insists on continuing such policies, it will harm Turkey's interests and it will make it a hostile state for all."⁶¹

Interestingly according to some analysis, Turkey has set things in motion to build up a contingency plan in the face of the increasing likelihood that the country may be divided along sectarian lines. This includes creating a united front, consisting of Sunni Arabs and Kurds, against the Shiite majority that is in deep contrast with the Turkish foreign policy that aimed at preserving the territorial integrity of neighboring Iraq and maintain its social fabric, be it ethnic or religious.⁶²

Despite the fact that a majority Shiite government backed by Kurds was favored by Maliki, the question of Kurdish support remains highly debatable because of the increased frictions between Iraq's central government and the KRG over the sharing of oil revenues and future status of Kirkuk.

On the other hand, the Turkish chances to broker an alliance between Sunni-Arabs and Kurds require at the minimum that the PKK problem and the dispute over oil-rich Kirkuk province, whose population is a volatile mix of Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen be solved. Ankara perceives itself more powerful than ever as long as KRG seems to be threatened by the Maliki government. Convergences of interest between Ankara and the KRG are much clearer in the economic field than in the political area. Barzani needs an outlet to the outside world for trade, especially for Kurdistan's oil exports, whereas Turkey can make huge profits out of it. The business links between the two sides today accounts for more than half of Turkey's US\$12 billion trade with Iraq. What Ankara expects from Barzani is his assistance in Ankara's efforts to crack down the Kurdish insurgency in eastern Turkey, led by the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which operates out of sanctuaries in northern Iraq.⁶³

Two questions come to the fore: Is this the sincere political aim of Barzani? Even if that is so could he assure that Kurds would have no aspirations for an independent state after the dissolution of Iraq? Turkish Peace and Democracy Party co-leader Selahattin Demirtas's following words show that the developments -at least by Turkey's own Kurds- are not read in line with this approach.

*If Iraq is separated into three, it means the borders will be redrawn. A Kurdistan in Syria may be official. For the moment, there is already a Kurdistan state within Iran. As a result, from Hatay to Id r, Turkey's entire south border will officially be with Kurdistan. Then, Turkey should put its thinking cap on and say, 'I must urgently make peace with my own Kurds.'*⁶⁴

Fundamental Divergences

In spite all the similarities in their foreign policy discourse and the roles they intend to assume, there are fundamental differences between Turkey and Iran as long as the US-Iran rivalry continues. No matter how much criticism has been posed to the global system and demands made for a just order by the Turkish leaders, Turkey unlike Iran has no intention of breaking with the system. In fact, on the contrary it promotes market economy, it praises virtues of neo-liberalism, privatization and integration with Western capitalism. Turkey is an important US ally, having institutional ties with the West. Though the need for regional states to determine the fate of the Middle East is an argument which is often stressed by Ankara, in practice Turkey's efforts to facilitate solutions never excluded US participation.

As opposed to Turkey Iran backs countries and organizations that resist the US and Israel and acquired prestige in the region as a result of Hezbollah-Lebanon victory, preventing US's strategic plans. Besides it is interesting to note that despite tensions between Turkey and Israel since the deadly attack on a Gaza-bound aid ship in 2010, the trade volume continued to rise on the sale of military and other goods. Turkey is currently Israel's biggest trade partner in the region and its second-biggest in the world, following the United States.⁶⁵ According to some experts given the new environment in the Middle East, Israel appears to be thinking of restoring ties with Turkey.⁶⁶

Impacts of Turkish-Iranian Tensions

The tensions in Turkish-Iranian relations have a negative impact on the two countries' cooperation against counterinsurgency. In August 2011 Iranian security forces reportedly captured a senior wanted PKK leader, Murat Karayilan, but soon after deliberately let Karayilan go possibly to use it against Ankara. Iran's subsequent rejection in September of Turkish calls to conduct joint operations against the PKK in the Qandil Mountains deepened those suspicions.⁶⁷

The strained relations negatively affect the growing trade and economic relations between Turkey and Iran too. Confirming the realist paradigm that 'a nation would not risk having food, arms or other resources cut off by a rival', Turkey started to seek ways to decrease its dependency to Iran especially in the area of oil and gas. Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz declared that there are plans to purchase oil from Libya in an attempt to reduce its dependence on Iranian oil by 20 percent. Turkey imports around

200, 000 barrels of oil per day from Iran, representing 30 percent of its total imports and more than 7 percent of Iran's oil exports. Tupras is Turkey's main oil importer that has an annual purchase contract of 9 million tons. It is argued that the expected outcome would help Turkey to bypass sanctions imposed by US and would also contribute to the normalization of Libya, increasing the trade volume with this country bilaterally. However Turkey's talks with Saudi Arabia on spot oil purchases and longer term contacts and its plan to increase the number of countries oil bought from and the routes used, challenged these arguments. Turkey's maneuver in oil purchase raises question marks over the country's natural gas deal with Iran too. Some Turkish energy experts are uncomfortable about the prospects of this decision. According to their arguments whether or not Iran would seek revenge on Turkey because of the oil issue, Turkey's decision to reduce purchase of oil from Iran might have an impact on natural gas and electricity as well.⁶⁸ The trade volume between Turkey and Iran was of the order of worth \$16 billion in 2011, most of which was from Iranian natural gas and oil proceeds. According to Turkish Energy Ministry, Turkey paid Iran \$423 for every 1, 000 cubic meters of natural gas, the most expensive price Turkey pays to any country. Turkish attempts to bargain for cheaper natural gas prices so far proved unsuccessful.⁶⁹

Another issue that raises Turkey's concerns is Iranian authorities' maltreatment of Turkish truckers carrying goods to be sold in various Caucasian, Central Asian and Middle Eastern markets. Turkish companies complain about Iran which is a common transit country for Turkish transporters whose final destinations are Azerbaijan and Central Asian countries due to the unfair treatment and excessive bureaucratic procedures applied to Turkish truckers at border gates that undermine Turkey's competitiveness in the entire region.⁷⁰

There are also some signs for Turkey's possible change of approach on the nuclear issue. So far, neither Prime Minister Erdoğan nor President Gul have publicly addressed the implications of a nuclear-armed Iran for Turkey's own regional power ambitions or the regional balance of power. Nor have they spoken about the potential threat it might pose to Turkey. However following the deterioration of Turkish-Iranian relations Ankara's security concerns about a nuclear-armed Iran and about the impact that it would have on the regional balance of power became more loudly spoken. According to Haluk Özdalga who is a JDP Ankara deputy:

If Iran does go nuclear, the US will most likely offer its nuclear protection umbrella to a number of countries in the region, including Turkey. For

Ankara to accept such an offer would be reasonable only if it doesn't relinquish its own nuclear option. Otherwise Turkey could be, as circumstances develop, a strategic hostage to the US in the Middle East. Turkey has a legitimate right to consider all future possibilities... European Union membership would certainly reduce Turkey's risks, and largely eliminate the nuclear option. The opposite scenario in which Turkey's EU membership prospects die and Iran builds up a nuclear arsenal, would pose a troublesome situation. In that case, to avoid getting stuck in a bottleneck of heightened risks, Turkey would need to seriously consider developing its own nuclear capability.⁷¹

This thought seemed to be shared by an important portion of Turkish society as well. According to a recent survey carried out by the Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM), more than half of Turks support the option of Turkey's obtaining nuclear arms in case of a possible threat from a nuclear-missile armed Iran, while 35 percent believe that Turkey should not develop nuclear weapons.⁷²

Concluding Remarks

So far neither Turkey nor Iran seem to be able to acquire a preponderance of power in the Middle East that succeeded in building institutions to regulate regional affairs. It does not seem that anything like that could also happen in the near future because of major powers opposed interests, the mutual balancing acts of Turkey and Iran and the complicated but not harmonious interests of regional states that motivate them to align with external powers as well as with Turkey and Iran. But their stakes are in great danger and both states' actions have the power to change the course of developments whereas the risks of becoming enemies would risk their existential interests.

NOTES

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Matching Ambitions with Realities: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East*

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article vise à explorer la nouvelle politique étrangère de la Turquie au Moyen-Orient. Il fait valoir que sous l'administration de l'AKP la politique de la Turquie au Moyen-Orient a subi une reconfiguration significative en raison d'un certain nombre de facteurs concordants. Ceci est en partie lié à la vision stratégique du ministre des affaires étrangères de la Turquie Ahmet Davutoğlu, ainsi qu'à des changements dans l'équilibre des forces régionales. S'il est vrai que les visions transformatrices de la politique étrangère turque ont été inventées dans le passé récent, ce n'est que sous l'administration de l'AKP que les relations de la Turquie avec la plupart de ses voisins du Moyen-Orient ont connu des changements significatifs. Des améliorations majeures ont été constatées concernant les relations avec l'Iran et la plupart des Etats arabes, tandis qu'une détérioration grave a été observée par rapport à Israël. Cela reflète à la fois le nouvel environnement stratégique régional, ainsi qu'une ambition croissante du côté de la Turquie à jouer un rôle de premier plan au Moyen-Orient. Comme l'un des membres du G-20 et affichant une performance économique relativement fort élevée, la Turquie aspire à rejoindre le club des nouvelles puissances moyennes émergentes. D'autre part, cela peut conduire à la déstabilisation de certains des piliers de la politique étrangère de la Turquie et même à la reconfiguration de ses relations stratégiques avec l'Occident. Alors que la Turquie gagne en effet de plus en plus un poids stratégique régional, aller trop vite pour elle pourrait conduire à des turbulences et des reculs importants.

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore Turkey's new foreign policy in the Middle East. It is argued that under the AKP administration Turkey's Middle East policy has undergone a significant reconfiguration due to a number of concurring factors. This is partially linked with the strategic vision of Turkey's foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, as well as changes in the regional balance of power. While it is true that transformative visions of Turkish foreign policy have been coined in the recent past, it was only under the AKP administration that Turkey's relations with most of its Middle Eastern neighbours have undergone significant changes. Major improvements have been noted regarding relations with Iran and most Arab states, while serious deterioration has been observed with respect to Israel. This reflects both the new

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regional strategic environment, as well as an increasing ambition on the side of Turkey to play a leading role in the Middle East. As one of the G-20 members and displaying a relatively strong economic performance, Turkey aspires to join the club of the new emerging middle powers. On the other hand, this may lead to the destabilisation of some of the cornerstones of Turkish foreign policy and even to the reconfiguration of its strategic relations with the West. While Turkey is indeed gaining in regional strategic weight, moving too fast might lead to significant turbulences and setbacks.

Introduction

The foreign policy of republican Turkey was shaped by the country's decisive shift towards the West. The promotion of Turkey's relations with the United States and Western European countries was underlined by the country's Westernisation campaign as well as its membership of Western security organisations. Turkey's NATO membership in 1953 highlighted its commitment to the Western security camp and consolidated its Western orientation. Similar were the consequences of Turkey's quest for membership of the European Economic Community (EEC)/European Union (EU). In that respect Turkey's Islamic identity was suppressed by the secularist nature of the regime. Despite century-old historic and cultural links and the potential of economic cooperation, no significant cooperation occurred. Improving relations with Middle Eastern countries was not deemed to be a priority. Turkey was the first Muslim-majority country to recognise the state of Israel in 1949. It also comprised one of the key Western security assets in the Middle East during the Cold War. The establishment of the short-lived Central Treaty Organisation (or Baghdad Pact) in 1955 between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and the United Kingdom was an example of the pivotal role the West recognised Turkey in order to promote its security in the Middle East. This contradicted the strategies of Arab nationalist movements which saw Turkey as a collaborator of the West opposing their anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles. Turkey's stance in the Algerian war only reinforced these views. To these grievances one had to add territorial and water disputes which aggravated Turkey's relations with key Middle Eastern states. Syria, one of the leading Arab states, claimed the Hatay province which had been ceded by France to Turkey in 1939, as well as vehemently objected to the building of water dams in southeastern Turkey which would allow Turkey to limit the downstream flow of the Euphrates to Syria. Turkey's territorial claims on the *vilayet* of Mosul and the presence of strong Kurdish populations in northern Iraq and eastern Turkey complicated relations with Iraq, Turkey's other Arab neighbour.

Moreover, nation-building on both sides posed additional obstacles. Turkish nationalism depicted Arabs as underdeveloped, ignorant and inept who had betrayed the Ottoman Empire through the collaboration with Entente forces during the First World War and greatly contributed to its demise. In fact, one of the reasons that republican Turkish nationalism identified for the decline of the Ottoman Empire was its alleged Arabic influences, which originated from Islam. Hence one of the main aims of republican Turkish nation-building was the purification of all these Arabic elements from Turkish culture and identity. On the other hand, Arab nationalists turned the Ottoman Empire into a scapegoat for all the social, economic and political problems which the Middle Eastern states faced. The Ottoman Empire was seen as an early colonial force, not very different from the English and French, which strapped Middle Eastern provinces from their resources and did not allow for their economic and social development. The identification of republican Turkey with the West and the United States only reinforced this image and made Turkey unpopular in Arab public opinion. Most Arab states opted for close relations with the Soviet Union, which meant that they stood in opposite camps with Turkey throughout the Cold War.

Meanwhile, the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the birth of the Islamic Republic of Iran led to Turkey's further alienation in the region. Through the collapse of the Pahlavi regime, whatever had remained from the Baghdad Pact, an US-driven Cold-War attempt to coordinate its regional allies in the Middle East, collapsed, Turkey lost a secularist regional ally and had to confront an Islamist state in its eastern borders, which –at least in the early years of the revolution– professed the expansion of its revolutionary message throughout the Islamic world. As a result, Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East focused on the development of relations with Israel. This was tantamount with a gradual but countervailing shift regarding the role of Islam in Turkish public sphere.

The first signals of a change in this approach were observed in the 1980s and were linked with the increasing role of Islam in Turkish society. The adoption of the “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis” (*Türk-İslam Sentezi*) by the 1980-1983 military regime restored Sunni Islam as an essential element of Turkish national identity (Grigoriadis 2008, pp. 101-02). Religious courses became again mandatory in public education, while Islam was hoped to act as deterrent against the two threats which the military regime had identified as critical for republican Turkey: Kurdish nationalism and communism. This policy allowed for the gradual reintroduction of Sunni Islam into the public sphere and the rise of an Islamist elite (Göle 1997, pp. 53-57). During the

administration of Turgut Özal and the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi-ANAP*), relations with the Middle East entered a new phase. While relations with Israel were improving, promoting economic cooperation with Middle Eastern countries also became an item in Turkey's foreign policy agenda. Turkey maintained a cautious neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war.

Two seminal events, the end of the Cold War and the first Iraq war reshaped Turkey's approach towards the Middle East (Hale 2002). The collapse of the Soviet bloc meant that a vacuum was created in the Middle East which would be filled with a reconfiguration of regional alliances. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 shattered the regional balance of power and led Turgut Özal to involve Turkey to the US-led UN military operation to eject Iraq from Kuwait. Meanwhile, the escalation of the Kurdish conflict within Turkey meant that Turkey had to carefully watch developments in the Middle East and their impact on its own Kurdish question. When Necmettin Erbakan, the historic leader of Turkish political Islam, became the first avowedly Islamist Prime Minister in the history of republican Turkey, one could expect that Turkey would aim stronger ties with Middle Eastern states (Robins 1997, pp. 88-94). Erbakan paid official visits to several Middle Eastern capitals. The first natural gas deal was then signed with Iran, which provisioned the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Iran to Turkey, the supply of the Turkish market with Iranian natural gas with the potential to further access European markets. However, this Middle East overture did not comprise a breakthrough in regional politics. Middle Eastern states were not willing to acknowledge Turkey the leading role Erbakan had envisioned. Some openings in fact backfired rather nastily. The visit to Libya, in particular, turned into a debacle when the rather unpredictable, then Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi scolded publicly Erbakan for Turkey's stance on the Kurdish question and urged Turkey to recognise the independence of a Kurdish state in its southeastern territories.¹

While Erbakan took pains in promoting Turkey's relations with the Arab world, relations with Israel also flourished. Military and intelligence cooperation reached their peak in the mid 1990s (Altunışık 2000). An alliance between Turkey, Israel and the United States was seen as a fundamental element of Turkey's security strategy. Even Erbakan himself as Prime Minister did not pose any obstacle to the further consolidation of Turkish-Israeli relations. The fall of the Erbakan government in 1997 led to the removal of the increased interest in the Middle East and reconfigured Turkish foreign policy on more conventional lines. Yet Turkey's relations with Israel continued to flourish unabated. The improvement of EU-Turkey relations since 1999

and Turkey's prospective EU membership also meant that the bulk of Turkish diplomacy would be interested in the improvement of EU-Turkey relations.

The AKP Era - A Strong Interest in the Middle East

Turkey's Middle Eastern policy changed drastically with the advent of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*-AKP) to power in November 2002. While EU-Turkey relations continued to improve and Turkey underwent between 2002 and 2005 the most comprehensive political reform process since the Atatürk years, a novel, as well as strong, interest in promoting relations with the Middle East was articulated (Taşpınar 2008). This new foreign policy bore the imprint of Ahmet Davutoğlu (Uslu 2009). A professor of international relations, Davutoğlu was the chief foreign policy advisor of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, until he became himself Foreign Minister in May 2009. In his books and other publications, he had early outlined his vision for Turkish foreign policy. Under his guidance, Turkish foreign policy would develop on multiple levels and directions. Davutoğlu had early outlined his vision for Turkey's strategic mission and foreign policy in his book "Strategic Depth" (*Stratejik Derinlik*) (Davutoğlu 2001). According to Davutoğlu's view, Turkey is classified due to its history and cultural heritage among the "central powers" which possess "strategic depth."² This also means that Turkey should no more render its regional strategies and policies subservient to those of its Western allies, in particular the United States. On the contrary, it had to establish its own strategic agenda and priorities, which would not necessarily be parallel with these of the United States or Europe (Oğuzlu 2009, p. 49). Davutoğlu argued that Turkey had to undertake a multi-fold and multi-level foreign policy strategy aiming to establish its position as a pivotal state between Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East (Murinson 2006, pp. 951-53). The strategic vision which Davutoğlu articulated following the rise of the AKP to power, differed from the typically geopolitical approach which dominated his earlier writings. It included the resolution of all long-standing bilateral disputes between Turkey and its neighbours ("zero-problem policy with neighbours"), as well as a leading role in regional conflict resolution (Evin *et al.* 2010, p. 12). In other words, Turkey should dispose of these "petty" conflicts which comprised a handicap for the development of its global strategic potential. In a much publicised speech towards Turkish high-level diplomats, Davutoğlu noted that by the centenary of the Republic of Turkey in 2023, Turkey should be one of the ten leading states in the world (Bozkurt 2010). This required good relations with the United States and the European Union, as well as with the

Islamic world. While relations with Muslim states significantly improved, this was largely the result of a rather pragmatic approach to foreign policy (Idiz 2009) quoted in (Kramer 2010, p. 19). Turkey was developing relations with countries like the United Arab Emirates, Syria or Malaysia, not simply because they were Muslim, but rather because of the unexploited strategic and economic potential. In Davutoğlu's view, Turkey had to dissociate itself from its established militaristic and firmly pro-Western image and foster a new image in which Turkey's soft power, translated into economic, cultural and political clout would prevail (andar 2009). According to that view, Turkey should claim a leading intermediary role in all regional conflicts in the Middle East, resolve all pending bilateral disputes and build strategic cooperation with its neighbours. In addition, it should promote regional economic cooperation and integration. The increase of the volume of bilateral trade was seen as a key instrument in promoting Turkey's regional role (Kirişçi 2009).

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to purport that Davutoğlu's foreign policy vision was unique in its emphasis on a multilateral and assertive approach. In fact these views were in continuity with visions expressed by other Turkish politicians. Turgut Özal was the first to argue in the late 1980s that Turkey should follow a more assertive foreign policy and claim a leading regional role. About ten years later, Ismail Cem, Turkey's Foreign Minister at the time, also argued along similar lines. This showed that the core of Davutoğlu's views had been in fact shared by influential political actors across the Turkish political spectrum (Kramer 2010). Yet the congruence of a set of favourable domestic and international conditions which emerged following the rise of the AKP to power, allowed for the stronger articulation of these views. What was really different in Davutoğlu's foreign policy thesis was his attempt to project Turkey's image as a "soft power" and promote the resolution of domestic and bilateral conflicts due to their obstructive role to Turkey's transformation into a global actor.

Structural Reasons for this Change

The AKP's largely pragmatic foreign policy can – at least partially – be attributed to the impact of globalization on Turkish political Islam (Öni 2006). The radical economic reform programme introduced by Turgut Özal during the 1980-1983 military regime set the ground for the opening of Turkish society to global economic and social trends. A large part of Turkish political Islam underwent a transformation process. It reconciled itself with globalisation and was able to benefit from the changes which Turkey's

integration into the world economy and exposure to global social and political trends entailed. Becoming a globalisation winner also meant the gradual abandonment of religion-based ideological approach towards politics. This is not to say that religion disappeared at the symbolic level. The Ottoman legacy has often been referred to as a strong cultural and religious bond bringing all these regions together. Religious links with countries of the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa and Asia have been invoked in order to popularise a series of foreign policy initiatives. Nonetheless, in most cases these decisions were more importantly based on pragmatic grounds, namely the improvement of economic and diplomatic relations. Increased use of religious rhetoric is linked in the case of Turkey with the democratisation process and the increasing need of governments to consider public opinion preferences on a number of key foreign policy issues (Grigoriadis 2010, pp. 65-66). Improving relations with Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbours did not primarily have to do with religion but rather with mutual, underexploited interests. Within a few years, relations of Turkey with its Middle Eastern neighbours improved dramatically (Larrabee 2007). On the other hand, a religious underpinning in several foreign policy initiatives of the government could be observed. While the base of this policy shift was primarily pragmatic, there appeared to be deviations in some cases, such as Sudan. These undermined the normative base upon which the AKP administration claimed to have based Turkish foreign policy.

Relations with Egypt

Egypt is a country which appeared as the natural leader of the Panarabist movement. Its brief union with Syria in 1958 signalled the apex of the project, while its sound defeat in the 1967 Six Day War dealt the first blow against the leadership of Egypt in the Arab world. The signature of a peace treaty in Camp David in 1978 and the recognition of Israel meant that Egypt would cease to spearhead Arab nationalism. While Egypt's regional clout is far from what it used to be, this has allowed for other actors to attempt to fill the "vacuum" left, to Egypt's chagrin. Turkey's Middle East strategy –in particular its increased interest in the Palestinian question– has necessarily engaged Egyptian strategies in the region. In particular the improvement of Turkey's relations with Hamas has raised significant concern in Egypt, given the links of Hamas with the Egyptian Islamic Brotherhood and the anxiety with which Egypt sees any legitimisation of the Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip. In January 2010, strains in Turkish-Egyptian relations were revealed when an international convoy, including many Turkish citizens and aiming to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza clashed with Egyptian security forces on the

checkpoint with the Gaza Strip. On the following day, a demonstration held by Hamas on the other side of the checkpoint led to turmoil, the death of an Egyptian soldier and the injury of numerous Palestinians. The attempt of the Turkish Foreign Minister to mediate between the group and the Egyptian government met with failure. The group's leading figure, British MP George Galloway was declared *persona non grata* and deported from Egypt. Shortly thereafter, he stated that "It is a badge of honour to be deported by a dictatorship....I wish that Egypt and Britain had leaders like [Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan". His point may have resounded with the view of the activists and the public opinion in Egypt and many Arab countries; yet, it made clear why the Egyptian government was becoming concerned about Turkey's stronger involvement in Middle Eastern affairs, in particular attempts to emerge as the "true defender" of the Palestinian cause (Idiz 2010).

Relations with Gulf States

Relations with Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States also flourished under the AKP administration (Aras 2005). Personal relationships played some role. Several leading members of the AKP had spent part of their career in Gulf states, including President Abdullah Gül who had worked in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s. Yet security and economic considerations formed the basis of Saudi-Turkish relations. The future of Iraq following the 2003 US invasion was naturally a key security interest for both states. Preventing a rise of the Shiite influence in post-war Iraq was a primary security concern for Saudis, while Turkey was primarily concerned with the prevention of Kurdish independence in northern Iraq.

While there had not been an official visit of a Saudi king to Turkey for decades, King Abdullah visited Ankara twice in 2006 and 2007, signing a series of economic agreements (Olson 2008, pp. 76-82). The Turkish-Saudi rapprochement was also mirrored in the advancement of Turkey's role in key international Islamic organisations. Turkey was awarded an observer status to the Arab League, while a Turk, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, was elected in 2004 for the first time to the General Secretariat of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an organisation based and supported by Saudi Arabia. While previous Turkish efforts had failed to bear fruit, the rise of the AKP government apparently changed the calculus of Saudi diplomacy, as well as removed concerns about the Muslim identity of the Turkish leadership (Foley 2010, p. 32).

Improvement of relations expanded to the rest of the Gulf. Major investment projects in Turkey were financed by Abu Dhabi or Dubai holdings.

Given that some of the Gulf States have been indeed among the biggest global investors and Turkey has been one of the most favoured destinations of foreign direct investment, this match was natural. The AKP government spent considerable efforts on the consolidation of these economic relations. Turkey-Gulf summits were organised aiming to promote economic and political cooperation with the Gulf States. In fact, the attraction of Gulf investment capital had wider implications. Apart from serving the growth of Turkish economy, it also enabled the AKP government to appeal to its Islamist clientele, by showing that investment capital was flowing to Turkey from the West, as well as from the Islamic world. Investment from Islamic countries was equally welcome to Turkey and significantly contributed to the country's economic development. By inviting Gulf investors the AKP was able to relate Turkey to the world in such a way that its constituency could claim some ownership of Turkey's interaction with the world. Besides, AKP-friendly entrepreneurs took the opportunity to leverage their Islamist credentials in the Gulf which enjoyed high liquidity, due to rising oil prices, and actively sought investment opportunities (Grigoriadis and Kamaras 2008). On the other hand, the prospect of advancing Turkish-Iranian relations caused considerable concern among Gulf states, especially those which had long-standing bilateral disputes with Iran (Martin 2009). This became all the more clear, as Gulf States were among the most concerned by the prospect of development of nuclear weapons by Iran. Turkey's attempts to mediate between the West and Iran on the question of Iran's nuclear programme were often seen as tilting towards the Iranian side.

Relations with Syria

Relations with Syria were arguably those to improve the most since the advent of the AKP administration. This happened against a very difficult historical and diplomatic backdrop (Hale 2002). The Syrian Republic never recognised the secession of the Alexandretta province (Hatay in Turkish) from French-mandate Syria in 1939 and its annexation to Turkey and has claimed the province back ever since its independence in 1946. In addition, water comprised a source of serious conflict. The construction of gigantic dams in the upstream flow of Euphrates in southeastern Turkey was met with wrath by Syria, which heavily depended on the Euphrates water supply for its own agriculture. The rise of the Kurdish question and the intensification of the activities of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (*Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan-PKK*) gave Syria an additional lever in its relations with Turkey. Even the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was living in Damascus under Syrian protection. This

came to an end in 1998, when Turkey openly threatened Syria with war, and Öcalan was forced to flee the country. Relations improved dramatically with the rise of the AKP administration. Syria saw in Turkey a major regional actor which could help her escape international diplomatic isolation. Turkey found in Syria a partner with which it would develop strong economic relations and through which it could engage in almost all the major regional disputes (B. Aras and Karakaya Polat 2008). A free trade agreement was agreed in 2004 and came into force three years later. Intensified bilateral contacts led to booming economic relations,³ the lifting of visa requirement for touristic visits of citizens of the two countries⁴ and the establishment of a minister-level “Strategic Cooperation Council” which aimed to promote multilevel cooperation. Long-standing bilateral disputes were silently put aside. Although Syria did not *de jure* recognise the annexation of the Alexandretta province, it appeared ready to do so *de facto*.

Things went even further in June 2010 with the announcement of an “economic union” between Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan that was an additional step towards that direction. Turkey had already signed bilateral agreements with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan which mutually abolished the visa requirement for touristic visits of their respective citizens. Now the expansion of this regime was announced, so the touristic visa requirement would be completely abolished for the citizens of all four states. In addition, the proclamation of an “economic union” of an area with a combined GDP of 1.13 billion USD echoed like an attempt to imitate the examples of the European Economic Community or NAFTA, ASEAN or Mercosur in the Middle East (Istanbul Office 2010). Yet what remained unclear is how the potential development of this union would be compatible with Turkey’s European integration process and adoption of the European *acquis*.

Relations with Iraq

Relations with Iraq have also enjoyed a major improvement (Hale 2009). Despite its heavy involvement in the 1991 Gulf War, Turkey considered itself to be among the losers in its aftermath. At the economic level, it suffered heavy economic losses due to the UN embargo on Iraq, which were never compensated. On the other hand, the rise of a *de facto* Kurdish entity in Northern Iraq following the 687 and 688 UN Security Council resolutions and the Operation Provide Comfort program caused major concern in Turkey. As PKK units attacked Turkish security forces after entering Turkish territory from Northern Iraq, Turkey often retaliated by attacking PKK camps within

northern Iraq. Unlike in the first Iraq War, Turkey abstained from active involvement in the 2003 war which led to the occupation of Iraq and the toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime (Hale 2007). While the control of post-war Iraqi developments was among the main reasons for supporting Turkey's direct involvement in the second Iraq war, the 1st March 2003 vote of the Turkish Parliament meant that the role of Turkey in post-war Iraq would be rather limited and that the role of Iraqi Kurds, the most important allies of the United States in the war, would be consequently significant. In the first years after the war, Turkey was extremely anxious about the emergence of a Kurdish political entity within Iraq. Despite the emergence of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on Turkey's borders and the existence of major disputes such as the final status of the oil-rich Kirkuk province in northern Iraq, relations have considerably improved (International Crisis Group (ICG) 2008). The visit of the Turkish President Abdullah Gül in March 2009 to Baghdad highlighted a major change. Gül was reported to use the term "Kurdistan" twice during his statements to Turkish journalists. This was the first time a Turkish official used a term whose use has been an anathema for many years and could be considered as a symbolic opening towards the establishment of smooth relations between Turkey and the KRG.⁵ In October 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Baghdad heading a delegation of nine ministers. Following a joint ministerial meeting of Iraqi and Turkish delegations, no less than forty-eight bilateral agreements were signed ranging from security and cooperation against the PKK to trade, energy, education, culture, health, transportation, agriculture and water management and sharing. The opening of two additional border-crossing points was also agreed. This signalled that Turkish-Iraqi economic relations were poised to reach –and exceed– levels not seen since the 1980s. These agreements also involved projects in the KRG. A few days later, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu paid a visit to Erbil, the *de facto* capital of the KRG. This was the first time a Turkish minister paid a visit to Kurdish-controlled Northern Iraq. Davutoğlu met the President of the KRG Massoud Barzani as well as Prime Minister Nehcirvan Barzani and announced the opening of a Turkish consulate in Erbil. Davutoğlu stated that this visit should have taken place long time ago. Noting that he found Erbil very developed, Davutoğlu added

All of us will contribute to the even further development of Erbil. This will become a bridge between Iraq and Turkey. We are the gate of Iraq to the European Union. And Erbil is our gate opening to Basra (Kene 2009).

This visit was the corollary of a rapprochement which has reshaped the bilateral relations between the KRG and Turkey. Yet improvements remain fragile due to uncertainty in a number of key issues which pervade the

relations between Turkey and the KRG. The future status of the disputed city of Kirkuk, constitutes one of the disputes which could lead to serious complications (Barkey 2009, pp. 15-29).

Relations with Iran

Relations with Iran also improved considerably. Despite the increasing isolation of Iran under the administration of President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, Turkey maintained close economic and good diplomatic relations. In fact, economic cooperation in the field of energy went deeper. The cooperation, which had begun in the mid 1990s through the construction of a pipeline for the export of Iranian natural gas to Turkey has been consolidated and included Turkish investment in the Iranian natural gas upstream sector. Bilateral trade reached 10.2 billion dollars in 2008 from just above one billion USD in 2000, with the aim to reach 20 billion by 2013. Yet there was a heavy bilateral trade deficit on the Turkish side, due to Turkey's energy imports from Iran. The volume of Turkey's exports to Iran was just over 2 billion USD worth of goods to Iran, while its imports amounted to 8.2 billion USD (Hale 2009, p. 153) Yet there was much more than mutual economic gains in Turkish-Iranian relations. A series of official visits highlighted the level of mutual understanding at the top level, and public opinion of both countries seemed to agree. During his official visit to Turkey in August 2007, Iran's President Mahmud Ahmadinejad was cheered by Turkish citizens when he went to pray in the historic Sultanahmet mosque in Istanbul. This was all the more important given Iran's increasing alienation at the international level. The Iranian nuclear program has caused fear and concern about the true intentions of the Iranian regime. Iran's potential interest in developing nuclear weapons has worried not only the United States, Israel and Europe, but also Arab states, most notably Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. While Iran's nuclear ambitions and alleged hidden agenda for the development of nuclear weapon capabilities raised serious concerns globally and in the Middle East, Turkey seemed to be least concerned of all neighbouring states. It even attempted to play a mediating role between Iran and the West on the burning issue of Iran's nuclear programme.

This allowed for a reconfiguration of Turkey's relations with Iran, which should not be a function – or even hostage – of US – or European-Iranian relations. In an article of his, Davutoğlu stated that

...our allies should take into consideration Turkey's unique position. As a growing economy and surrounded by energy resources, Turkey needs

Iranian energy as a natural extension of its national interests. Therefore, Turkey's energy agreements with Iran cannot be dependent upon its relationships with other countries (Davutoğlu 2008, p. 91).

Turkey's new Iran policy has comprised a clear attempt to achieve its emancipation from US Middle Eastern policy (International Crisis Group (ICG) 2010, pp. 16-18). Ever since the rise of AKP into power in 2002, Turkey has increasingly taken distance from US strategies and policies in Iraq, Israel and other Middle Eastern states. It is also indicative that Davutoğlu in his writings includes Iran to his privileged group of states which due to their history and geography have a "central power" status and enjoy "strategic depth." Hence he prioritizes the development of strong Turkish-Iranian strategic relations. Iran and its energy resources are more important for Turkey than its Western allies might consider.

Many suspect religion to be one of the main reasons for the affinity between Ankara and Tehran. The AKP, Turkey's government party since 2002, comes from the ranks of Turkish political Islam, and this was perceived to be sufficient reason for a close relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Religious affinity was indeed the reason why Turkey's first Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan aimed to improve bilateral relations and signed the first natural gas deal with Iran in 1996. Nevertheless, it was more strategic considerations and less religion behind the determination of the AKP government to upgrade relations with Iran and claim a key role in its nuclear controversy. The Iranian nuclear crisis provided a golden opportunity –as well as a litmus test– for Foreign Minister Davutoğlu to implement his vision about Turkey's proactive foreign policy and autonomous strategic role. Distancing itself from the United States and the European Union, Turkey claimed a leading mediating role in the Iranian nuclear dispute. It has refused to side with Western pressure aiming to stop Iran's uranium enrichment program, objected to the imposition of any sanctions against Tehran and defended Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In accordance to this vision, Turkey has aimed to spearhead international mediation for a compromise solution. In his visit to Tehran in February 2010, Davutoğlu attempted to broker a deal for the enrichment of uranium necessary for Iranian nuclear power plants under conditions which would preclude the possibility of developing nuclear weapon capabilities. Turkey's interventions aimed further than minimizing the risk of developing nuclear fuel for Iranian power plants. Turkey's independent approach to the Iranian nuclear question was crystallised in its mediating effort on solving the Iranian uranium enrichment conundrum. Joining forces with Brazil and following

intensive negotiations, a compromise agreement was triumphantly signed on May 17, 2010 in Tehran. Yet it bore little fruit, as far as the crux of the crisis was concerned. Failing to win Iran's abolition of its domestic uranium enrichment program meant that the international community would not consider the agreement satisfactory. The 10 June 2010 decision of the UN Security Council to impose additional sanctions on Iran due to its nuclear program was a consequence of this and was made despite the dissenting votes of Turkey and Brazil. Turkey's vote rekindled discussions on whether Turkey was gradually distancing itself from the West (Turan 2010b) and turning into a *de facto* unaligned actor.

These arguments were often enriched by Turkey's novel approaches on the issue of nuclear proliferation. In a speech in Washington DC in December 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan defended a nuclear-free Middle East and accused the Western states of double standards when dealing with issues of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. This was a skilful implication of Israel, a country which is not a signatory of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but is believed to possess nuclear weapons, in Iran's nuclear controversy. Turkey attempted to reshape the agenda of nuclear non-proliferation in the Middle East in a way that did not only include Iran but also Israel. In a nutshell, Turkey criticized the non-proliferation system as a whole because it gave strong privileges to the states which controlled nuclear weapons before the introduction of the system (Turan 2010a). These states were also accused of turning a blind eye to Israel's efforts to develop its own nuclear arsenal. Erdoğan voiced a popular argument throughout the Middle East regarding Iran's nuclear program, namely that it would be unfair to demand from Iran to freeze its nuclear program, while Israel has faced no criticism for its violation of nuclear proliferation treaties and development of nuclear weapons. This criticism of the non-proliferation system implied that Turkey would not firmly oppose any attempts of Iran to develop its own nuclear capabilities despite the prohibitions of the non-proliferation system. This would entail a clear divergence from Western strategic interests.

Relations with Israel

Nonetheless, there was a notable exception to the rule of Turkey's improving relations with its neighbours. A major shift was the rapid deterioration of Turkey's relations with Israel. The two countries had long enjoyed strategic partnership under the auspices of their strategic alliance with the United States (Hale 2002). Turkish-Israeli cooperation peaked in the 1990s with the signature of a series of military, intelligence and diplomatic accords (Sayari

1997, pp. 49-50). The Turkish and Israeli military forces, the region's most formidable, often exercised together, and Israeli aircraft often used Turkish airspace for their manoeuvres. These relations were not put into question by the Erbakan government in the mid 1990s (Altunışık 2000). Despite his fierce anti-Israeli and often anti-Semitic rhetoric, Erbakan did not deviate from the policies of his predecessors regarding Israel. Nevertheless, relations with Israel suffered a gradual but constant deterioration following the rise of the AKP government into power in 2002. While Turkey used to take a neutral or mildly pro-Israel stance in the Palestinian question and the rest of Israel's disputes with its Arab neighbours, a radical departure was noted under the AKP administration. The reconfiguration of Turkey's Middle Eastern policy implied that Turkey's national interest in the region would no longer be identical with that of the United States or Israel. Bilateral relations began deteriorating when Ankara attempted to mediate in the crisis between the Palestinian Fatah and Hamas groups which further complicated the resolution of the Palestinian question. The Turkish government ignored Israeli calls to the international community for the isolation of the Gaza-based Hamas government and invited a delegation of Hamas to Ankara for talks in February 2006. Its attempt to mediate between the West Bank-based Fatah authorities and the Gaza-based Hamas authorities complied with Turkey's new vision of its role in the Middle East which required a working relationship with all regional actors, including Hamas. Relations further deteriorated during the 2006 Lebanon War when Turkey took an overtly anti-Israeli position and accused Israel for the brutality of its operations. The bombing of cities and civilian targets was widely covered by Turkish media and outraged public opinion, while Turkish officials repeatedly employed aggressive rhetoric against Israeli policies. Some of them came to the point of accusing Israel of "genocide" against the Palestinians. At times opposition to anti-Israeli policies was translated into anti-Semitism. At the popular culture level, movies and TV series replete with anti-Semitic messages gained wide publicity and popularity.⁶ The deterioration of bilateral relations did not prevent Turkey from attempting to play a mediating role between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Significant progress was said to be made in Turkey-brokered negotiations between Turkey and Syria in 2007, which fell however short of a resolution of the Golan Heights question. Bilateral relations deteriorated, however, even further, to the point that the very viability of the initiative was questioned. Israel ceased viewing Turkey as an impartial actor. The decline of Israeli-Turkish relations was underlined by a major diplomatic episode during the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2009. In a panel discussion on "Peace in the Middle

East,” Prime Minister Erdoğan had a row with Israeli President Shimon Peres. Erdoğan told Peres that “you know well how to kill” and furious abandoned the panel, as well as Davos. He was greeted as a hero some hours later by thousands of cheering Turks at the Istanbul Airport. In January 2010, a major diplomatic crisis erupted when following new anti-Semitic scenes in Turkish TV serials, the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon publicly humiliated Turkey’s Ambassador. The withdrawal of the Turkish Ambassador from Israel was only averted through a formal apology letter from the Israeli government. These led several analysts to question whether there was anything left from the once formidable Israeli-Turkish alliance (Rubin 2009).

Relations hit an all-time bottom on 31 May 2010, when a flotilla aiming to disembark humanitarian aid at the port of Gaza defied Israeli orders and was intercepted by Israeli armed forces at the international waters off the shore of Gaza. Clashes ensued on board one of the ships, and nine Turkish citizens were killed. The incident caused a shock; Turkey withdrew its ambassador from Israel, while anti-Israeli sentiment soared. The incident attracted the attention of the global media, and Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan demanded that Israel issued a formal apology for the events, something which Israel singlehandedly refused. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu made several rather unusual statements in the aftermath of the attack stating that this event was “Turkey’s own 9/11” or that “he would soon pray with Palestinians in the Al-Aqsa mosque.” Some weeks later, Turkey refused an Israeli military aircraft access to its airspace. Interestingly the AKP government stance was popular not only among its core Muslim constituency but also among secular Turks. While such events helped the popularity of the AKP government at the domestic front and raised Turkey’s prestige in the “Arab street” even further, they questioned even more Turkey’s ability to act as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In addition, they risked a radical shift in the stance of the powerful pro-Israeli lobby in the United States. Organizations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Anti-Defamation League which had historically supported Turkish positions in the US Congress and State Department appeared to reconsider their positions in light of the new circumstances. The recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Anti-Defamation League in 2007 was a prime early example (O’Brien 2007).

Relations with Sudan

Meanwhile, Turkey’s relations with Sudan, one of the peripheral Arab Middle Eastern states, has drawn a lot of public attention and led to

questioning the normative base of Turkey's foreign policy under the AKP government. An Arab Muslim-majority state on the frontier between the Mashreq and sub-Saharan Africa, Sudan, hosts large religious minorities, Christian and animist in the south. The attempt of the Muslim-controlled government to impose the Sharia law throughout the country has met with the armed opposition of Sudanese minorities. While a ceasefire has brought relative peace in the southern front, the situation in the west, in the Darfur province has reached the dimensions of a humanitarian catastrophe. The international community has almost unanimously held the Sudanese government responsible for numerous atrocities against the civilian population of Darfur. These led the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue in 2008 an arrest warrant against the President of Sudan Omar Hassan al-Bashir, due to alleged war crimes and genocide perpetrated under his instructions by the Sudanese army against the civilian population in Darfur. In contradiction to its rather sensitive stance on the rights of Palestinians, Turkey has refrained from condemning the acts of President al-Bashir at the Western Sudanese province of Darfur. While al-Bashir has avoided visiting European capitals due to the fear of his arrest on the grounds of the warrant, he has maintained cordial relations with the AKP government. Economic cooperation between the two countries thrived. In fact al-Bashir was planning to visit Istanbul for a summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in late 2009. Turkey is not a signatory of the Treaty of the International Criminal Court, so it would be under no legal obligation to arrest al-Bashir and hand him to The Hague. Moreover, several Turkish officials had declared their solidarity to the Sudanese government and President al-Bashir. However, due to domestic and international public outcry, al-Bashir had to cancel his Istanbul trip. What was noteworthy however was the attempt by several Turkish politicians to defend against the accusations of the ICC. Prime Minister Erdoğan himself argued that he was comfortable with al-Bashir's visit because "a Muslim cannot commit genocide" (Özkan and Akgün 2010, p. 7). The attitude of the AKP government toward al-Bashir and the Darfur crisis shed doubts on the sincerity of the normative base of the approach towards Israel, as well as the pragmatic nature of the AKP foreign policy. While Turkey appeared to consider respect for human rights to be a key factor in its foreign policy, in particular in the Middle East, this seemed to wither away when it came to the case of Sudan and Darfur.

Concluding Remarks

Turkey's new Middle East policy has revealed a set of new opportunities which have emerged due to structural changes of the regional and global strategic environment during the last twenty years. Turkey is indeed becoming more important in the region and globally; this does not mean, however, that it has suddenly grown into a global actor (Sanberk 2010, p. 9). Turkey is still dependent on the West for its international security, political stability and economic growth. This means that it needs to maintain and even strengthen its strategic links with the West. On the other hand, this does not preclude capitalisation on its newly established bonds with numerous Middle Eastern states. A Europeanising Turkey, which is embedded in the Western camp, is a more appealing partner and more reliable negotiator for the Arab Middle Eastern states. What Arab states also need is a Turkey which is in good terms with Israel and could thus act as catalyst in their disputes. This point was made clear in a long statement by the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during his July 2010 visit to Madrid. In Assad's view,

We view the Turkish-Israeli relations from two perspectives... The first is Turkish role in the peace process which is built on the relationship between Turkey and Israel and the relationship between Turkey and Syria. Any mediator must have good ties with both parties. The second perspective is that the Israeli government's policies are not only the attack on Freedom Flotilla, but its non-response to the indirect Syrian-Israeli talks in Turkey in 2008 and the war on Gaza.... All of these affected the Israeli-Turkish relations.... As a result, these relations have not been back to normal and the Turkish role will be difficult to make these talks take place.... Therefore, if Turkey's role in the negotiations process on the Syrian track recedes, this will affect regional stability (Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) 2010).

Al-Assad's statement was all the more interesting as they originated from a leader of a country considered Israel's archenemy in the region. They highlighted that the deterioration of Turkey's relations with Israel was an issue of concern for all these countries which hoped that Turkey's cordial relations with the Arab Middle East, matched by good relations with Israel, could contribute to the resolution of the region's long-lasting conflicts. While the Iranian nuclear crisis allows for the articulation of Turkey's regional leadership and autonomous strategic planning ambitions, one needs to question whether it has had any real impact on the crisis itself. The jury is still out on this. On the one hand, it has been argued that Turkish diplomatic efforts have widened

diplomatic manoeuvring space. It would be hard to deny the importance of building dialogue and communication channels between the Islamic Republic and the West, especially as far as the prevention of sanctions and further escalation are concerned. On the other hand, Turkey is not alone in this role. The quick and successful involvement of Brazil, another emerging country with regional and global ambitions, in the mediation on the question of uranium enrichment underlined that Turkey's role in the resolution of the Iranian nuclear question was not considered indispensable by Iran. One also needs to add that Turkey's Iran strategy could involve significant risks, if Iran indeed develops nuclear weapons and rises as the second –after Pakistan– Muslim-majority state to join the nuclear league. In fact, Turkey's regional security position could be seriously complicated in such a case (Lesser, I.O. 2010a). Turkey might even have to follow Arab Middle Eastern states, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt in a nuclear race aiming to counter Iran's regional leadership claims. The decision of the Turkish government to proceed with the construction of a nuclear power plant in Akkuyu despite years of deliberations and the opposition of environmental groups could also be understood as Turkey's decision to get deeper involved in nuclear affairs. Turkey's attempt to claim a mediating role between Iran and the West on Iran's nuclear program has so far failed to have a catalytic effect. The nuclear program conundrum persists, while no progress has been achieved in the question of how to safely enrich Iran's uranium for peaceful purposes. It has, however, comprised a clear case of Turkey's new strategic thinking and foreign policy, as well as its regional leadership ambitions. Turkey's regional interests have become too important to be subordinated to US, European or Israeli concerns regarding Iran and its nuclear ambitions. The endgame of the Iranian nuclear question will provide evidence on whether this reconfiguration is rational.

Turkey's growing regional ambitions have met with concern by European and US observers who fear that this could herald the shift of Turkey's orientation from the West towards the Middle East and the Islamic world. While Turkey has indeed become more assertive in setting its own strategic and tactical objectives, this does not necessarily mean a divergence of Western and Turkish strategic objectives in the Middle East. Turkey is still a NATO member and a candidate state for EU accession. Yet some of the overtures of Turkish diplomacy lend credit to opinions that Turkey might be also interested in pursuing the role of an unaligned middle power (Lesser 2010), possibly in collaboration with other emerging powers, such as Brazil. In an interview, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu argued that Turkey “could already set

its own strategic axis” (Anatolia News Agency 2010). For Turkey to follow the latter path, this would entail considerable medium- and long-term risks which would question its strategic interests. Turkey still needs the West more than the West needs Turkey. A shift of Turkey’s foreign policy so it can better reflect its changing role in the Middle East could be expected. The success of this shift, however, is incumbent upon its ability to maintain its impeccable Western credentials as a full member of NATO and a state aiming full EU membership alongside reinforcing its ties with the Middle East. While Turkey is indeed gaining strategic weight, moving too fast in the direction of de-alignment is likely to create formidable risks and lead to significant turbulences and setbacks for Turkey’s regional and global ambitions.

NOTES

1. At that time, Turkish security forces were fighting an all-out war against the forces of the Kurdish Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan-PKK) in the eastern and southeastern provinces of the country.
2. For more on this, see (Davutoğlu 2005).
3. Bilateral trade volume grew 729 million USD in 2000 to 2,754 million USD in 2008. See (Hale 2009).
4. The liberalisation of Turkey’s touristic visa regime has been one of the most innovative tools of Turkey’s new policy towards its neighbours. For more on this, see Devrim and Soler I Lecha. 2010).
5. The official Turkish view purported that the term “Kurdistan” was fictitious and was thus a tool of Kurdish nationalism aiming to partition Turkey.
6. An example of this was the “Valley of the Wolves (Kurtlar Vadisi)”, a blockbuster movie which was later turned into an equally successful TV series.

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La Turquie, le Moyen-Orient et les révoltes arabes

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ABSTRACT

Turkey under the AKP, for domestic political reasons but also under the weight of regional and international changes, outlined a new foreign policy while arguing azimuth geostrategic and geoeconomic position. Without abandoning its Western allies and its prospects for joining the European Union, Ankara turns to the Arab-Muslim world seeking to achieve a hegemonic position or become the cultural center of this set according to the old Ottoman model. This is an ambitious project whose success would give Turkey a unique weight to every point of view. That said, it is unlikely that the new Turkish policy could reconcile its own contradictions and overcome the mistrust of Arab countries towards it which have their own priorities and that have no interest in helping Turkey to become a regional pole even to their detriment.

RÉSUMÉ

La Turquie sous l'AKP, pour des raisons de politique intérieure mais aussi avec le poids des changements régionaux et internationaux, a défini une nouvelle politique extérieure tous azimuts faisant valoir sa position géostratégique et géoéconomique. Sans abandonner ses alliés occidentaux et son projet d'adhésion à l'Union européenne, Ankara se tourne vers le monde arabo-musulman cherchant d'y obtenir une position hégémonique ou bien de devenir le centre culturel de cet ensemble selon le modèle ottoman de jadis. Il s'agit d'un projet ambitieux dont le succès donnerait à la Turquie un poids inédit à tous points de vue. Ceci étant, il est peu probable que la nouvelle politique turque puisse concilier ses propres contradictions et surmonter la méfiance des pays arabes à son égard, avec leurs propres priorités et qui n'ont aucun intérêt à aider la Turquie à devenir un pôle régional à leur détriment.

Introduction

Depuis son fondement en 1923 l'Etat turc moderne a suivi une politique extérieure orientée vers l'Occident, ce qui éloignait Ankara de son contour moyen-oriental immédiat. Cette orientation politique se consolide durant les

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années de la Guerre froide par l'adhésion du pays aux principales structures politico-militaires occidentales, voire à l'OTAN. Dès lors grâce à sa position de gardienne des Détroits la Turquie devient une des frontières politico-stratégiques les plus importantes entre l'Occident et le camp socialiste, en endiguant la politique soviétique qui cherchait ardemment d'acquérir un accès libre «aux mers chaudes» (Bazoglu, 1981).

La fin de la Guerre froide trouve la Turquie dans un monde en mutation profonde où les équilibres et les enjeux politico-stratégiques d'hier n'existaient plus. Dans ce contexte fluide, ambigu et conflictuel la Turquie se trouve au voisinage immédiat avec deux sous-systèmes en conflit c'est-à-dire les Balkans et le Moyen-Orient ainsi qu'avec le Caucase et l'Asie centrale, régions en effervescence et à la recherche d'identité et de développement. Cette situation inédite qui créait autant de risques et d'opportunités a obligé la Turquie à se lancer à la recherche d'un rôle régional nouveau et à revaloriser son poids géopolitique et géostratégique aux yeux de ses alliés occidentaux.

Durant la première décennie métabipolaire, Ankara a essayé de se présenter comme un modèle pour les nouveaux pays à population musulmane, émergés après la dissolution de l'URSS, tout en resserrant ses relations avec les pays arabes dits modérés, entamées déjà aux années '80, sous Turgut Ozal. Parallèlement, la Turquie cherchait à accomplir son adhésion à l'Union européenne. Ceci étant, les efforts de la diplomatie turque n'avaient pas les résultats attendus du côté turc: ni l'adhésion européenne ni une place de puissance régionale au Moyen-Orient ne furent acquises (Kefala, 1999).

La première décennie du nouveau siècle a été marquée par les coups terroristes contre les Etats-Unis en septembre 2001. Quelques mois après en Turquie, le Parti de la Justice et du Développement (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi AKP) -un parti islamique modéré- emporte une victoire écrasante aux élections législatives de 2002. Le nouveau gouvernement turc avait une double tâche difficile à accomplir dans le domaine de la politique intérieure: redresser l'économie du pays au bord de la faillite et se battre pour sa propre survie contre la méfiance grandissante à son égard de la part de l'*establishment* politico-militaire kémaliste. Sur le plan de sa politique extérieure la Turquie devait faire face aux développements régionaux dont certains, comme la guerre de 2003 contre l'Irak, touchaient directement à des intérêts considérés vitaux par Ankara.

Dès lors, la politique extérieure turque commence à se différencier par rapport à un passé pas si lointain. Le nouveau gouvernement en place à Ankara a graduellement pris des distances face aux Etats-Unis, allié traditionnel et stratégique de la Turquie, et il se mit à tracer une politique extérieure encore plus active qu'auparavant aux sous-systèmes voisins et surtout au Moyen-

Orient, région toujours vitale du point de vue politique et économique.

L'idée principale développée dans cet article est que la Turquie pour des raisons de politique intérieure mais aussi sous le poids des changements régionaux et internationaux a tracé une nouvelle politique extérieure tout azimut visant à surmonter ses problèmes et à s'imposer comme puissance régionale. Il s'agit d'un jeu subtil de risques et d'opportunités dans le cadre duquel le succès de la politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie non seulement renforcerait sa position dans la région mais en même-temps il consoliderait la position du gouvernement islamique turc à l'intérieur du pays. Par ailleurs, gagner une position hégémonique au Moyen-Orient ou encore devenir le centre culturel et politique des pays musulmans d'une région aussi vaste que celle qui s'étend du Caucase au Golfe y compris l'Afrique du Nord, selon le modèle ottoman de jadis, signifie que la Turquie acquiert un poids inédit de tout point de vue.

Pour gagner cet enjeu de taille la Turquie a révisé ses priorités et ses alliances régionales et elle a fait valoir son poids géostratégique, géopolitique et géoéconomique dans tous les domaines et surtout dans le domaine du transport du pétrole. Ainsi, la Turquie, sans abandonner ses alliés occidentaux et son projet d'adhésion à l'Union européenne, transpose-t-elle le centre de gravité de son action politico-diplomatique et n'hésite-elle pas à arriver à la rupture avec Israël et à renouer des relations politiques avec des pays arabes, tel la Syrie, avec laquelle la Turquie avait des relations plutôt conflictuelles. Par ailleurs, la Turquie a cherché à jouer un rôle actif durant les révoltes arabes, éclatées en 2011, en exerçant des pressions politico-diplomatiques sur les régimes égyptien et syrien et elle a finalement collaboré avec les pays occidentaux qui ont imposé une *no fly zone* sur la Libye. Ceci étant, et malgré des succès politiques turcs dans le monde arabe, il est peu probable que cette «offensive d'amitié» de la Turquie pourra surmonter ses propres contradictions et aussi la méfiance des pays arabes qui sont d'ailleurs si diversifiés, qui ont leurs propres intérêts et priorités et qui n'ont aucun intérêt à aider la Turquie à devenir un pôle régional, voire au détriment de leurs propres ambitions.

«La profondeur stratégique de la Turquie»

L'architecte de la politique régionale turque, se voulant nouvelle et multidimensionnelle, est l'actuel ministre des Affaires étrangères de la Turquie Ahmet Davutoğlu qui a exprimé ses idées dans son livre intitulé «*La profondeur stratégique. La position internationale de la Turquie*». Dans cet ouvrage Ahmet

Davutoğlu adopte une optique géostratégique qui met en valeur la position géopolitique de la Turquie et son poids stratégique et économique qui, au lieu de diminuer après la fin de la Guerre froide, augmente dans les conditions méta bipolaires actuelles, vu que la Turquie occupe un espace névralgique:

(...) la Turquie est via Thrace un pays balkanique; Elle est (aussi) un pays côtier de la mer Noire; par le biais du plateau d'Erzeroum la Turquie est un pays du Caucase; via la plaine de Haran la Turquie est un pays de la Mésopotamie et du Moyen-Orient et par le biais de ses côtes du sud et du Golfe d'Alexandrette elle est un pays de la Méditerranée orientale. (...) La position spéciale des Détroits de Bosphore et des Dardanelles ajoute à cette richesse géographique la dimension d'un espace qui relie des continents. Les Détroits constituent le point cardinal des voies qui traversent l'Eurasie vers la direction Nord-Sud et Est-Ouest (Davutoğlu, 2010: 301).¹

Ce passage ne fait qu'une description classique de la position géostratégique de la Turquie en tant que point cardinal et passage obligatoire transcontinental. Pourtant, ce qui est intéressant dans cette analyse est la différence établie entre l'utilisation de cet espace stratégique dans le passé et dans le future. En fait, durant la Guerre froide, Ankara a offert sa position géostratégique de pivot à ses alliés occidentaux, qui l'utilisaient efficacement pour endiguer l'Union soviétique. Ainsi, la Turquie gagnait-elle la place de l'allié indispensable de l'Occident dans la région en jouissant des privilèges mais aussi en subissant des restrictions qui en découlaient (Davutoğlu 2010: 248-249). Or, aujourd'hui, une fois que n'existent plus ni les équilibres politiques et stratégiques ni les contraintes de la Guerre froide, la Turquie doit utiliser cet espace précieux à son propre compte et chercher à accomplir des enjeux propres à sa politique extérieure. D'autant plus que des intérêts vitaux turcs sont parfois mis en danger par la politique américaine, comme c'est le cas au nord de l'Irak, ou bien l'attitude de Washington à l'égard de l'Iran, qui non seulement est un pays voisin mais aussi un partenaire économique important pour Ankara. En ce qui concerne le domaine des relations turco-européennes le bilan n'est pas satisfaisant pour Ankara qui trouve que l'attitude de Bruxelles par rapport à son adhésion à l'Union européenne est pour le moins ambivalente (Perouse, 2004).

En d'autres termes, selon l'analyse d'Ahmet Davutoglu, le temps est propice pour que la Turquie utilise habilement ses avantages pour changer le statut que lui était réservé par l'Occident durant la Guerre froide, à savoir le statut d'un pays de deuxième rang, pourtant allié indispensable. D'ores et déjà la

Turquie, sans rompre ses liens transatlantiques et sans abandonner l'enjeu de son adhésion à l'Union européenne, devrait quand il le faut différencier sa politique régionale de celle des ses alliés occidentaux pour mieux servir ses intérêts nationaux. Dans ce cadre des considérations la Turquie devrait adopter «une politique de problèmes zéro» avec ses voisins, à savoir laisser derrière elle une politique conflictuelle, comme c'était le cas avec la Syrie, l'Iraq ou bien avec l'Iran, une politique qui reflétait en partie au moins celle de ses alliés occidentaux (Dorronsoro, 2009).

En ce qui concerne les relations de la Turquie avec la Grèce elles ne doivent plus être considérées comme une priorité comme se fut toujours le cas, car une telle attitude piégeait la Turquie dans une échelle d'action politique inférieure à ses possibilités en l'empêchant d'exercer une politique de grande échelle et d'envergure mondiale. Il en va de même pour Chypre. La Turquie devrait être préparée à répondre avec sévérité à toute action qui menace ses planifications stratégiques, elle ne doit pas permettre que sa politique extérieure soit hypothéquée ou se laisser entraîner à une position inférieure, qui n'est pas la sienne. Par contre la Turquie, un pays qui dispose d'un poids spécial, doit s'affirmer au rang qui est le sien et d'où elle devrait s'entretenir avec les autres acteurs internationaux (Davutoğlu, 2010: 236-238).

Ceci signifie qu'en développant ses possibilités et sa dynamique croissante la Turquie pourrait influencer à son profit le devenir des sous-systèmes qui lui sont voisins, voir devenir un pôle régional en comblant le vide de *leadership* au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du nord, régions liées à la Turquie par une religion et une civilisation communes mais aussi par un passé ottoman commun (Davutoğlu 2010, 302-303). Il faut donc réviser sa politique extérieure et faire des choix à savoir maintenir son alliance avec les Etats-Unis, chercher toujours à adhérer à l'Union européenne en tant que membre à part entière mais en même temps s'ouvrir vers le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du nord², où la Turquie pourrait trouver des conditions favorables au développement de sa politique (Davutoğlu, 2010/05/20).

En fait, depuis la fin de la Guerre froide et jusqu'aujourd'hui, le Moyen-Orient a subi des bouleversements profonds et a connu des conflits nouveaux qui viennent s'ajouter à ceux déjà existants. Tout d'abord la guerre de 1991 contre Bagdad qui a conduit l'Iraq au bord de la faillite et qui a fait raviver la Question kurde, pour le moins dans sa dimension irakienne, représentent pour Ankara une source d'inquiétude majeure, puisque la Turquie se bat depuis le début des années '80 contre les Kurdes vivant dans le sud-est turc (Kefala, 2006). Par la suite, la faillite des négociations israélo-palestiniennes et le démenti cruel des espoirs pour une paix régionale nés par les Accords de

Washington en septembre 1993, fait de la Question palestinienne un problème grave et chronique qui affecte profondément le Moyen-Orient³. Par ailleurs le durcissement de la position américaine et israélienne face à l'Iran, l'isolement et, par la suite, la marginalisation de la Syrie, pays en voisinage immédiat avec la Turquie, sont des facteurs qui créent beaucoup d'opportunités mais aussi beaucoup des risques pour la politique turque. Enfin, la guerre contre le terrorisme islamique lancée par le président américain de jadis Georges Bush et l'identification de l'Islam au terrorisme a provoqué des difficultés à la politique turque, dirigée d'ores et déjà par le AKP.

Dans ce contexte défavorable et lourd de menaces et de risques, Ankara a cherché à suivre une politique moyen-orientale très active dont le succès aurait un double mérite pour l'AKP: D'une part Ankara soulignerait son poids géopolitique et surtout son poids géoculturel, grâce auquel la Turquie pourrait jouer le rôle indispensable de médiateur entre les Etats-Unis/Union européenne et le monde musulman (Eralp, 2006: 99-100) en crispation par les pressions continues américaines et en colère par le lien direct établi par Washington entre la religion islamique et le terrorisme. D'autre part, si la Turquie pouvait jouer ce rôle de médiateur son importance politique serait augmentée et elle deviendrait de la sorte un facteur régional dont les intérêts devraient être pris en considération à toute solution donnée aux problèmes moyen-orientaux ou dans tout nouvel équilibre qui y serait établi. Un tel succès dans la politique extérieure de l'AKP confirmerait la validité du «modèle turc», c'est-à-dire de la synthèse entre l'Islam politique et la démocratie de type occidental, ce que procurerait à l'AKP encore plus d'avantages dans sa lutte contre ses rivaux politiques à savoir les kémalistes et les leaders de l'armée turque.

Il s'agit donc d'une interaction continue entre la politique intérieure et extérieure: pour réussir son adhésion à l'Union européenne, un des buts principaux de la politique extérieure turque auquel aspirent tant les kémalistes que l'AKP, le gouvernement devrait procéder à des changements profonds dans tous les domaines. Au niveau politique le changement le plus important concernait le rôle prépondérant de l'armée dans la vie politique turque, un rôle inconcevable dans un système politique qui se réclame de la démocratie occidentale. Dès son arrivée au pouvoir l'AKP avait tout intérêt à poursuivre un tel changement, d'autant plus qu'il disposait d'un important soutien populaire ainsi qu'à faire promouvoir de nouvelles lignes directrices dans sa politique extérieure. Or, la politique suivie jusqu'alors était plutôt dictée par l'armée et elle était étroitement liée à celle de l'Occident dont les intérêts ne coïncidaient pas toujours avec ceux de la Turquie, ni dans le niveau politique et stratégique ni dans le niveau économique. L'ouverture d'Ankara vers le

monde arabo-musulman semblait donc plus que nécessaire, mais pour accomplir ce but la Turquie devrait éliminer la méfiance arabe à son égard née tout d'abord de son alliance stratégique avec Israël.

Les relations turco-israéliennes

Les relations turco-israéliennes datent en substance depuis la création de l'Etat d'Israël en 1948, la Turquie étant un des pays qui ont reconnu l'Etat juif dès 1949. A l'époque Ankara n'était pas soucieuse à maintenir ses liens avec son contour moyen-oriental croyant que ces liens, dans la mesure où ils existaient, ils appartenaient plutôt au passé qu'au futur. Qui plus est l'Etat turc moderne, qui ne comptait alors que vingt-cinq ans, ne jouissait pas d'une grande sympathie dans le monde arabe. Or Israël, porteur de valeurs occidentales, était, tout comme la Turquie, un Etat non arabe dans une région dominée par le nationalisme arabe. L'idée développée par David Ben Gourion, le fondateur de l'Etat juif, que les pays non arabes du Moyen-Orient devraient collaborer, sinon nouer une alliance pour faire face à l'hostilité arabe contre eux (Parsi, 2007: 21-23) a trouvé un accueil favorable en Turquie kémaliste qui à l'époque ne souhaitait pas souligner son profil moyen-oriental.

Les relations entre la Turquie et Israël existaient donc d'une manière substantielle, quoi que discrète, ce qui provoqua le mécontentement israélien (Nahmani, 2003: 221) d'autant plus que durant la Guerre froide les deux pays avaient des intérêts convergents et des adversaires communs: la Syrie et l'Irak, par exemple, deux Etats alliés de l'Union soviétique qui cherchaient chacun pour soi le rôle du «champion de la cause commune» c'est-à-dire deux Etats qui se mettaient en défenseurs du peuple palestinien, et qui étaient des adversaires redoutables pour Israël. En ce qui concerne la Turquie, ses relations avec la Syrie et l'Irak étaient des relations tendues, sinon conflictuelles, surtout à cause de la question du partage des eaux des fleuves Tigre et Euphrate, qui trouvent leurs sources sur le sol de la Turquie de sud-est et qui traversent par la suite la Syrie et l'Irak. Cette question si importante a faillit se transformer en conflit armé ouvert entre Ankara d'une part et Damas et Bagdad d'autre part durant les années '80, mais le pire a été évité par la médiation de l'Arabie saoudite. Par la suite, les relations turco-syriennes s'aggravent davantage car Ankara accusait Damas d'avoir systématiquement aidé la guérilla kurde qui se battait contre l'armée turque dans le sud-est du pays depuis 1982.

Dans l'époque métabipolaire, la guerre du Golf, déclenchée contre l'Irak en janvier 1991, a provoqué des graves bouleversements régionaux, dont la

création de deux zones interdites à l'aviation irakienne couvrant le sud de l'Irak principalement habité par des chiïtes et le nord du pays région fortement habitée par les Kurdes a profondément inquiété Ankara. En effet, la Turquie avait peur que la création de cette poche de sécurité pour les Kurdes de l'Irak n'encourage les revendications des Kurdes vivant en Turquie. Dans ce contexte, Ankara a pratiqué le dit droit de poursuite, c'est-à-dire que l'armée turque envahissait régulièrement les frontières turco-irakiennes en poursuivant des rebelles armés du PKK qui selon la Turquie y trouvaient refuge. Il en va de même pour la Syrie, accusée par Ankara et Tel Aviv de donner refuge tant aux cadres politiques kurdes qu'aux leaders des organisations islamiques palestiniennes.

En dehors des questions politiques, la coopération entre la Turquie et l'Etat d'Israël s'étendait aussi dans le domaine de vente d'armes et à la collaboration militaire. Israël a développé une technologie militaire avancée et il est devenu un important exportateur d'armes. L'armée turque y pourrait acheter d'armes de nouvelle technologie sans subir des restrictions, même officieuses, à l'utilisation de ces armes, comme c'était le cas quand la Turquie achetait de l'armement chez ses partenaires de l'OTAN. Il s'agissait d'une situation favorable à toutes les deux parties: la Turquie pouvait obtenir d'armement sophistiqué sans restrictions quant à son utilisation, par exemple interdiction d'utiliser cet armement contre ses minorités, et Israël gagnait d'importantes sommes d'argent par les commandes passées par l'armée turque à l'industrie militaire israélienne.

Dans ce contexte de convergence d'intérêts, en février 1996 la Turquie et l'Etat d'Israël transformèrent leur collaboration en une alliance stratégique dont le contenu n'est pas entièrement rendu public. Ceci étant, dans le cadre de cette alliance, il semble que les deux pays signataires se sont mis d'accord à réaliser d'exercices militaires communs, à s'échanger des renseignements militaires, à avoir chacun la liberté d'utiliser l'espace aérien ou territorial de l'autre, à coordonner leurs stratégies de défense etc. (Ozturk, 2005). Bien que cette alliance ne soit pas une alliance classique, par exemple elle ne contenait pas la clause d'une assistance militaire au cas d'une attaque contre l'un des deux pays signataires, elle créait un espace stratégique commun ou plutôt un espace de sécurité qui servirait également aux intérêts américains (Bir – Scherman, 2002). Cette alliance fonctionnait par conséquent comme un multiplicateur de puissance tant pour la Turquie que pour Israël et renforçait davantage la position américaine non seulement au Moyen-Orient, mais aussi au Caucase.

L'alliance turco-israélienne se transformait en réalité en un triangle stratégique, unissant entre eux Washington et ses deux alliés stratégiques dans

cette région névralgique et toujours en agitation. Or, ce fait suscitait d'une part la méfiance d'autres pays de la région, comme la Syrie, qui cherchaient des moyens à contrebalancer cette nouvelle menace; d'autre part cette alliance mettait dans une position difficile l'autre allié important des Etats-Unis au Moyen-Orient, à savoir l'Egypte qui se voyait mise à l'écart dans les équilibres nouveaux formés par le couple turco-israélien. Qui plus est, tant Israël que les Etats-Unis avaient tout intérêt à renforcer la Turquie et à soutenir sa politique régionale, basée sur la dite synthèse turco-islamique.

Mais si des intérêts convergents ont poussé Ankara et Tel-Aviv à l'alliance, des intérêts divergents ont conduit les deux pays à la rupture. Le point de divergence le plus important concernait le sort de l'Irak (Burris, 2003). Pour la Turquie le démembrement de l'Irak devrait être évité à tout prix, à cause de répercussions négatives que pourrait avoir un changement des frontières dans une région parsemée de minorités, comme c'est le cas du Moyen-Orient, mais surtout à cause de la Question kurde. La Syrie partageait-elle aussi ces mêmes préoccupations, car sur son sol vivent aussi des Kurdes, tout comme en Turquie. Par contre, pour Israël le démembrement de l'Irak signifiait que son vieil ennemi ne pourrait plus représenter une menace considérable contre la sécurité de l'Etat juif. Pour les Etats-unis aussi, la création d'un Etat kurde au nord de l'Irak représenterait un avantage de taille car un tel Etat, très riche en pétrole par ailleurs, serait un allié fidèle à Washington.

Les relations turco-israéliennes commencent à se refroidir dès l'éclat de la deuxième Intifada palestinienne, en septembre 2000, réprimée avec violence par l'armée israélienne qui a occupé de nouveau les grandes villes de Cisjordanie, passées sous le contrôle de l'Autorité palestinienne depuis l'Accord de Washington en 1993. En 2002 le Parti de la Justice et du Développement sous Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gagne les élections législatives avec une écrasante majorité et quelques mois plus tard les Etats-Unis, dans le cadre de leur croisade contre le terrorisme islamique, déclenchent une nouvelle guerre contre l'Irak. Cette guerre, qui a provoqué des vives réactions parmi les alliés des Etats-Unis, a été vivement soutenue par Israël qui a identifié sa politique de force armée exercée aux territoires palestiniens occupés à la politique contre le terrorisme islamique menée par Washington. Dans ce contexte la Question kurde, neutralisée durant les douze ans d'embargo imposé au régime de Saddam Hussein, se pose de nouveau et d'urgence pour la Turquie.

Dans ces conditions le nouveau gouvernement turc sous Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a réagit d'une manière jusqu'ici inconcevable face au grand allié américain: il n'a pas permis aux forces américaines d'utiliser le sol turc pour ouvrir un deuxième front contre l'Irak. Cette décision du gouvernement

Erdoğan a certes provoqué des réactions de la part des leaders de l'armée turque mais la puissance politique de l'AKP a été grande et intacte et il n'était pas facile pour les généraux Turcs d'organiser un coup d'Etat «méta moderne» comme celui de 1997 contre le gouvernement islamique d'Erbakan, de jadis. Qui plus est un coup d'Etat devenait d'autant plus difficile que la Turquie soit obligée de procéder à des changements politiques et institutionnels profonds dans la direction de sa démocratisation, condition *sine qua non* pour continuer son itinéraire européen et obtenir finalement son adhésion à l'Union européenne. Cette réaction inédite d'Ankara face à la demande américaine en 2003, était plutôt perçue à l'époque comme une erreur dûe au manque d'expérience du gouvernement Erdoğan qui mettait en cause son rôle d'allié stratégique des États-Unis et qui privait l'économie faible turque d'une offre économique américaine de plus de vingt-cinq milliards de dollars (Candar, 2006).

Cependant la suite de la politique extérieure de l'AKP montre qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une erreur mais d'une décision délibérée qui mettait les fondements d'une nouvelle politique régionale turque, adaptée aux nouvelles conditions prévalant tant à l'intérieur de la Turquie qu'aux sous-systèmes qui lui sont voisins. D'ores et déjà l'AKP semblait décidé à suivre une politique régionale ouverte débarrassée de fardeaux du passé et de tout élément qui pourrait freiner le dynamisme de la politique régionale turque. Mais pour que la Turquie développe ce dynamisme il faudrait également mettre en valeur son poids géopolitique, géostratégique, géoéconomique et géoculturel et un des champs les plus propices pour une telle ouverture était le monde arabe. Or, l'alliance avec Israël ne représentait plus un avantage pour la Turquie (Razoux, 2010); au contraire elle s'est transformée en un obstacle pour le rapprochement du monde arabe au sein duquel la Question palestinienne occupe toujours une position spéciale.

Devenir le champion du monde arabe

Dans ce contexte, les premières frictions aux relations turco-israéliennes apparaissent en mars 2002, durant la réoccupation des villes palestiniennes en Cisjordanie par l'armée israélienne et surtout par la sanglante reprise des camps des réfugiés palestiniens de Jénine en avril de la même année. Cette opération avait un impact tellement négatif sur l'opinion publique de la Turquie⁴, que le Premier ministre Turc d'alors, Bulent Ecevit, leader d'un parti laïque et de gauche modérée, a déclaré que les opérations israéliennes à Jénine «était un génocide» (Schleifer, 2011).

Mais ce n'est pas uniquement le cas de la Palestine qui a conduit la Turquie à formuler des critiques acerbes contre son allié stratégique américain, mais aussi la politique de Washington contre l'Irak. En effet, le nouveau gouvernement turc sous Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, monté au pouvoir en novembre 2002 et disposant d'une écrasante majorité parlementaire, était contre la décision de Washington de déclencher une nouvelle guerre contre l'Irak et ceci pour deux raisons. Tout d'abord parce que la Turquie n'avait rien à gagner d'une guerre contre un pays voisin, ce qui constitue en soi une source d'instabilité et de menace pour la région toute entière. Les objections turques à cette guerre devenaient d'autant plus fortes à cause de la Question kurde ouverte par les Etats-Unis pendant la guerre précédente contre l'Irak, à savoir celle de 1991. Or, Ankara qui se battait contre les Kurdes du PKK depuis 1982 craignait que cette nouvelle guerre ne conduise à l'autonomie des Kurdes de l'Irak, ce qui pourrait ouvrir la même voie aux Kurdes de la Turquie. Par la suite, le gouvernement Erdoğan, qui comptait beaucoup sur l'identité musulmane tant au niveau politique qu'idéologique, se trouve dans une position délicate et difficile par cette nouvelle attaque occidentale contre un pays musulman. C'est dans ce cadre des considérations que le gouvernement d'AKP a refusé aux Etats-Unis l'utilisation du territoire turc pour ouvrir un second front contre l'Irak en 2003 et que certains de hauts cadres de l'AKP ont qualifié de «génocide» (Cagaptay, 2009) l'offensive américaine contre la ville irakienne de Faludja.

Mais c'est justement la Question irakienne qui a contribué au rapprochement entre Ankara et Damas, cette dernière ayant tout intérêt à établir des liens avec la Turquie, des liens qui briseraient l'isolement international imposé en Syrie par l'Occident. En janvier 2004 le président Syrien Bashir al-Assad, invité à la capitale turque, avait l'occasion de discuter la Question irakienne avec le Premier ministre Turc Recep Tayyip Erdoğan; De ces pourparlers il en résulte une parfaite convergence de vue: Ni la Turquie ni la Syrie ne souhaitaient qu'il y ait un démembrement de l'Irak et surtout pas un Kurdistan autonome (Öztürk, 2005).

Le rapprochement turco-syrien n'a pas provoqué des vives réactions de la part de Tel-Aviv, ce qui ne fut pas le cas quand Ankara a fait savoir son intention d'élever ses relations diplomatiques avec les Palestiniens. La réponse d'Israël - qui avait par ailleurs tout intérêt à un affaiblissement incontournable de l'Irak - y était immédiate et très sévère, mettant en garde la Turquie que dans un cas pareil Israël enverrait un ambassadeur au Kurdistan irakien, jouissant d'une large autonomie dans le cadre de l'Etat irakien, d'ores et déjà, fédéral (Kosebalaban, 2012).

Bien qu'Ankara n'ait pas changé le niveau de ses relations diplomatiques avec les Palestiniens, pourtant ses relations avec Tel-Aviv allaient de mal en pis dans la mesure où Tel-Aviv suivait une politique trop agressive contre les civils Palestiniens dans le but de briser la seconde Intifada. Le nombre croissant des civils Palestiniens morts par l'armée israélienne, la démolition des maisons de famille de ceux qui ont commis une attaque de suicide contre des cibles civiles israéliennes et surtout l'assassinat du chef spirituel du Hamas islamique, Cheik Yassin, et de son successeur Abdelaziz al-Radissi, ont eu un effet très négatif sur l'opinion publique turque. En résumant la colère et l'indignation provoquées en Turquie par cette politique israélienne, le Premier ministre Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a qualifié la politique israélienne contre les civils Palestiniens de «terrorisme d'Etat» et il a accusé les Etats-Unis, qui épaulaient Israël sans réserves, de «complicité au massacre» (*Haaretz*, 2004).

Malgré ces graves frictions, les relations turco-israéliennes ne sont pas rompues, l'alliance stratégique entre les deux pays persistait et, même, la Turquie a entrepris le rôle de médiateur pour la reprise des négociations de paix entre Israël et la Syrie. Or, il s'agissait d'un vain effort, puisque Tel-Aviv souhaitait négocier non seulement le retour, certes pas inconditionnel, des Hauteurs du Golan à Damas mais aussi l'alliance de cette dernière avec Téhéran, ce qui était hors de question pour la Syrie. Face à une telle situation, Ankara commence à multiplier les gestes d'ouverture vers des pays arabes et à prendre des distances à l'égard d'Israël.

Par la suite, la très sanglante opération dite «Plomb durci» déclenchée par Israël contre la Bande de Gaza en décembre 2008 dans le but déclaré «d'éliminer les terroristes du Hamas islamique pour gagner la sécurité de l'Etat juif» a eu un effet de catalyseur aux relations turco-israéliennes, des relations déjà minées par une divergence d'intérêts qui se faisait de plus en plus sentir. Ainsi, le Premier ministre Turc, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, pendant sa rencontre avec le Secrétaire général de l'ONU en voyage au Moyen-Orient début janvier 2009, n'a-t-il pas caché sa colère contre l'opération «Plomb durci» et il a même demandé l'expulsion d'Israël des Nations-Unies puisque l'Etat juif continuait à ignorer les appels onusiens d'arrêter ses attaques sanglantes (*Epohi*, 2009). Quelques jours plus tard, le Premier ministre Turc qui participait au Forum Economique Mondial de Davos accuse violemment le Président israélien Simon Peres de l'opération «Plomb durci» contre Gaza et quitte la salle de conférence.

Depuis, les relations de deux pays vont de mal en pis: Le 11 octobre 2009 Ankara exclut la participation israélienne aux exercices militaires sur le sol turc, tandis que le 11 janvier 2010 l'ambassadeur Turc à Tel Aviv est invité

par les autorités israéliennes à s'excuser pour un feuilleton présenté à la télévision turque jugé antisémite. Le 8 avril 2010 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan caractérise Israël comme la menace principale contre la paix au Moyen-Orient et le 17 mai 2010 Israël dénonce la fraude de l'accord sur l'enrichissement de l'uranium iranien signé entre la Turquie, le Brésil et l'Iran. Mais l'incident le plus grave qui a profondément marqué les relations turco-israéliennes et les a pratiquement conduit à la rupture a été l'attaque des forces armées israéliennes contre le navire turc *Mavi Marmara* au mois de mai 2010. Ce navire faisait partie de la flottille internationale cherchant à briser l'embargo total imposé par Israël à la Bande de Gaza sous contrôle du «gouvernement terroriste de Hamas». A la suite de cette attaque israélienne contre *Mavi Marmara* neuf ressortissants Turcs ont trouvé la mort. Ankara a demandé avec insistance que Tel-Aviv présente officiellement ses excuses pour cet incident sanglant mais l'Etat juif s'est contenté à exprimer ses regrets, ce qui était loin d'offrir la satisfaction demandée par la Turquie.

La question de *Mavi Marmara* est investiguée par une commission d'enquête onusienne qui a publié un rapport qui d'une part caractérisait d'excessive l'utilisation de la violence utilisée par les forces israéliennes et d'autre part caractérisait d'illégal l'effort des activistes de briser l'embargo imposé à Gaza⁵. La riposte turque, à savoir l'expulsion de l'ambassadeur Israélien et la suspension des liens militaires unissant Ankara à Tel-Aviv depuis 1996, montrent la détermination de la Turquie d'aller loin avec cette lutte à la corde diplomatique et politique. Ceci étant, c'est la déclaration d'Ahmet Davutoğlu, Ministre Turc des Affaires étrangères, que son pays «prendra toutes les précautions nécessaires pour la sécurité de la navigation maritime dans l'est de la Méditerranée»⁶ qui met l'affaire de *Mavi Marmara* et les réactions relatives d'Ankara sous une optique tout à fait différente.

Il s'agit, en effet, d'une approche régionale dominée par la Question chypriote laquelle se trouve directement liée avec un double but stratégique de la Turquie: D'une part il s'agit d'accomplir l'enjeu de son intégration à l'Union européenne et d'autre part, il s'agit de la préservation de ses «acquis» à Chypre, dont le 38, 5% reste toujours sous occupation turque depuis l'invasion de 1974. L'adhésion de la République de Chypre à l'Union européenne à part entière en 2004, a provoqué une très vive réaction de la part du gouvernement de Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, qui a adopté en la matière la position commune à tous les gouvernements turcs successifs depuis 1974: Soit refuser de reconnaître la République de Chypre, en tant qu'Etat indépendant et traiter Nicosie comme «l'administration chypriote-grecque» (Claude, 2007: 252). Ceci étant, pour concilier ces deux enjeux stratégiques,

et sous les pressions de Bruxelles, la Turquie a accepté de négocier de nouveau sur la base d'un nouveau plan, présenté par le Secrétaire général de l'ONU de jadis, Koffi Annan, accepté par les Chypriotes-turcs mais pas par les Chypriotes-grecs. Ankara revient donc à sa position initiale et par conséquent elle rejette comme «nul et non advenu» tout acte international de Nicosie, comme c'est le cas de la délimitation de zones maritimes d'intérêt économique.

Or, la découverte des riches gisements sous-marins de pétrole et de gaz naturel dans l'est de la Méditerranée posait la question de la délimitation des zones exclusives d'exploitation économique parmi les Etats côtiers de cette région, selon le Droit de la mer. Mais cette délimitation devient un problème très difficile à résoudre étant donné que les relations des Etats côtiers sont plutôt loin de ce que l'on pourrait appeler des «relations de bon voisinage.» La République de Chypre, ayant conscience des difficultés à surmonter, a cherché à conclure des accords nécessaires de délimitation pour exploiter ce trésor énergétique mais la Syrie, l'Égypte et le Liban sont revenus sur leur position positive initiale devant les menaces peu voilées de la Turquie (Kanli, 2011). Le seul pays de la région qui a finalement signé un tel accord avec la République de Chypre était Israël, pays adjacent et disposant lui aussi de très riches gisements de pétrole et de gaz naturel sous-marins (Kefala, 2011). Cet accord a donc touché le noyau dur des intérêts régionaux turcs, ce qui explique l'intransigeance d'Ankara dans l'affaire de *Mavi Marmara*, qui a joué le rôle d'un catalyseur aux relations déjà tendues et fragilisées entre la Turquie et l'Etat juif, les alliés stratégiques d'alors.

En fait, la Turquie en choisissant d'adopter une position intransigente face à Israël cherchait à obtenir d'une pierre deux coups: Préserver le noyau dur de sa politique chypriote, à savoir la négation de l'existence de l'Etat chypriote, neutraliser la politique de la Grèce en la matière, se débarrasser d'une alliance qui ne servait plus la politique régionale d'Ankara, voire elle représentait d'ores et déjà un fardeau, sauvegarder son prestige aux yeux de l'opinion publique turque et musulmane, et s'imposer comme le nouvel Etat fort de la région qui n'hésite pas à rompre ses liens privilégiés avec Israël et même provoquer sa colère pour défendre les Palestiniens et devenir donc «le nouveau champion de la cause commune.» Dans ce contexte, il n'est pas étrange que la Turquie ait cherché à jouer un rôle primordial au devenir des révoltes arabes qui éclateront en janvier 2011.

Les révoltes arabes et la Turquie

Au début de 2011 le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique du Nord sont secoués par les dites émeutes du pain qui sont très vite transformées en révoltes populaires, qui finissent par renverser des régimes-tunisien et égyptien jusqu'alors considérés inébranlables. De ce fait, les équilibres politiques régionaux sont sérieusement bouleversés, vu que ces régimes avaient des relations privilégiées avec l'Occident, qui, surpris et embarrassé, se contentait à suivre le cours des événements sans pouvoir y intervenir. Par contre, la Turquie a très vite ajusté sa politique aux conditions nouvelles créées par la révolte égyptienne et elle était un des premiers pays qui ont demandé au président égyptien Hosni Moubarak de quitter le pouvoir pour éviter l'effusion du sang dans le pays.

L'irrésolution et la confusion de l'Occident augmentent dans le cas libyen du moment où la position des révoltés est devenue critique et qu'ils ont demandé l'aide occidentale pour imposer une zone d'exclusion aérienne au-dessus de la Libye pour empêcher les forces de Mouamar Quaddafi à marteler leurs positions. Face aux appels des Libyens révoltés, la France, le Royaume Uni et le Liban, le 17 mars 2011 ont fait adopter par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU la résolution 1973, qui permet aux pays qui le souhaitent de participer aux opérations militaires nécessaires à l'établissement d'une *no fly zone* sur la Libye pour la protection des civiles et pour y imposer un cessez-le-feu. Dans un premier temps la Turquie a refusé toute intervention étrangère en Libye mais face à la résolution de Paris, de Londres et finalement de Washington, Ankara a changé d'avis et elle a participé aux opérations, commencées le 20 mars, qui ont conduit au renversement du régime libyen mais elle n'a demandé la démission de Mouamar Quaddafi que le 3 mai.

La Turquie a adopté une politique analogue dans le cas de la révolte syrienne, commencée à mi-mars 2011: elle s'est opposée à toute intervention étrangère en Syrie, et ce n'est qu'après des mois de répression sanglante qu'Ankara ait invité le Président Syrien à quitter le pouvoir⁷. On se demande donc pourquoi la Turquie a suivi une politique si différente face à l'Égypte d'une part et face à la Libye et la Syrie d'autre part. La réponse se trouve dans les intérêts économiques et politiques turcs dans ces trois pays. En faite, les relations politiques d'Ankara avec le Caire du temps de Hosni Moubarak ont été plutôt tièdes et les intérêts économiques turcs en Égypte plutôt médiocres. En conséquence une attitude dure face au régime et favorable aux manifestants de la place *Tahrir* offrait à Ankara d'avantages politiques, voire sans aucun coût. Au contraire, dans le cas de la Libye la position turque était différente car Ankara avait d'importants intérêts économiques, vu que depuis l'ouverture du régime libyen vers l'Occident la Turquie a développé des

relations économiques croissantes et un grand nombre des ressortissants Turcs travaillaient en ce pays nord-africain. En ce qui concerne la Syrie, Ankara avait tout intérêt à supporter le régime en place avec lequel elle partageait la même optique sur des questions régionales d'intérêt commun (Tocci, 2011).

Dans ces deux cas, Ankara a fait preuve d'une flexibilité politique et elle a changé de cap quand son soutien à Tripoli et à Damas se retourne contre elle en raison des réactions internationales croissantes contre les régimes de ces pays. Par ailleurs, après la rupture des relations turco-israéliennes, Ankara a cherché à ménager ses relations avec Washington, surtout dans le cadre de la crise libyenne, durant laquelle la Turquie a réaffirmé son attachement aux liens transatlantiques, tandis qu'elle a consenti à l'installation du bouclier antimissile américain (Marcou, 2011) conçu selon les Etats-Unis à protéger ses alliés régionaux d'un coup iranien contre eux. Or, cette attitude a provoqué des frictions aux relations entre Ankara et Téhéran, partenaire économique important d'Ankara, dans la mesure où selon l'optique iranienne, ce bouclier antimissile se dirige clairement contre l'Iran et menace sa sécurité.

Le 11 septembre 2011, le Premier ministre Turc a successivement visité Le Caire, Tripoli et Tunis, dans un effort de resserrer les liens politiques ou d'établir des relations plus étroites dans cette région en effervescence avec les nouvelles forces politiques émergées après la chute d'anciens régimes en place. Les enjeux politiques de cette tournée sont plutôt clairs: d'une part la Turquie cherche à se présenter en tant que puissance régionale; d'autre part, elle souhaite souligner son poids économique, mais surtout idéologico-politique, et faire valoir son modèle turco-islamique, composé d'un Islam politique modéré et d'un système économique et politique démocratique de type occidental. Il semble que la tâche soit facile pour Ankara dans ce dernier domaine, puisque des partis islamiques, tels l'Enahda en Tunisie ou les Frères Musulmans en Egypte se réclament déjà du modèle turc, qui est loin du fanatisme et de l'intolérance du fondamentalisme islamique (Rabbani, 2011). La Turquie servira-t-elle de modèle aux pays arabes qui viennent de se libérer de régimes corrompus et autoritaires? La réponse est plutôt négative, parce que chaque pays est différent et le modèle de l'AKP n'est pas une panacée et parce que le modèle turc a montré ses limites par son insistance à imposer une islamisation qui se fait de plus en plus sentir sur la vie publique (Schmid - Semo, 2011). Finalement, il ne faut pas oublier que les révoltes arabes ont eu comme base des valeurs laïques, telles la démocratie et la dignité, et qu'elles ne sont pas accomplies par des islamistes.

Conclusion

Renforcé d'une audience politique extraordinaire Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a cherché à utiliser à son profit les demandes européennes de modernisation du pays, condition *sine qua non* pour son adhésion à l'Union européenne. Dans ce contexte, le Premier ministre Turc a put neutraliser politiquement l'armée, jusqu'alors garant du caractère laïque de la Turquie, et à donné un nouveau souffle à l'économie turque au bord de la faillite. Dans le domaine de la politique extérieure, l'AKP a suivi une politique qui se veut nouvelle mais qui se base sur des lignes directrices du passé: faire valoir son poids géostratégique et géopolitique, s'imposer en tant que grande puissance, préserver ses intérêts régionaux, maintenir son alliance avec les Etats-Unis, qui ont toujours besoin de la Turquie pour mener à bien leur politique au Caucase et en Asie centrale (Lewis, 2006), adhérer à l'Union européenne en bonne et due forme.

Mais pour accomplir ces vieux enjeux la politique turque devrait s'adapter aux conditions nouvelles prévalant aux sous-systèmes voisins. Dans ces circonstances, la politique extérieure de Recep Tayyip Erdoğan instrumentalise des facteurs politiques et idéologiques, comme l'Islam politique modéré, pour se rapprocher des pays à populations musulmanes et elle développe le concept d'un espace géoculturel commun qui correspond grosso modo aux confins de l'Empire ottoman. Aussi, la Turquie fait-elle valoir sa position charnière et vise à devenir une puissance géoéconomique, c'est-à-dire transformer son territoire en passage obligatoire d'oléoducs qui assureront la sécurité énergétique occidentale. Il s'agit en conséquence d'une politique trop ambitieuse qui ne saurait pas être débarrassée de contradictions et qui semble parfois ne pas prendre en considération les réalités locales et régionales.

Si l'on veut donc évaluer la politique moyen-orientale de la Turquie on constate qu'elle suit à la fois plusieurs objectifs contradictoires, comme son rapprochement à l'Iran et en même temps son consentement à l'installation du bouclier antimissile, ou bien l'idée que la Turquie pourrait devenir le nouveau pôle idéologico-politique au Moyen-Orient pour avoir adopté une politique pro-palestinienne ou encore l'idée que la Turquie est devenue le nouveau leader du monde arabe parce que des partis islamiques, émergés à la suite des révoltes arabes, se réclament de son modèle. Or, il n'y a pas de raison pour croire que le monde arabe pourrait surmonter sa méfiance traditionnelle à l'égard de la Turquie et, encore moins, qu'il est prêt à accepter son hégémonie politique. Il semble donc très peu probable que la Turquie pourrait accomplir les enjeux de sa politique moyen-orientale.

NOTES

1. Le texte cité provient de l'ouvrage d'Ahmet Davutoğlu, traduit en grec. Les sections citées sont traduites en français par l'auteur et les numéros des pages citées correspondent à l'édition grecque de l'ouvrage.
2. "As we leave behind the first decade of the 21st century, Turkey has been able to formulate a foreign-policy vision based on a better understanding of the realities of the new century, even as it acts in accordance with its historical role and geographical position. In this sense, Turkey's orientation and strategic alliance with the West remains perfectly compatible with Turkey's involvement in, among others, Iraq, Iran, the Caucasus, the Middle East peace process, and Afghanistan."
Davutoğlu A. Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy
3. Il est intéressant de noter que le fait que la Turquie n'a pas été invitée à participer à la Conférence de paix à Madrid lancée par les Etats-Unis en octobre 1991 est perçu par Ankara comme un signe que la Turquie est considérée par l'Occident comme un pays de 'deuxième rang' (Davutoğlu, 2010: 281).
4. Le commentaire du président Américain de jadis, Georges Bush, qui a qualifié le Premier ministre Israélien, Ariel Sharon qui a pris cette décision, «d'un homme de paix» a fait déborder l'opinion publique en Turquie, et dans le monde musulman tout entier. Par ailleurs, l'opinion publique en Turquie s'est montrée très hostile face à Israël en 1980, après que Tel-Aviv eu annexé Jérusalem Est à l'Etat juif en déclarant que Jérusalem ainsi unifiée constitue sa capitale éternelle et indivisible.
5. «Dans ce document, la commission d'enquête de l'ONU estime, certes, qu'Israël a fait un usage «excessif» et «déraisonnable» de la force, ce fameux 31 mai 2010 lorsque l'assaut israélien a été donné sur le bateau turc Mavi Marmara. Mais elle soutient aussi qu'Israël a agi en état de légitime défense face à la «résistance organisée et violente» de certains activistes. Le rapport donne également raison à l'Etat hébreu en affirmant que le blocus naval qu'il maintient sur l'enclave palestinienne est légal du point de vue du droit international. Un élément que les officiels Turcs envisagent de contester en s'adressant à la Cour de Justice internationale de la Haye. Démarche longue et complexe en perspective. Mais la force du rapport est considérablement amoindrie par le fait que les membres turcs et israéliens de la commission, composée de quatre hommes, se sont dissociés des conclusions du rapport. Un responsable des Nations-Unies souligne qu'en réalité, les deux parties, israélienne et turque, ne sont pas parvenues à se mettre d'accord sur le récit des événements, ni sur les conclusions du rapport. Le document n'est donc pas un document qui fait consensus. D'ailleurs, le président Turc Abdullah Gül a déclaré que ce rapport était «nul et non avvenu.»
6. *Op. cit.*
7. Le 22 novembre Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a demandé à Bachar al Assad de quitter le pouvoir en soulignant que la répression des manifestants par le régime syrien renvoie aux méthodes de l'Allemagne nazie.
http://www.lepoint.fr/monde/syrie-la-turquie-demande-la-demission-d-assad-23-11-2011-1399276_24.php

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La Turquie, Chypre et la Méditerranée orientale

Stephanos Constantinides*

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the strategic importance of Cyprus and its efforts to safeguard its independence against Turkish expansionism. The discovery of energy resources in the eastern Mediterranean in the exclusive zone of Cyprus, led Turkey to step up its threats towards the Republic of Cyprus. Nicosia, however, acting in accordance with international law and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay Convention, 1982), has the support of the international community. In addition there has been a rapprochement in recent years between Israel and Cyprus, which strengthens the position of Nicosia.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse l'importance stratégique de Chypre et son effort de sauvegarder son indépendance face à l'expansionnisme de la Turquie. La découverte de ressources énergétiques en Méditerranée orientale dans la zone exclusive de Chypre a conduit la Turquie à multiplier ses menaces envers la République de Chypre. Nicosie a cependant le soutien de la communauté internationale en agissant selon le droit international et la Convention des Nations unies sur le droit de la mer (Convention de Montego Bay, 1982). En plus il y a eu ces dernières années un rapprochement entre Israël et Chypre, ce qui renforce la position de Nicosie.

L'importance stratégique de l'île

La politique extérieure turque envers Chypre a toujours été caractérisée par son agressivité. La Turquie considère Chypre comme faisant partie de son domaine d'influence, et estime que cette île est d'une importance stratégique capitale pour ses intérêts. Il est notable que l'actuel ministre des Affaires étrangères de Turquie, Ahmet Davutoğlu, a écrit à ce propos: «même s'il n'y avait aucun Turc à Chypre, la Turquie serait toujours intéressée pour l'île à cause de son importance stratégique».¹ Autrement dit, la minorité turque de Chypre a été toujours utilisée comme un prétexte pour les interventions d'An-

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kara dans l'île. Il ne s'agit pas d'une nouvelle politique inventée par Davutoğlu, mais au contraire d'une vision constante de la Turquie envers Chypre. Il y a eu évidemment le traité de Lausanne de 1923 par lequel la Turquie abandonnait tous ses droits sur l'île qui résultaient de l'emprise ottomane sur Chypre. Malgré le fait qu'on dit parfois que la Turquie a découvert à nouveau Chypre dans la première moitié des années '50, à cause de la lutte des Chypriotes pour l'Enosis, la réalité est qu'Ankara a toujours porté un intérêt particulier pour Chypre. Par exemple, Chypre figurait dans la liste de ses revendications pour entrer dans la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. On sait aussi que le Consulat turc à Nicosie suivait de près l'évolution politique à Chypre et conseillait les Chypriotes turcs sur la façon de se comporter. Ainsi le leader chypriote turc -modéré- Ihsan Ali, mentionne dans ses mémoires qu'il a été invité par le Consul turc à Nicosie, qui lui a conseillé d'éditer un journal chypriote turc. Ihsan Ali lui a proposé le docteur Fazil Kûçük-plus tard devenu vice-président de la République de Chypre-comme étant plus apte à prendre cette responsabilité. C'est ainsi qu'en 1941 a commencé la publication du quotidien Halkin Sesi avec des fonds d'Ankara.²

Il est vrai, cependant, que les Britanniques ont tout fait pour pousser Ankara à s'intéresser à Chypre et à avancer la revendication du partage de l'île contre la demande de la majorité grecque en faveur de l'Enosis. Les documents officiels du Foreign Office publiés depuis, montrent effectivement que la Turquie est devenue très agressive envers Chypre avec l'encouragement de Londres. Il y a eu même des moments où les Britanniques exerçaient des pressions sur la Turquie pour faire monter les enchères afin d'aider la politique coloniale de Londres.³ Le Premier ministre britannique Antony Eden avoue, lui-même, dans ses mémoires avoir encouragé la Turquie à s'opposer aux aspirations des Chypriotes.⁴ Un universitaire turc a du avouer que la politique britannique «was a blatant case of divide and rule».⁵

L'importance géostratégique de Chypre est l'élément clé de la compréhension de son histoire, en particulier de la période postérieure à la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Tout au long de son histoire des puissances régionales mais aussi mondiales ont tenté, en occupant ce pays, de l'utiliser pour promouvoir leurs intérêts. L'île constitue un pont de communication entre l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Europe et un point de surveillance de cette vaste région. Proche des sources du pétrole et des oléoducs qui le transporte vers diverses directions, l'île est devenue aussi une base centrale de la défense des approvisionnements en énergie tant de l'Europe que de l'Asie.

Comme il a été dit,

La situation géostratégique de Chypre se caractérise par une position géographique particulière, à la fois centrale du fait de sa localisation charnière entre l'Anatolie, le Levant, le canal de Suez et la Crète, et excentrique parce que s'ouvrant sur les côtes les plus reculées du bassin oriental de la Méditerranée. Au regard des puissances étrangères désireuses d'étendre leur influence dans la région et du fait de ses nombreuses possibilités stratégiques, Chypre apparaît comme un pivot grâce auquel il est possible de couvrir le littoral levantin. L'île détient également une position centrale au cœur des flux périphériques de la circulation méditerranéenne, au même titre que le canal de Suez, les détroits des Dardanelles, du Bosphore, d'Anticythère, de Karpathos et de Gibraltar, parce qu'elle constitue l'extrémité la plus orientale de la Méditerranée, incluse dans la sphère d'influence occidentale.⁶

Déjà le Premier ministre Britannique Disraeli, au moment de l'occupation de l'île par les Britanniques en 1878, déclarait que celui qui voulait dominer l'Asie devait d'abord posséder Chypre.⁷ Et plus tard, après la perte de Suez, les Britanniques se sentaient, sans Chypre, vulnérables pour leur approvisionnement en pétrole. *Le Premier ministre britannique Antony Eden était catégorique sur ce point, considérant que non seulement le Royaume-Uni, mais l'Occident, en général, dépendait du pétrole du Proche Orient. En conséquence, Chypre était d'une valeur stratégique inestimable. Cet homme politique britannique a ainsi déclaré: «The welfare and indeed the lives of our people depend on Cyprus as a protective guard and a staging post to take care of those interests, above all oil».*⁸ Dans une autre déclaration Eden était encore plus clair:

*No Cyprus, no certain facilities to protect our supply of oil. No oil, unemployment and hunger in Britain. It is as simple as that today.*⁹

Sur ce plan de la valeur stratégique de l'île, il est important de signaler, cependant, qu'il existe une continuité historique, l'île ayant une situation stratégique immémoriale.

Les rapports Erim

Point tournant de la politique turque envers Chypre: les deux rapports du professeur Nihat Erim, qui plus tard a exercé aussi les fonctions de Premier ministre de la Turquie et conseillait en 1956 le gouvernement turc du Premier ministre Adnan Menderes en matière de politique chypriote. Nihat Erim proposait essentiellement le partage de l'île entre la Turquie et la Grèce en suivant sur ce point la ligne tracée par Londres. Son rapport contenait cinq recommandations:

1. Les Britanniques restent les maîtres de l'île.
2. Si ceux-ci l'abandonnent, Chypre doit retourner à la Turquie.
3. Si le retour à la Turquie n'est pas possible, la seule autre solution sera le partage de l'île selon une ligne qui favoriserait ses intérêts stratégiques.
4. Une forme de *self government* sous domination des Britanniques serait aussi possible.
5. La solution de l'Enosis ne serait en aucun cas acceptable¹⁰.

Cette politique turque de partage de l'île est restée constante jusqu'à l'invasion turque de l'île en 1974. L'indépendance de 1960 telle que la Grèce et l'Archevêque Makarios l'ont acceptée signifiait en pratique le retour de la Turquie dans l'île comme puissance garante et avec une présence militaire. Les accords Zurich-Londres, qui ont conduit à l'indépendance, se sont avérés catastrophiques pour Chypre, essentiellement à cause du retour de la Turquie dans l'île. Les objectifs fixés par les rapports Erim ont été en partie réalisés.

À partir de 1974 Ankara s'oppose au partage de l'île en préférant la mise en place de deux États à Chypre, un État turc au nord et un État grec au sud, coiffés par un lien confédéral, pratiquement sous «protection» turque. Cette politique vise donc à faire de Chypre un protectorat turc et à évincer la Grèce de la Méditerranée orientale. La Turquie a toujours prétendu qu'une présence grecque à Chypre aurait exposé directement la frontière sud de son territoire à une menace permanente. Une telle présence en effet, aurait permis l'encercllement du territoire turc par le sud.

Ahmet Davutoğlu et la vision islamiste

Ahmet Davutoğlu, l'actuel ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la Turquie, a élaboré, comme universitaire, la vision géopolitique du gouvernement islamiste actuel. Celui-ci est considéré comme l'architecte de la politique extérieure de la Turquie islamiste. Contrairement aux Kemalistes, qui ont voulu, au moins dans un premier temps, couper avec le passé ottoman, Davutoğlu repose son analyse sur le respect qu'il nourrit envers le passé impérial ottoman de son pays. Il tente de démontrer que ce passé, combiné avec la position géostratégique unique de la Turquie, loin d'être un fardeau pour le pays, est un grand avantage pour accroître son importance régionale et mondiale. Au-delà de la rhétorique, Davutoğlu a renforcé la tendance, existante déjà depuis plusieurs années en Turquie, en faveur d'une politique néo-ottomane. En fait cette tendance est devenue avec l'arrivée au pouvoir des Islamistes et la défaite

des Kemalistes, la politique officielle de la Turquie. De fait, la doctrine de «profondeur stratégique», élaborée par Davutoğlu, vise à faire de la Turquie une puissance régionale disposant de sa propre sphère d'influence à la croisée de l'Europe, du Moyen-Orient et de l'Eurasie.

Le contrôle de l'armée par les Islamistes a enlevé le dernier obstacle à l'encontre de cette doctrine. D'abord la politique proclamée de «zéro problèmes» a été pratiquée surtout dans les Balkans, mais a vite dérapé, en partie, à cause de l'Arménie et de la Syrie, sans parler des difficultés récentes avec l'Iran et l'Irak. Par ailleurs, la guerre russo-géorgienne d'août 2008 et le retour en force de la Russie dans le Caucase ont réduit les ambitions turques au-delà de ses frontières nord, la «république sœur» d'Azerbaïdjan redoublant elle-même de prudence. Chypre n'a pas été incluse dans cette politique dès le début. Au contraire Ankara applique contre Chypre une politique neo-ottomane très agressive. D'ailleurs dans son livre *Profondeur Stratégique*, Ahmet Davoutoglu, après une analyse de l'importance stratégique de Chypre conclut: Un pays qui ignore Chypre ne peut être actif ni sur le plan régional, ni sur le plan global.¹¹

L'équilibre régional

Dans un premier temps l'invasion de Chypre par la Turquie en 1974 a renversé l'équilibre dans l'île et dans la Méditerranée orientale en faveur d'Ankara. Cependant, l'adhésion de Chypre à l'Union Européenne en 2004, sans renverser l'équilibre dans la région en faveur de la Turquie, a porté un coup sévère à ce pays en renforçant la position de l'île d'Aphrodite et évidemment celle de la Grèce. Le plan Annan proposé en 2004 visait justement d'empêcher la République de Chypre de devenir membre de l'UE. A sa place devait y entrer un État chypriote confédéral sous l'influence turque. Ainsi le plan Annan devait conduire avec la dissolution de la République de Chypre plus qu'à une finlandisation de l'île. Il est intéressant de signaler qu'une telle dissolution a été, depuis 1964, un objectif constant non seulement de la politique turque mais aussi de la politique britannique soutenue à cet égard par Washington. C'est dans ce sens qu'il faut considérer l'intégration de la République de Chypre à l'Union européenne comme une victoire diplomatique considérable pour Nicosie et Athènes. Désormais les ambitions européennes de la Turquie passent par Nicosie.

La découverte des ressources énergétiques

Un nouveau point tournant pour l'équilibre politico-diplomatique dans la région de la Méditerranée orientale a été la découverte des réserves de gaz

naturel dans la Zone Economique Exclusive de Chypre. Au cours de l'année 2009 d'importants gisements de gaz ont été découverts au large du port israélien de Haïfa. Chypre qui avait signé avec Israël le 17 décembre 2010 un accord délimitant sa frontière maritime a choisi pour ses propres forages la compagnie *Noble Energy*, celle-la même qui s'est associée aux prospections israéliennes et opère aussi aujourd'hui en Grèce. Malgré l'opposition féroce d'Ankara, la République de Chypre a réussi à délimiter aussi sa Zone Economique Exclusive avec l'Égypte, par un traité conclu avec ce pays, le 17 février 2003. Un accord a été aussi conclu en 2007 à cette fin avec le Liban qui ne l'a cependant pas ratifié à cause des pressions d'Ankara.

Fin décembre 2011, on affirme, côté chypriote, qu'un réservoir important de gaz naturel contenant entre 140 et 224 milliards de m³ vient d'être mis à jour. Cette découverte de gaz naturel change les données stratégiques dans la région. A cela s'ajoute la rupture entre Ankara et Tel Aviv. Il est évident que cette rupture, qui a facilité un rapprochement entre Chypre et Israël, renforce la position de Nicosie dans la région. Bientôt pays exportateur de gaz naturel, Chypre offre à Israël une porte d'entrée « gazière » vers l'Europe et à l'UE la possibilité de diversifier ses approvisionnements, tout en résistant aux intimidations turques.

Le Premier ministre israélien, Benjamin Netanyahu, a effectué, la première visite officielle d'un chef de gouvernement hébreu dans l'histoire des relations diplomatiques des deux pays, à Nicosie, le 16 février 2012, et s'est entretenu avec le président chypriote Dimitri Christofias de la coopération, notamment énergétique, entre les deux pays. Le président chypriote avait effectué lui-même une visite officielle en Israël le 16 mars 2011, alors que le président israélien Shimon Peres s'est rendu à Chypre en novembre 2011. Plusieurs autres visites de ministres des deux pays ont été effectuées entre-temps à Nicosie et Tel Aviv. Ce rapprochement avec Israël renforce évidemment la position de Nicosie dans la région.¹²

Les réactions féroces d'Ankara n'ont pas en effet empêché la mise en place par la République de Chypre des structures pour l'exploitation de ses richesses naturelles. Sur ce plan, forte de ses droits légitimes, et soutenue par le droit international de la mer, Chypre a obtenu le soutien de la communauté internationale face aux menaces d'Ankara. Elle a ainsi répété, maintes fois, sa détermination à faire valoir son droit souverain à exploiter ses ressources énergétiques, dans le cadre des lois internationales.¹³

En outre, la République de Chypre assumera, le 1er juillet 2012, la présidence tournante de l'Union Européenne. «De quoi concentrer entre ses mains

plusieurs enjeux liés non seulement à l'Europe, mais aussi aux gigantesques réserves de gaz récemment découvertes en Méditerranée orientale, et à la faveur desquelles de nouvelles alliances se nouent dans la région». ¹⁴ Ainsi la République de Chypre pourrait diriger une partie des opérations de la force militaire internationale sous commandement européen qui opère dans les Balkans et qui comprend des soldats turcs... Afin d'éviter ce scénario la Turquie aurait pensé au retrait des militaires turcs, ce qui a été démenti par la suite. ¹⁵ La Turquie, entre-temps, a menacé de geler ses relations avec Bruxelles durant la période de la présidence chypriote. Des pressions ont été exercées, en particulier par les Anglo-saxons, pour que la question chypriote soit définitivement résolue, avant le 1er juillet 2012, ce qui permettrait à Ankara un contrôle sur le nouvel État qui en résulterait, via la communauté chypriote turque soumise à sa tutelle.

En guise de représailles, la Turquie a signé en septembre 2011 un accord avec la «République», autoproclamée, de «Chypre du Nord», pour entamer des forages offshore de gaz et de pétrole et a envoyé un bateau de prospection dans la région en vertu du même accord. En outre la Turquie a multiplié les manœuvres militaires dans cette zone pour imposer sa présence. Face aux menaces turques, Nicosie aurait sollicité l'aide de la marine israélienne pour défendre ses champs gaziers. D'autres informations ont fait état de facilités accordées aux avions israéliens basés à Chypre, ce qui a été démenti par les autorités chypriotes.

En mai 2012 la Turquie a franchi un pas décisif dans la bataille diplomatique qu'elle livre à Chypre pour le contrôle des ressources énergétiques de l'île. En inaugurant un puits de forage terrestre près de la ville de Trikomo, sur la côte nord, dans la partie occupée de Chypre, Ankara espère découvrir des gisements d'hydrocarbures, à environ 3000m de profondeur. ¹⁶

Entre-temps, Chypre a annoncé, le 11 mai 2012, que 15 sociétés et consortiums avaient déposé des offres lors d'enchères portant sur 12 blocs d'exploration pétrolière et gazière au large de l'île méditerranéenne, en dépit de l'opposition de la Turquie à ces prospections. Il s'agit de la seconde phase d'enchères après celle de 2008.

Les offres ont été déposées par dix consortiums et cinq groupes, dont le français Total, le malaisien Petronas et l'américain ATP.

Le ministre chypriote du commerce, Neoclis Sylikiotis, a affirmé que la seconde phase d'enchères avait "dépassé les attentes".

Face à ce succès, la Turquie a proféré des menaces contre les compagnies,

qui ont déposé des offres lors d'enchères portant sur les 12 blocs. Ainsi le ministère turc des Affaires étrangères a appelé le 18 mai 2012, les consortiums candidats à un appel d'offre chypriote sur l'exploration pétrolière et gazière au large de l'île à se retirer, les avertissant qu'ils seraient exclus de tout projet de coopération avec la Turquie.

“Nous invitons les pays et les compagnies pétrolières concernées à se comporter avec bon sens en renonçant à toute activité dans cette zone maritime à l'origine de différends liés à la question chypriote et en se retirant de l'appel d'offre en question”, a déclaré le ministère dans un communiqué.¹⁷ Il poursuit en prévenant que lesdites compagnies seront tenues pour “responsables” “des tensions qui pourraient surgir dans la région si elles entament une coopération avec le gouvernement chypriote-grec “au mépris des droits des Chypriotes turcs”.

“Il sera hors de question d'inclure les compagnies qui auront coopéré avec l'administration chypriote-grecque dans les projets énergétiques futurs en Turquie”, ajoute le communiqué.

La République de Chypre, reconnue par la communauté internationale et dont l'autorité, légalement, s'étend sur l'ensemble du territoire de l'île, a condamné l'attitude provocatrice de la Turquie, qui cherche par une politique de la canonnière pour promouvoir ses desseins expansionnistes à Chypre.

“Les menaces turques ne vont pas entamer la détermination de la République à poursuivre l'application de son programme de recherches, d'exploration et d'exploitation”, a déclaré le ministère des Affaires étrangères dans un communiqué.¹⁸

Il n'y a pas de doute que la Turquie continuera à faire monter le ton dans les mois à venir surtout dans le contexte de l'exercice de la présidence européenne par Nicosie. Mais ni l'Union européenne ni les Etats-Unis n'ont intérêt de voir un autre conflit éclater dans la région.

Conclusion

La Méditerranée orientale reste un des points stratégiques les plus importants au monde. Cela s'explique par sa position sur la route qui relie trois continents, l'Europe, l'Afrique et l'Asie. Berceau de civilisations, cette région, qui a toujours eu une grande place stratégique dès le début de l'histoire, est devenue aujourd'hui encore plus importante à cause des ressources énergétiques si-

gnificatives des pays avoisinants. En outre, on y trouve les oleoducs et les terminaux où transite l'énergie du Caucase, de la Mer Noire, et du Proche Orient.

Chypre est située au centre de ce trafic important et de surcroît abrite les importantes bases britanniques utilisées par l'OTAN et les Etats-Unis. Chypre est aussi en mesure d'offrir des facilités militaires à d'autres pays, y compris la France, Israël et même la Russie. Ce pays est évidemment aussi un centre de communications et de services financiers. D'où son importance stratégique inestimable.

C'est dans ce contexte qu'il faut considérer le conflit entre la République de Chypre et la Turquie. En réalité Ankara s'intéresse peu à la minorité turque de Chypre comme le montre sa politique de ces dernières années et les manifestations des Chypriotes turcs contre sa présence dans l'île¹⁹. La minorité turque de Chypre est utilisée comme un outil stratégique par Ankara pour servir ses propres intérêts nationaux. On a d'ailleurs cité déjà l'analyse d'Ahmet Davutoğlu, actuel ministre des Affaires Etrangères de la Turquie, qui considère que même s'il n'y avait aucun Turc dans l'île, Ankara aurait toujours le même intérêt pour Chypre.

La stratégie turque concernant Chypre n'a pas varié depuis plus d'un demi-siècle. Il s'agit d'une stratégie qui vise le contrôle de l'île et l'exclusion autant que possible de la Grèce de la Méditerranée orientale. Cette stratégie a été simplement adaptée sur le plan tactique selon les circonstances pour donner l'impression d'une politique turque flexible envers Chypre. Contrairement à la stratégie turque, ni Athènes ni Nicosie n'ont eu de véritable politique chypriote. Il y a eu sûrement quelques faits intéressants du côté grec, comme l'adhésion de la République de Chypre à l'Union européenne, dont la paternité est d'ailleurs réclamée par ceux-là mêmes qui étaient d'accord pour la disparition de la République dans sa présente forme. Dans le contexte actuel avec la découverte du gaz naturel et la possibilité de l'existence de ressources pétrolières dans sa Zone Economique Exclusive, Chypre dispose de cartes importantes pour faire face aux continues menaces turques. Sa présence aussi au sein de l'Union européenne, qu'elle va présider au cours du second semestre 2012, est une autre carte significative que Nicosie peut jouer en faveur de la paix dans cette région. Puisqu'en définitive la paix est dans l'intérêt de tous les peuples de la région, y compris le peuple turc.

NOTES

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2. Ihsan Ali, *Mes mémoires*, Nicosie, 1980, p.4 (En grec)
(En anglais, Dr Ihsan Ali, *My Memoirs*, published by Ihsan Ali Foundation, Nicosia, 2000).
3. Robert Holland, *Britain and Revolt of Cyprus, 1954-1959*, Oxford, 1998, et aussi son article «Greek-Turkish Relations, Instabul and British Rule in Cyprus, 1954-59: Some Excerpts from the British Public Archives», *Bulletin du Centre d'Études sur l'Asie Mineure*, no 10, p.328-365.
4. Antony Eden, Full Circle, London, Cassel, 1960, p.400.
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6. Fotini Katy Mirante-Psaltakis, «Chypre: Un enjeu prépondérant de l'équilibre géopolitique et géostratégique Est-Méditerranéen», *Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies*, vol.19, no.2, Automne 2011.
7. D.LEE, *Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878*, Londres-Cambridge, 1934, p.113.
8. H.C.Deb., vol. 550, col, 447, cité par Nancy Crawshaw, in *The Cyprus Revolt*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1978, p.171.
9. *The Times*, 2 Juin 1956, cité par Nancy Crawshaw, in *The Cyprus Revolt*, op.cit., p.195.
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11. Ahmet Davutoğlu, *La profondeur stratégique. La place internationale de la Turquie*, op.cit., p. 275.
12. Sur l'évolution de relations entre Chypre et Israël, voir entre autres, Charalambos Petinos, *Chypre-Turquie, perspective géopolitique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2011, Emile Landrieux, «Netanyahu effectue une visite historique à Chypre», <http://www.francaisenouvelles.com>
«Les relations israélo-turques continuent de se dégrader», *L'Express*, 06/09/2011,

- «Benjamin Netanyahu à Chypre pour la première fois» *www.lepoint.fr*, 16/2/2012.
13. Voir les journaux Chypriotes *Phileleftheros* et *Cyprus Mail* de septembre 2011 a decembre 2011.
 14. «Chypre-Turquie: gare à l'explosion de 224 milliards de m3 de gaz naturel qui chauffent déjà les esprits» *www.causeur.fr*, 06 février 2012.
 15. *Ibid*, 06 février 2012.
 16. *Le Monde*, Géo & Politique 13-14 mai 2012.
 17. *The Zaman*, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 18 mai 2012.
 18. *O Phileleftheros*, quotidien chypriote, 19 et 20 mai 2012.
 19. Les 28 février et 2 mars 2011 a eu lieu en zone occupée une manifestation de plusieurs dizaines de milliers de Chypriotes turcs contre un plan d'austérité imposé par Ankara et la présence de l'armée turque.

Lévendia, Philotimo, Kaïmos: Figures et Formes Rebelles de la Musique Grecque

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ABSTRACT

Greek music occupies a special place in the heart of the Greeks. From folk music (*dimotiki*) to popular music (*laiki*), a constellation of images and symbols are deployed in the Greek repertoire. Deeply linked to a spirit of resistance and identity preservation over the centuries, this music in its many aspects, remains one of the best gateways to understand the Hellenic imaginary. Reviewing the main Greek musical genres, this article highlights what they reveal of history, memory and collective identity of Greece in constant renewal.

RÉSUMÉ

La musique grecque occupe une place de choix dans le cœur des Grecs. De la musique démotique (*dimotiki*) à la musique laïque (*laiki*), une constellation d'images et de symboles se déploient au sein du répertoire grec. Profondément liée à une volonté de résistance et de préservation identitaire au fil des siècles, cette musique, dans ses multiples aspects, demeure l'une des meilleures portes d'entrée pour comprendre l'imaginaire hellénique. Passant en revue les principaux genres musicaux grecs, cet article souligne ce qu'ils dévoilent de l'histoire, la mémoire et l'identité collective d'une Grèce en rénovation permanente.

Des tavernes aux fenêtres entrouvertes, en Grèce, la musique émane des endroits les plus inattendus. On l'entend partout. Dans les taxis, les restaurants, les bureaux ou les kiosques¹, elle est indissociable du quotidien des Grecs et les accompagne tout au long de la journée. Elle est partie intégrante de leur vie. Ce n'est donc pas anodin si la légende raconte que les Grecs peuvent répondre à n'importe quelle question par une chanson². L'abondante production nationale, combinée à la pluralité des lieux (boîtes de nuit, salles de concert, etc.), entretient sûrement l'attachement des Grecs à cet art, mais n'explique pas pourquoi la musique est depuis des siècles au cœur de leurs rituels et célébrations. Plus qu'un simple divertissement, elle semble indissociable de leur quête identitaire et intimement liée aux grands moments de leur histoire.

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Si le monde entier a découvert le son du bouzouki dans le film *Zorba le Grec* (1964), les chansons solidement rythmées et rimées du rébétiko n'ont pas attendu le déferlement des touristes pour se développer. De la même manière, les chants et les danses traditionnelles des communautés villageoises n'ont pas été inventés pour divertir les visiteurs, mais se sont préservés de siècle en siècle afin de maintenir vivante la culture grecque.

L'une des premières mesures de la dictature des colonels (1967-1974) fut de censurer le rébétiko et les chansons de résistance, en plus de l'œuvre entière de Mikis Théodorakis. En les bannissant, c'est comme si les colonels reconnaissaient implicitement l'impact immense qu'ils pouvaient avoir dans la société grecque. Depuis des siècles, il semble que toutes les formes de résistance en Grèce ont donné l'occasion de faire usage de la musique (Mouchtouris, 1989).

Cet article souhaite s'attacher à la chanson grecque en ce qu'elle «exprime et explique» (Marcadet, 2008) de la Grèce. Il vise effectivement à appréhender la chanson grecque comme révélateur social de la Grèce afin de saisir les processus identitaires, les enjeux de société et les sensibilités qui s'y déploient. Cette incursion permettra ainsi de dégager des figures, formes et thèmes caractéristiques de l'identité grecque en continuelle réinvention.

1.1. Chanson, héros et résistance

Au fil de son histoire, la chanson traditionnelle grecque (chanson démotique) n'a cessé de mettre en scène des héros en racontant les exploits de certains personnages réels ou fictifs pendant que la population vivait sous occupation étrangère. Du joug ottoman à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, trois figures ont particulièrement été célébrées: les akrites, les klephtes et les andartès. Que nous révèle cette présence héroïque dans la chanson grecque?

Alors que certains dieux olympiens et divinités entretiennent des liens étroits avec les arts, que l'on pense à Apollon, Athéna, Hermès ou aux neuf Muses, l'histoire contemporaine grecque n'a pas non plus cessé d'investir le champ héroïque au travers de la chanson. Plus précisément, c'est dans le genre musical démotique (*dimotiki*) que s'est manifesté ce déploiement; le terme démotique signifiant «populaire». Tirant ses origines de l'ancienne poésie et musique grecque, ce genre s'applique à toutes les chansons traditionnelles datant d'avant le début de la guerre d'Indépendance (1821). Transmis de village en village, son répertoire s'est enrichi pendant huit siècles. œuvre de musiciens qui ont appris à jouer à l'oreille, il concerne le monde des communes, des montagnes, des plaines, des provinces et des îles. De manière générale, il est lié au monde rural et maritime. Il se caractérise par ses images fortes, ses

phrases toutes faites, ses comparaisons hardies et la récurrence de ses thèmes.

Sous le joug ottoman, l'impossibilité de créer des archives a fait des chants traditionnels retransmis de génération en génération de manière orale le moyen privilégié de mémorisation et de préservation de la morale et des mœurs hellènes (Pierrat, 1977). Les Grecs de tous âges exprimaient leur imaginaire par des vers, s'assurant par le fait même leur propre survivance identitaire. Expression de toute une communauté assiégée éprise de liberté, ce «country folk» se divise principalement en deux genres: akritique et klephitique, chacun se référant à des héros similaires.

1.1.1. Ballades akritiques

Le premier date du neuvième siècle et fut créé pour exprimer la vie et la lutte des gardes-frontières³ de l'Empire byzantin. La ballade akritique entretient une relation profonde avec la musique byzantine⁴. Chantant une liberté à défendre, elle relate les actions héroïques des Grecs de la diaspora, dont celle de Digénis Akritas qui, selon les légendes, aurait eu une force physique prodigieuse. Ce héros qui tient à la fois d'Héraclès, d'Alexandre et de Constantin aurait été le seul à pouvoir se mesurer à Charon, roi de l'Hadès. Invincible, il représente le prototype du héros akrite «généreux, orgueilleux, téméraire, doué d'une force physique hors du commun et d'une haute moralité» (Michel et Mavroeidakos, 2005, p. 29). Lacarrière souligne l'influence de ce géant mythique sur les Crétois qui lui vouaient un véritable culte:

Chaque fois qu'un accident naturel du terrain, le profil d'une montagne, une empreinte géante dans le roc attiraient l'attention, on y voyait le Pas, l'Empreinte, la Selle de Digénis. Plus encore qu'Héraclès, son ancêtre, c'était un géant militaire qui affrontait les hommes plus que les fauves ou les monstres et dont l'ombre démesurée a recouvert toute la Crète pendant ces siècles de combat. À l'exemple de Digénis, le seul héros qui osa affronter la Mort en personne en la défiant en combat singulier sur une aire de marbre, (c'est le plus bel épisode, des Chants de Digénis, épisode dont le thème tragique, les péripéties, le sillage mythique ont marqué toute la conscience grecque médiévale) chaque Crétois était préparé à affronter dès son plus jeune âge les ennemis visibles et invisibles (Lacarrière, 1975, p. 135).

Nicolas Politis explique, pour sa part, comment Digénis fut investi d'une forte charge symbolique:

L'imagination du peuple tissa dans les exploits de Digénis des mythes, qu'il avait reçus pour la plupart, en les rénovant, du riche patrimoine mythique de l'Antiquité et forgea le type idéal du héros, jeune comme Achille, puissant comme Héraclès et illustre comme Alexandre. C'est ici le symbole de la longue lutte continue de l'élément grec contre l'élément musulman (Politis cité dans Michel et Mavroeidakos, 2005, p. 29).

À la fois bravades et plaintes, les chants akritiques racontent non seulement les prouesses de ces «guetteurs des confins» (Lacarrière, 1975, p. 195), mais aussi leur exil imposé.

1.1.2. Ballades klephtiques

Pour ce qui est du style klephtique, il est né à la fin de l'ère byzantine et le début de la révolution grecque ayant mené à l'Indépendance en 1829. Il fut créé par les klephtes, ces bandits des montagnes lors de la guerre d'Indépendance grecque qui prirent plus tard le nom de pallikares. Ces fugitifs s'étaient retirés dans les hauteurs de la Grèce pour lutter contre l'occupant. Même s'ils attaquaient indistinctement les Grecs et les Turcs, leurs assauts contre les symboles du pouvoir ottoman en firent des héros. Théodoros Kolokotronis, le plus populaire d'entre eux, est au centre de nombreux *kelftika*. Ce grand chef de la révolution fut surnommé le «Vieux de Morée», car il avait déjà cinquante ans au début du conflit. Tout comme les ballades akritiques, les chansons improvisées par ces combattants partisans parlent de bravoure, de liberté, de mort et de nature (la montagne).

La nostalgie de la ville perdue (Constantinople) et des allusions à la Vierge viennent s'ajouter à l'éventail des thèmes abordés. Les ballades klephtiques partent du fait que l'ennemi a occupé le pays et le tient sous son joug. Ce sont des chansons d'éloge; des hymnes à ceux qui se sont soulevés contre l'Occupation turque. Elles racontent les hauts faits et l'héroïsme du klephte. Comme le font remarquer Michel et Mavroeidakos, «les chants klephtiques s'imposent à l'imaginaire populaire et deviennent le signe de ralliement de la rébellion face aux autorités turques» (2005, p. 31). Incarnant l'esprit de résistance des Grecs, elles furent remises à l'honneur pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale où de nouveaux textes se combinèrent aux anciennes mélodies pour chanter les héros du moment: les andartès.

1.1.3. Les chansons de résistance durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale

Comme les akrites ou les klephtes, les andartès se sont soulevés contre les occupants. Mouchtouris explique que ce geste a suffi à les ériger en héros:

Dans les moments de soulèvement général tout individu qui se dresse contre les ennemis reconnus est considéré par la population anti-fasciste comme un libérateur, un sauveur, un homme qui ne pourrait être vaincu que par la ruse ou par une action sournoise. Dans l'imaginaire grec, le résistant est le dépositaire de valeurs que seuls la nature et les ancêtres héroïques possèdent (Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 53).

Si les chansons consacrées à Digénis et Kolokotronis dominent respectivement les ballades akritiques et klephtiques, celles ayant trait à Aris Velouchiotis sont nombreuses parmi le répertoire de résistance. Le comportement exemplaire du chef de l'Armée Populaire de Libération Grecque (ELAS) y est constamment souligné. Image type du chef charismatique, Aris représente la force, la certitude de la victoire et le courage de tous les maquisards:

Son envergure est telle que la seule évocation de son nom suffit à redonner l'espoir aux uns et à inspirer la crainte aux autres. Son nom a une portée sociale. Sa présence est signalée et espérée partout dans les montagnes et les vallées. Sa mobilité est un gage d'espoir par ce qu'elle confère de fiabilité à son action (Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 75).

Les chansons continueront à immortaliser ses exploits même après sa mort. L'extrait de la chanson suivante témoigne d'ailleurs de la dimension mythique que lui accorde la population:

Ode à Aris (Épire)

Aris, sur quels sommets marches-tu? [...]

Ton ombre est bannière

Et ton nom est espoir

Tes ennemis tremblent devant toi.

Et la patrie s'en réjouit (Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 75).

Ainsi, la chanson démotique⁵ a mis en scène des héros dans les épisodes cruciaux de son histoire. Du joug ottoman à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, en passant par la guerre d'indépendance, un portrait similaire du héros y a été célébré. Les akrites, les klephtes et les andartès ont en effet en commun de

s'être dressés contre l'occupant. Ils partagent aussi une même force physique et morale. Si l'envergure exceptionnelle de ces héros est au cœur des chansons démotiques qui relatent leurs hauts faits, cette aptitude s'ancre dans l'imaginaire collectif grec depuis des siècles.

1.1.3.1. Un lexique de vaillance

En grec, il existe en effet tout un vocabulaire pour désigner cette bravoure qui n'est pas sans rappeler les caractéristiques des héros cités plus haut. Lacarrière s'est à ce sujet appliqué à en distinguer les différentes variantes:

C'est l'andreia, la bravoure (mais en notant que le mot vient justement d'anèr, andras, l'homme et que bravoure signifie aussi virilité). Être homme, être anèr, c'est être valeureux et être lâche, ne pas être hominien, (je dis hominien car jamais en Crète les femmes n'ont passé à priori pour lâches parce que femmes, au contraire d'autres régions de Grèce). Andreia qui constitue l'andreioménos, l'homme valeureux – autant dire pour un Crétois l'homme tout court – ou par d'autres mots le lévendès et le pallikare. La lévendia, c'est la vaillance physique et morale, la bravoure et la générosité, la belle allure et la ténacité. De même que pallikare, mot typiquement crétois qui signifie lui aussi beauté et vaillance tant physiques que morales. Entre andreioménos, lévendès et pallikare, la différence est mince (Lacarrière, 1975, p. 137).

Alors que ces termes sont de sources crétoises, ils se sont cependant généralisés au reste de la Grèce. Comme le fait remarquer Lacarrière (1975), la bravoure ne se limite pas à des aptitudes physiques; la vigueur surhumaine étant à l'image de la force intérieure. C'est la force physique contrôlée qui est en effet magnifiée dans les récits populaires et non la violence brutale.

Ce vocabulaire élaboré autour du même thème n'est sûrement pas sans lien avec le souci de l'honneur qui existe chez les Grecs depuis la plus haute Antiquité. Par exemple, Achille et Léonidas se sont tous les deux engagés dans des guerres même ayant conscience qu'elles leur seraient fatales, car ils cherchaient la gloire et la renommée (Fakinos, 1988, p. 58). Ce sens de l'honneur, mêlé à la dignité, la fierté et l'amour-propre porte d'ailleurs un nom particulier en Grèce: le *philotimo*. Dans l'Antiquité, l'absence de *philotimo* chez un homme entraînait son rejet de la communauté et le mépris de son entourage.

1.1.3.2. La chanson comme acte de résistance

Si la chanson démotique a vanté la résistance de héros mythiques ou mythi-

fiés, elle a également fait partie des actes de résistance dans les périodes de luttes de l'histoire grecque. Chanter en combattant ou devant l'exécution était monnaie courante depuis l'Occupation et la guerre de libération. Cette tradition grecque s'est ensuite perpétuée durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale où les combattants chantaient en trois temps différents: lors de l'entrée dans le village, en cours d'opération et après l'action⁶. Alors que sur la couverture de la première édition des statuts de l'organisation de la jeunesse EPON (Front national de libération de la jeunesse) était imprimé le slogan «On fait la guerre et on chante», les trois témoignages suivants d'anciens résistants montrent comment la chanson et l'action militaire ne pouvaient se passer l'une de l'autre:

Je n'ai pas participé activement à la résistance...J'étais trop jeune... À l'époque, j'étais ouvrière agricole, il y avait des gens qui les chantaient (les chansons de résistance) parfois doucement. Mais la nuit, on écoutait beaucoup de chansons. On les connaissait toutes (S. Panayota cité dans Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 36).

Seul ou en compagnie, on chantait fort ou en murmurant ou bien on sifflait. Tu pouvais te sentir antifasciste, combattant, en état de guerre, avec les chansons. Tout le reste, presse clandestine, rassemblements, tracts, passait au deuxième plan (M. Makridis cité dans Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 36).

...Quand j'ai commencé à participer à la lutte antifasciste, le responsable m'a envoyé une lettre et, dans l'enveloppe, il n'y avait qu'une chose, une chanson, avec l'indication du rythme sur lequel il fallait la chanter. À mon tour, je l'ai enseignée à mes camarades (Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 38).

Il n'était alors pas étonnant de retrouver dans les chansons de résistance des références qui remontent à la création de l'État grec et des expressions liées à l'Occupation turque réutilisées parce qu'elles trouvaient alors sens. Puis, peu à peu, des chansons spécifiquement sur l'Occupation allemande furent créées.

Les Grecs ont toujours investi la chanson démotique que ce soit à la Libération (1944) ou bien aux funérailles de Lambrakis (1963). De la même manière, les *dimotika* furent également reprises par les Grecs au cours de leurs manifestations durant la dictature des colonels (1967-1974). Par exemple, la chanson traditionnelle crétoise *Pote tha kanei xasteria* (*Quand le ciel va s'éclaircir*) fut chantée comme emblème de la lutte à l'école Polytechnique d'Athènes en novembre 1973. Chantée à l'origine par les klephtes lors de la guerre d'indépendance

(1821-1829), cette chanson fut en effet récupérée au moment du régime militaire; le titre faisant alors référence au moment rêvé où la dictature allait prendre fin. Si les chansons d'artistes opposés à la junte, dont principalement celles de Mikis Théodorakis, sont alors devenues les hymnes de combat de la population, la censure empêchait cette dernière de les chanter ouvertement. Ainsi, ce sont les chansons traditionnelles qui n'avaient pas été censurées qui se sont retrouvées au centre des manifestations.

1.1.4. La grécité

La mise en perspective de l'esprit de résistance au cœur de la chanson démotique et de sa pratique nous mène à nous questionner sur le sens collectif qui y a été investi. Comment expliquer que la chanson ait été le moyen d'expression privilégié des militants grecs au fil des années? Une part de réponse semble se trouver dans un thème sous-jacent à cette dernière, présent également dans l'imaginaire collectif grec de manière générale: la grécité (*romiossini*). Thème récurrent dans la littérature hellénique, que l'on pense seulement à l'œuvre de Kazantzaki⁷ ou Ritsos⁸ avec son hymne bouleversant au sol bafoué de la Grèce, la grécité est liée à une revendication identitaire. Si elle peut être définie comme «tout ce qui fait l'âme grecque» (Michel, 2005, p. 21), son sens n'est pas que purement essentialiste. Lacarrière (1975, p. 374) nous invite ainsi à l'appréhender d'une manière plus créatrice:

Cette grécité, cette romiossini, dans son sens le plus large de réinvention quotidienne de la tradition grecque, qui est à la fois magie et conscience du verbe, recherche, découverte et redécouverte d'une identité grecque d'autant plus nécessaire qu'elle fut toujours étouffée par les tragédies de l'histoire, elle existe chez tous les poètes, en filigrane ou proclamée, comme un Graal ou comme un fusil.

À la fois attachement à l'héritage grec et création originale malgré les épreuves de l'histoire, la grécité serait ainsi une identité continuellement réinventée. Pour Mikis Théodorakis, la musique permet d'ailleurs de l'exprimer:

Ce qui fait la spécificité de la grécité c'est que la culture – notre poésie, notre musique, nos danses – joue un rôle déterminant dans l'histoire. Ce n'est pas quelque chose qui est à part, qui se limite au temps de loisir. La musique, en Grèce, n'est pas un divertissement; elle a une fonction sociale [...] La liberté pour les Grecs, c'est le pain et la musique. Le chant comme la danse, c'est beaucoup plus qu'un rituel, c'est une nécessité où s'expriment la solidarité, l'angoisse, l'espoir et la joie. Pendant la guerre civile,

quand on exécutait les partisans, souvent ils éprouvaient le besoin de danser à la dernière minute (Théodorakis, 1975, p. 42).

Défendre la Grèce contre les occupants peut de la sorte se comprendre comme une manière de défendre la grécité. Dans ce même ordre d'idées, chanter en résistant permettrait d'exprimer cette grécité. À la manière d'un espace de liberté où s'expriment les craintes ou les joies de tout un peuple, la chanson pourrait ainsi être vue comme une manière de défier l'oppresser au travers d'une réclamation identitaire.

Si la pratique de la chanson de résistance peut être considérée comme l'expression d'une grécité, ses thèmes ne sont pas non plus sans évoquer «La Grèce Éternelle», comprise comme une âme et une tradition (Mouchtouris, 1989). La notion d'appartenance à la Grèce mère et la sublimation de la patrie sont en effet fréquemment au cœur des chansons de résistance. En voici un exemple:

Koukouvitsa

Ils étaient des géants dans le combat
Jeunes hommes vaillants
Ah! ma douce patrie
Jeunes hommes vaillants

Ils sont tombés pour la liberté
Pour la douce patrie
Ah! ma douce patrie
Pour la douce patrie (Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 64).

Mouchtouris (1989) l'analyse d'ailleurs en soulignant que le terme *doux*, *douce* est souvent utilisé pour qualifier la mère ou appliqué aux personnes en qui l'on met toute sa confiance. L'auteure s'attache aussi à un texte qui prône le consensus national:

La chanson de l'union

L'heure est enfin venue en Grèce
Pour que le peuple lève
Le flambeau de la liberté
Chasse le fascisme.

Enfants de la Grèce
Et espoirs de l'avenir
Unissez-vous dans le combat
La douce patrie vous le demande.

Oublions les haines
Et les dissensions du passé
Unissons nos épées
Dans le seul but de la liberté.

Et réunis
Dans la vie et dans le feu
Nous verrons ainsi, mes enfants,
Notre Grèce délivrée (Mouchtouris, 1989, p. 66-67).

Mouchtouris fait ici remarquer que l'union et la solidarité des Grecs sont revendiquées afin de vaincre le fascisme. Cette union serait possible à travers l'identification à un territoire et à une patrie.

Entre l'expression d'une identité collective dans le sens d'une grécité et le déploiement de thèmes propres à la mère patrie sublimée à défendre, l'attachement à la Grèce a ainsi été investi au sein de la chanson de résistance, venant même à être assimilé à cette dernière. Trames incessantes de la musique démotique des ballades akritiques, klephtiques et chansons de résistance de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, la Grèce et la grécité ne sont pas distinguables des grandes luttes historiques grecques.

2. Le rébétiko: un autre symbole de la résistance à l'oppression

Alors que la musique démotique a été associée à la résistance dans les épisodes de l'histoire grecque où la population était en lutte contre des occupants, un autre mouvement musical s'est développé à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle pour venir prendre une place de premier plan dans la vie des Grecs: la musique laïque⁹ (*laiki*). En quoi cette musique dévoile-t-elle un autre visage de la Grèce ancré dans l'histoire et la mémoire collective du pays? Comment en est-elle devenue un autre symbole de la résistance à l'oppression?

2.1. Une expression sociale

Contrairement à la musique démotique qui se développe dans les provinces grecques, la musique laïque est née dans les couches sociales des plus démunis et correspond à l'essor d'une société citadine et industrielle. Associée aux quartiers pauvres des faubourgs des villes grecques, elle trouve son essence dans le rébétiko qui exprime bien la situation de la Grèce qui est à la jonction des cultures orientales et occidentales. L'originalité du rébétiko est d'installer un équilibre inédit entre les mondes sonores d'orient et d'occident. Il évoque tout à la fois le flamenco, le blues, la musique arabe et turque. En même temps, cette musique est très particulière. Même si ses origines sont floues, son émergence remonte à une époque où les Turcs occupaient encore plusieurs régions du pays alors que beaucoup de Grecs vivaient dans des régions qui font aujourd'hui partie de la Turquie et où musique grecque et musique turque se côtoyaient depuis des siècles. Elle se propage en effet dans la communauté grecque d'Asie Mineure avant de rejoindre celle de Grèce.

Au début du vingtième siècle, le port du Pirée était reconnu pour les prostituées et les criminels qui le fréquentaient. Très vite, il devint le cœur du rébétiko. En même temps, une multitude de cafés musicaux firent leur apparition à Athènes, au Pirée, à Larissa, sur l'île de Syros, à Thessalonique, etc. Dans le café aman¹⁰, deux ou trois chanteurs improvisaient sur des vers, souvent sous la forme d'un dialogue avec un rythme et une mélodie libres. Des musiciens de rues venaient chanter dans ces lieux. Plus tard, de petits orchestres s'y sont installés avec des instruments turcs et grecs traditionnels comme le santouri. Les femmes, qui fréquentaient aussi ces lieux, y exécutaient le tsifteteli, la danse du ventre turco-grecque.

La «Grande catastrophe» de 1922, issue tragique de la «Grande idée», contribua énormément à l'évolution du rébétiko. Le déplacement massif d'un million et demi de Grecs d'Asie Mineure vers la Grèce fit accroître brutalement la population grecque. Les rescapés s'installèrent dans des ghettos nommés en référence aux lieux quittés (Nouvelle Smyrne, Nouvelle Ionie), reflétant la nostalgie de la patrie perdue. Ils amenèrent avec eux un style de musique qui jouissait déjà d'une popularité dans les cafés amans. Cette musique devint connue sous le nom de «Style de Smyrne». Des nouveaux cafés où les réfugiés jouaient et chantaient ont alors émergé.

Les réfugiés ne faisaient pas partie du même milieu que les musiciens grecs rébètès du Pirée, mais vivaient comme eux en marge de la société. Ils subissaient la ségrégation, car ils ne parlaient pas le même langage. De l'autre côté, les musiciens grecs rébètès étaient impressionnés par leur talent. Si le style de

Smyrne que plusieurs réfugiés d'Asie Mineure ont adopté n'est pas à confondre avec le rébétiko du Pirée, ces deux genres musicaux s'influencèrent mutuellement. Ils ont en commun les modes, les rythmes, mais aussi les chanteuses comme Marika Ninou.

Les cafés amans étaient plus respectés que les bas-fonds des rébètès. Ils attiraient des chanteurs comme Rosa Escanazi, véritable star en Turquie avant l'attaque de Smyrne. Le style de Smyrne a popularisé le rébétiko. Les Smyrniotes ont commencé à inclure des chansons rébétika dans leur répertoire, donnant à cette musique une respectabilité. Il n'aura fallu que quelques années pour que les Athéniens se mettent à écouter les chansons de haschisch du Pirée. Néanmoins, à l'époque, les rébètès n'étaient cependant toujours pas les bienvenus dans les cafés amans. Il a fallu attendre les années 1930, alors que le rébétiko est devenu très populaire, pour que les propriétaires de clubs les emploient. Le style de Smyrne a presque totalement disparu durant la période de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, mais plusieurs de ses principales caractéristiques ont été absorbées dans le rébétiko¹¹.

À Smyrne et Constantinople, les Grecs avaient l'habitude de sortir la nuit avec leurs familles et d'écouter de la musique tandis qu'à Athènes et au Pirée, les hommes sortaient seuls, à l'exception des cercles sophistiqués. Contrairement à la musique des cafés amans, le rébétiko d'origine est une musique exclusivement masculine, chantée, jouée, dansée et écoutée par des hommes qui se produisent dans les *tékèdès* ou les *dounia* pour boire, danser ou fumer le haschisch afin de connaître la *mastoura*, l'ivresse propre à la fameuse plante. Ce n'est que plus tard que des femmes firent leur entrée dans l'univers des rébètès. Les réfugiés de Smyrne ont également renforcé le fait de fumer du haschisch comme un élément de base du rébétiko. Fumer le haschisch était ouvertement accepté en Turquie. En Grèce, il était associé à la pègre.

Autre caractéristique qui distingue le rébétiko du Pirée du style de Smyrne: le bouzouki¹² qui accompagne les compositeurs-interprètes. Avec le baglama, son frère cadet, il est devenu le symbole et le signe de ralliement du prolétariat à partir des années 1930. Le bouzouki est plus facile à jouer et a une plus grande portée que le baglama qui possède un son plus aigu. Ce dernier était cependant plus populaire dans les prisons et les *tékèdès*, car il était facile à cacher et à fabriquer en raison de sa petite taille.

Que ce soit les réfugiés d'Asie Mineure vivant dans des conditions misérables ou les autres habitants de la capitale qui réussissent difficilement à s'en sortir, ces laissés-pour-compte de toutes origines en sont ainsi venus à partager un style musical leur permettant à la fois d'exprimer et d'oublier le malheur de

leur existence faite de déracinements, chômage et délinquance. Se méfiant de la politique et refusant la société qui l'opprime, le rébétiko préfère en effet l'évasion à la révolution. Comme un animal pourchassé, les fumeries de haschisch sont devenues son refuge. Face à une vie sans espoir et à une destinée sociale insatisfaisante, il revendique le plaisir du moment. Dans sa longue errance somnambule à travers la ville, la musique est l'exutoire de sa souffrance sociale et spirituelle où il exprime d'une voix rauque et tranquille sa litanie de la misère.

Comparable au «city blues» des années 1920, moment fort de la négritude américaine, le rébétiko était ainsi l'expression de groupes minoritaires qui se sont trouvés en marge de la société «respectable». La musique des rébétés reflétait la difficulté et la douleur de vivre à l'écart. Elle exprimait particulièrement bien le *kaïmos*; cette nuance typiquement grecque, entre la tristesse et la nostalgie. Le blues de la Nouvelle-Orléans, de Chicago ou d'Harlem avait en commun avec le rébétiko le même langage privé, le même pouvoir de communiquer la souffrance et le même mélange de soumission et de défiance. Pour la légendaire chanteuse de blues Bessie Smith, les chansons étaient le miroir de sa propre vie tragique. De la même manière, le rébétiko imbriquait un langage, un style de vie, un chant et une expression gestuelle, dont la danse caractéristique du *zeibékiko*¹³ qui est devenue un autre mode d'évasion. Seul, les yeux mi-clos, en transe, une cigarette sur le bout des lèvres, les bras en l'air pour garder son équilibre, le danseur commence à tourner doucement sur lui-même. Plus la danse progresse, plus ses mouvements deviennent complexes. C'est comme si le danseur était à la recherche de quelque chose. Les yeux tournés vers le bas, il touche le sol comme pour retrouver ses forces. Même si les autres le regardent, il est seul au monde dans son expérience introspective. Sa danse n'est pas pour divertir un public, elle semble plutôt lui servir de catharsis et à exprimer à sa manière la *levendia* (bravoure) et la dignité.

2.2.2. Une réappropriation collective

Si le rébétiko atteint son apogée à la fin des années 1920, c'est dans la Grèce meurtrie de l'après-guerre civile qu'il reprend de la vigueur après avoir subi la censure et la persécution sous le régime Métaxas (1936-1941). Alors que cette musique était celle des rebelles vivant dans les bas-fonds et consommant de l'alcool et de la drogue pour fuir la réalité, elle devient alors un nouveau symbole de la résistance à l'oppression; symbole à nouveau récupéré durant la dictature des colonels.

En 1936, Métaxas impose son régime en prônant que la dictature est nécessaire afin de prévenir un assaut communiste. Le rébétiko s'intègre alors mal

au cadre idéologique de la Troisième Civilisation Hellénique. Les fumeries de haschisch, les bouzoukis et les baglamas sont détruits par la police, les joueurs de bouzouki persécutés, les paroles des chansons rébétika censurées et la danse du *zeibékiko* interdite. Plusieurs musiciens fuient pour d'autres villes. À cette période, même si les communistes sont également persécutés par le régime Métaxas, ils n'approuvent pas pour autant le rébétiko. D'un point de vue marxiste, cette musique est considérée comme décadente et immorale parce qu'elle ne prend aucune responsabilité culturelle.

La persécution directe continue jusqu'en 1941. Les liens du rébétiko avec la pègre ont alors été brisés. Puis, lors de l'Occupation, l'industrie du disque ferme ses portes et les enregistrements sont perdus ou détruits¹⁴. Le couvre-feu à onze heures, le milieu dispersé et la clientèle perdue empêchent à cette musique d'être à son plein essor. Plusieurs cafés et clubs de bouzouki qui avaient fleuri à la fin des années 1930 demeuraient encore populaires, mais étaient fréquentés presque exclusivement par des officiers allemands et leurs copines grecques.

Ainsi, à la fin de la guerre, l'univers des *manguès* (autre synonyme de rébétés) n'existe plus et le rébétiko semble mort. C'est Vassilis Tsitsanis qui le remet alors à l'honneur en le faisant entrer dans la musique populaire. Ses paroles étaient plus romantiques que le répertoire d'avant-guerre et son orchestration plut à un public plus large. Sans aucune connexion avec la pègre, il fut un compositeur très prolifique et devint rapidement une idole. Sotiria Bellou et Marika Ninou, dont la voix rappelait le style de Smyrne, devinrent ses interprètes privilégiées. S'il n'existe aucune chanson rébétiko de résistance à proprement parler, plusieurs morceaux commentent directement les années de guerre, comme le célèbre *Dimanche nuageux* (1948) de Tsitsanis qui traduit bien l'atmosphère dépressive qui régnait alors sur Athènes.

Sans être explicitement des chansons de résistance, les rébétika composées avant la guerre ont été récupérées à la fin de la guerre civile par la population grecque à travers le pays qui sentait qu'elles exprimaient leur souffrance et leur haine collective. Le rébétiko aboutit alors à une véritable consécration populaire. En plus du peuple qui se l'approprie, les détenus politiques originaires des zones urbaines ouvrières qui connaissent déjà ces chansons se les communiquent entre eux; associant l'impasse politique dans laquelle ils se trouvent à la nostalgie et la résignation exprimées dans ces chants (Pierrat, 1977). Cet art marginal et maudit a ainsi été l'objet d'une récupération collective par l'ensemble de la société. Au centre de cette appropriation, les militants se sont particulièrement identifiés aux voyous rébétés:

La révolution trahie des uns trouve sa voix dans l'amertume gouailleuse des autres. La Grèce des héros vaincus, traqués, condamnés, se reconnaît dans celle des délinquants, des oisifs, des asociaux – tous ceux qui n'ont pas d'histoire. Ou plutôt si, ils en ont une, exemplaire à sa façon, et c'est précisément celle de ce chant rébétiko auquel ils ont confié leurs passions et leurs rêves (Pierrat, 1977, p. 63).

Il est en effet intéressant de noter que le rébétis, ce marginal rêveur qui rejette la réalité sans même essayer de la changer, devient en quelque sorte le frère spirituel des résistants qui ont justement lutté pour une transformation sociale et politique. C'est comme si l'antihéros se voyait investi des traits héroïques; son refus du monde oppressif étant alors transcendé en esprit de révolte. Loin du portrait du héros akrite, klephte ou andartès, le rébétis était pessimiste et ne cherchait pas à s'impliquer ou à accomplir des exploits remarquables dans la défense de sa patrie. Si la dureté de son univers quotidien l'a poussé vers la fuite du réel par sa musique, cette dernière lui a également permis d'exprimer tout son désarroi. En ce sens, il est possible de voir cette expression de la misère par le chant et la danse justement comme une manière de ne pas se laisser abattre et d'attirer l'attention sociale sur la condition de délaissé. Au sortir de la guerre civile, les militants battus ne se seraient ainsi pas simplement identifiés à la déception des rébètès en s'apitoyant sur leur sort. En effet, ne faut-il pas voir dans cette reconnaissance musicale une autre manière de résister dans un contexte de désillusion?

2.2.3. D'une musique proscrite à une reconnaissance tardive

Pendant ce temps, la chanson rébétiko aura créé une controverse dans la vie culturelle grecque entraînant de longs débats passionnés. L'intelligentsia grecque la percevait comme une relique orientale de la période ottomane. Elle critiquait les références aux drogues et aux bas-fonds¹⁵ qui étaient vues comme un héritage ottoman. Les intellectuels de gauche se questionnaient sur son contenu moral et son effet sur le prolétariat. Le musicologue Vassilis Papadimitriou l'accusa d'éroder la musique populaire et de polluer psychologiquement et spirituellement les gens (Holst, 2006). Face aux nombreuses critiques, le compositeur Manos Hadjidakis fut le premier intellectuel à faire un discours en faveur du rébétiko au Théâtre des Arts de Grèce en 1949. Il défendit passionnément la beauté de l'ensemble du phénomène rébétiko: c'est-à-dire autant les paroles, la musique que la danse qui s'unifiaient harmonieusement selon lui. Sa conférence «historique» participa ainsi à élever le rébétiko au pinacle et à le considérer comme un des courants forts de la tradition grecque

(Lacarrière et Volkovitch, 1999, p. 14).

Même si cette conférence reçut une critique mitigée, l'intelligentsia athénienne commença à prendre conscience des attributs uniques du rébétiko. Cependant, elle ne l'avait toujours pas pleinement acceptée en 1960 et fut choquée par son intrusion dans la musique de Théodorakis. Ce dernier avait osé utiliser le bouzouki et un chanteur rébétis pour interpréter son arrangement du poème de Ritsos, *Epitaphios*. À la prise du pouvoir des colonels en 1967, les enregistrements rébétiko ayant disparu sous le régime Métaxas, il était difficile pour les jeunes Grecs d'entendre le vieux style initial. Les nouveaux enregistrements n'étaient pas fidèles aux originaux et la seule anthologie des chants rébétiko d'Ilias Petropoulos (2000, c1968) avait également été censurée, devenant un item de collection circulant clandestinement. De la même manière qu'au sortir de la guerre civile la population a senti le besoin de se tourner vers le rébétiko, la jeunesse grecque d'alors s'est intéressée à cette musique qui exprimait à sa manière une forme de résistance. Les paroles des chansons censurées ont rappelé aux jeunes Grecs que les rébétés étaient des marginaux antiautoritaires. Vivant dans un régime militaire, ils ont été particulièrement interpellés par le langage secret du rébétiko et l'ancien symbole de la résistance qu'il représentait. Petropoulos a persuadé plusieurs vieux musiciens rébétés encore en vie de jouer à nouveau à Plaka, le quartier historique d'Athènes au pied de l'Acropole. La réponse fut tellement enthousiaste que plusieurs ont fait leur retour et se sont retrouvés dans des clubs de bouzoukis.

À la fin de la dictature des colonels, les clubs de bouzouki sont devenus très à la mode et surtout inabordable. Même si quelques rébétés célèbres dont Thanassis Athanassiou qui est retourné vivre sur son île après vingt-cinq ans passés aux États-Unis et Markos Vamvakaris¹⁶, le père du rébétiko à la voix inoubliable, ont rejeté les nouveaux lieux et modèles musicaux, un nouveau style de rébétiko allait ainsi s'établir, orienté pour un public bourgeois¹⁷. Les chansons ont été exploitées commercialement, mais les paroles avaient perdu leur contact immédiat avec leur milieu d'origine. Les compositeurs ont donc recherché de nouveaux textes en plus de modifier les chansons originales afin de les adapter au goût du jour et de satisfaire un plus grand auditoire. Comme le fait remarquer Mavroedakos (2005, p. 205), l'atmosphère d'autrefois tente d'être conservée, mais une certaine fausseté se dégage dans la reproduction d'un genre musical et d'un mode de vie qui n'existent plus.

2.3. L'entechno: un renouveau musical

Si la musique populaire grecque se caractérise par ses deux principaux styles musicaux que sont la musique démotique et la musique laïque, certains compositeurs grecs eurent envie de proposer, à partir des années 1950, des formes nouvelles alliant une composition musicale recherchée à des textes issus du grand répertoire poétique. Ils créèrent alors les *entechna*, les chansons populaires artistiques:

Elles se définissent par rapport à un ensemble d'influences que les compositeurs entendent utiliser pour renouveler le langage musical, influences inscrites dans le passé de la musique grecque, antique, traditionnelle, byzantine, rébétiko, rythmes d'une musique européenne idéale aux antipodes de la variété (Michel, 2005, p. 65).

La chanteuse grecque Nena Venetsanou définit pour sa part l'*entechno* comme «une musique sophistiquée faite pour être écoutée et faire rêver, une musique créatrice d'utopie» (Venetsanou citée dans Michel, 2005, p. 65). Selon Kostas Mylonas (1985), la révolution de l'*entechno* se résumerait en deux points: la disparition des modèles musicaux occidentaux (rythme, ligne mélodique, orchestration) et le changement radical des paroles (loin des sujets communs). Avec son œuvre *Epitaphios* en 1960, Théodorakis consacra la renaissance de la musique grecque et le genre *entechno*, dans lequel se sont inscrits d'autres compositeurs, dont Hadjidakis et Markopoulos. En faisant référence aux grandes œuvres du passé et à la création poétique contemporaine (Séféris, Elytis, Ritsos, Gatsos, etc.), tout en allant puiser dans une variété d'influences musicales grecques, Théodorakis renouvela considérablement le paysage musical en Grèce.

Conclusion

La musique grecque occupe aujourd'hui 70 % des émissions de radio, toutes chaînes confondues (Arvanitis, 2004, p. 127). D'après les taux d'écoute, la «pop» grecque et le rébétiko restent les genres musicaux auxquels la majorité des Grecs continuent de s'identifier. Même si les influences étrangères sont venues diversifier et modifier la musique grecque, il semble que bon nombre de Grecs soient restés fidèles à leurs traditions musicales.

Considéré comme un genre maudit par une bourgeoisie coupée du peuple, le rébétiko est à présent indissociable de la Grèce. Tout en ayant trouvé écho dans des phénomènes similaires tel le blues des années 1920, le chant rébétiko a anticipé sur le folksong et le rock nés en Occident quelques années plus tard.

Cet art pratiqué par quelques initiés et censuré par le régime Métaxas (1936-1941) a trouvé malgré lui un large écho populaire. Cantonné aux prisons, aux cales de navires et aux fumeries de haschisch, le bouzouki a même été consacré instrument national dans les années 1950.

Si le rébétiko demeure aussi populaire, c'est peut-être en raison de son rare pouvoir de toucher celui qui l'écoute. Selon Holst (2006), ce pouvoir serait en lien avec l'unité que le rébétiko parviendrait à créer entre l'homme et la musique. Malgré le passage du temps et même s'ils sont loin des conditions socio-économiques des rébètès de l'époque, les Grecs de tous âges restent attachés à cette musique et sont capables de chanter ses chansons (Mavroeidakos, 2005). Faut-il voir en l'esprit d'insoumission qui les caractérise la raison de cet attachement particulier?

Du côté de la musique démotique, elle demeure encore de nos jours une activité collective importante dans plusieurs communautés rurales, même si les formes traditionnelles ont été altérées par les nouveaux médias. Plusieurs artistes maintiennent vivant le répertoire des *dimotika* et l'industrie du disque continue de s'y intéresser. C'est comme si les Grecs tenaient à rester fidèles à cette musique qui a contribué à préserver leur culture pendant les périodes d'assujettissement.

En somme, ce panorama autour de la chanson grecque nous a permis de constater ses liens étroits avec l'histoire et les combats de la Grèce ancrés dans une volonté de résistance. Des akrites aux rébètès, la chanson a aussi célébré et mis en scène les héros et les insoumis; ces derniers s'exprimant d'ailleurs eux-mêmes par ce vecteur. Qu'elle prône une liberté à défendre ou la détresse des laissés-pour-compte, la chanson s'est ainsi inscrite comme moyen d'expression privilégié d'une communauté qui se questionne sur sa destinée.

NOTES

1. En Grèce, ils portent le nom de *periptera*. On y trouve un peu de tout.
2. Clio Mavroeidakos parle à ce sujet d'un «fonds collectif de chansons» (2005, p. 18).
3. Le terme *akra* signifie frontière.
4. La musique byzantine omniprésente dans les chants de l'Église orthodoxe constitue l'autre source de la musique grecque.
5. D'autres chants traditionnels exaltent les valeurs des héros nationaux, dont les chansons à caractère historique construites au moment de l'événement.
6. Les résistants entraient dans le village en chantant des chants d'initiation et d'encouragement. Puis, des chants de mobilisation, de distraction et de fête étaient chantés en cours d'opération. Les résistants préparaient un spectacle, par exemple une pièce de théâtre sur le thème de la lutte. Finalement, les chants de victoire et de gloire servaient à «rendre éternel» le succès sur l'ennemi et accompagnaient les fêtes spontanées suivant les combats. Les différentes sections de l'ELAS s'échangeaient aussi de nouvelles chansons à cette occasion.
7. Écrivain d'origine crétoise (1883-1957) qui demeure l'un des plus marquants de la littérature grecque contemporaine.
8. Nous faisons ici référence à *Grécité*, publié pour la première fois en 1954. Théodorakis mit ce texte en musique en 1966.
9. La musique laïque a une connotation populaire moderne contrairement aux chants traditionnels démotiques; *laos* signifiant peuple.
10. Du turc *aman* qui signifie «pitié». Né au dix-septième siècle sous l'Empire ottoman, il s'agissait du lieu où se réunissaient des gens pour boire, manger et fumer le narguilé.
11. Avant de devenir une création individuelle avec un individu autodidacte précis qui compose son morceau, le rébétiko originel était un art collectif et improvisé avec les improvisations vocales que sont les *taximia* et les *amanédhes* (tâqsim arabe) qui puisent leur source dans le style de Smyrne, justement caractérisé par de longues pièces improvisées pour violon, santouri ou voix.
12. Si le bouzouki est devenu l'instrument de base du rébétiko, il était joué en Grèce bien avant que cette musique se développe. L'origine du mot bouzouki est incertaine; elle viendrait probablement de *bozuk* en turc qui signifie «cassé». «Al Buzuk» désigne un instrument similaire avec lequel les femmes des harems accompagnaient leurs chants et leurs danses.
13. Le *zeïbékiko* a adopté le rythme d'une caste fermée de guerriers turcs du 19e siècle. Le *hassapiko* est également une autre danse du rébétiko vieille de plusieurs centaines d'années et initialement dansée par les bouchers albanais de Constantinople. La

danse connue sous le nom de *sirtàki* a été créée pour le film *Zorba le Grec* en 1964 et est un mélange de la version lente et rapide du hassapiko.

14. Dans les années 1930, les chansons transmises uniquement par la tradition orale ont commencé à être écrites et enregistrées. Les gramophones et les radios permettent alors de propager le rébétiko.
15. Le rébétiko a justement voulu réhabiliter le «bas monde» pour en faire le «vrai monde»; celui des souffrances de la réalité contrairement au monde conventionnel bourgeois.
16. Ce dernier eut une carrière d'enregistrement prolifique avant le régime Métaxas. Il jouait tous les morceaux de mémoire et pratiquait la musique de manière intuitive.
17. La bourgeoisie venait s'encanailler dans les tavernes transformées en établissements de grand luxe pendant que la classe ouvrière devait économiser des mois pour pouvoir y aller passer une nuit. Cette emphase mise sur l'instrument plutôt que sur le chanteur coïncidait avec l'ascension des joueurs de bouzouki comme Hiotis. À la même époque, de jeunes hommes ont introduit des pas de danse différents au *has-sapiko* qui était à l'origine dansé avec un minimum de mouvements.

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Poètes Chypriotes / Cypriot Poets

Theodosios Nikolaou

The poet's job

When at long last the angels close their eyes
And the flames of their swords fade away
The poet, who all this time, lies awake
Puts on the thief's uniform
Strides over the doorstep
And takes up his hard
And unholy job.
But he returns
Having enriched his sight
With the shapes and the colours of the things.
Blissful within the abyss of his ignorance
He smiles
Like a good hostess
Who polishes a copper vessel.

Of Nova Justiniana and all Cyprus

Great is the glory of the Archbishop of Cyprus.
He wears a purple cope like an emperor
Bears a sceptre like an emperor
Signs in red ink
like an emperor.

His title is not simply the Archbishop of all Cyprus
But of Nova Justiniana and of all Cyprus.
First of Nova Justiniana
Which is often omitted
For brevity's sake
Or because of ignorance.

Nova Justiniana... Nova Justiniana...
Where is Olden and where is Nova Justiniana?
There is neither Nova nor Olden Justiniana.
Where it used to be, other cities flourish now
With foreign names and foreign people,
Or its memory is only disturbed by iron
As it opens new ditches.
A memory that still burns without burning out
A yearning that doesn't cool down.

Nova Justiniana...
A stake that ceaselessly impales
The wings of imperial glory
Such a heavy anchor to be weighed.

(Translated by Andy Panayiotou)

Michalis Pashiardis

Poets

Poets keep memory
When others forget

Poets speak
When others keep silent

Poets mind the roots
When others cut boughs and wave

Poets ponder
When others refuse to think

Poets above all and always,
Always and above all keep vigil

(Translated by Irena Joannides)

A Soldier-Boy

There was a soldier - boy in the army
who lived in a different way;
the others didn't stomach him; the captain cursed him
and he laughed.

There was a soldier - boy in the army
who lived in a different way;
he had a hidden mourning in his glance, revealing itself
only when he laughed.

There was a soldier - boy in the army
who lived in a different way;
one day they left him dead in a trench;
might he still be laughing?

(Translated by Amy Mims)

Lefkios Zaphiriou

Poetry

Poetry is a garden
full of birds,
it sings of Eros
of Michalis, of Anna.
Poetry is a house
that holds the whole world.

But when freedom is lost
poetry becomes
rifle and sword.

(Translated by Irena Joannides)

My Mother in Spring

As the white buoys of spring
sprout forth
on the hills one by one
so your august face
appears
bathed in bright light,
a bust with two
butterfly tears in its eyes
from the tear-gas
of time.

(Translated by Amy Mims)

Plea

Do not ask me for explanations
of things for which I am not to blame
and for words which were never said
by me.
I speak with naked words
of things not at all imaginary
and so human:
bread, the labourer
and our crippled freedom.

(Translated by John Vicker)

Stephanos Constantinides

Fragmentaires

La poésie
dernière ligne
de défense
contre l'assaut
des barbares

.....

Le silence
dernier bouclier
contre l'assaut
des barbares.

.....

Si l'on pouvait
déchiffrer
une page blanche
on saisisrait alors
de la poésie
le sens même
le plus
profond.

.....

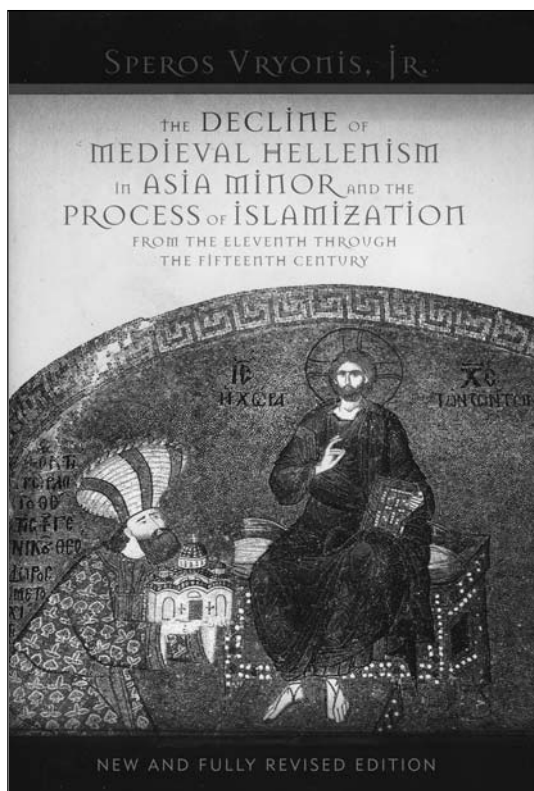
Douillettement
Il attend
la beauté et la volupté
du monde
l'investissement
des vents
pendant les grincements
de mortaises
de la nuit.

Livres Reçus/Books Received

Speros Vryonis, Jr.

The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization From the Eleventh Through the Fifteenth Century

(New and fully revised edition)



New York,
greekworks.com, 2011

Speros Vryonis, Jr., is one of the most eminent Byzantinists of his generation. After a distinguished career at UCLA, he was the founding director of the Alexander S. Onassis Centre for Hellenic Studies at New York University, from which he retired as emeritus Alexander S. Onassis professor of Hellenic civilisation. In addition to the seminal *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Professor Vryonis's extensive work on the history and culture of the Greeks from Homer to the present,

and on their relations with Islam and the Slavic peoples, includes *Byzantium and Europe*; *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks and Ottomans*; *Byzantium : It's Internal History and relations with the Islamic World*; and *studies in Byzantine Institutions and Society*. He is also the author, most recently, of the internationally acclaimed *The Mechanism of Catastroph: The Turkish Pogrom of September 6-7, 1955, and the Destruction of the Greek Community of Istanbul*.

As professor Heath W. Lowry of Princeton University noted, «In the thirty seven years since it first appeared, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor*, it has helped to educate successive generations of students, each of which has benefited from the breadth and scope of Vryonis unparalleled understanding of the final centuries of Byzantium and the rise of Ottomans. My own copy is so heavily read that it begs for rebinding. Long out of print, this book's republication is a service to every serious student in the field».

Another academic, professor John F. Haldon of Princeton University, noted that «This book still remains the classic analysis of a crucial period of Byzantine and Turkish history, and a major contribution toward understanding the process through which Anatolia became 'Turkey'. Scholarly informative, and vividly written, it offers a vast amount of evidence on the background to and the process of 'Turkification' of Asia Minor, describing in detail the progressive de-Hellenization of the former heartlands of the Byzantine empire, the conflicts and hostilities that accompanied this clash of cultures and ways of life, and the dynamic of historical, social, and cultural transformation. Vryonis reminds us that clashes of culture, belief systems, and social organization are part of the very fabric of human social and cultural evolution, and are best approached through the prism of history».

Chronologies

Chypre 16 novembre 2011 - 31 mai 2012

30 novembre: Selon Eurostat le chômage à Chypre en octobre atteint 8,2% de la population active (7,9% en septembre).

8 décembre: Selon la presse chypriote turque la commission des biens de la zone occupée a reçu 2 472 demandes d'indemnisation présentées par des Chypriotes grecs. 281 demandes ont été examinées et 62,608 millions de livres sterling ont été payées.

18 décembre: Elections municipales . Le parti de droite *DISY* devance le parti de gauche *AKEL* et remporte 26 des 38 mairies. A Nicosie Constantin Yiorakadjis , soutenu par le *DISY*, les socialistes (*EDEK*), les centristes (*DIKO*) et le parti européen *EVROKO* remporte l'élection.

13 janvier: Décès de Rauf Denktash, ancien chef de la communauté chypriote turque à l'âge de 87 ans.

L'agence de notation *Standard & Poor's* dégrade Chypre de 2 crans à BB+, catégorie regroupant les débiteurs, qui présentent des risques pour leurs créanciers.

23-24 janvier: Négociations intercommunautaires à New York en présence du Secrétaire général de l'ONU.

24 janvier: Poursuites judiciaires contre les anciens ministres Marcos Kyprianou et Costas Papacostas dans le cadre de l'enquête sur l'explosion meurtrière du stock d'armes à Mari. Six autres personnes sont poursuivies dans cette affaire.

16 février: Visite à Chypre du Premier ministre d'Israël Benjamin Netanyahu, qui déclare que les deux pays ont des intérêts communs dans tous les domaines. Selon la radio militaire israélienne Chypre aurait demandé l'aide de la marine d'Israël pour défendre les champs gaziers chypriotes face aux menaces de la Turquie.

4 mars: Dans une interview au journal *Kibris* le ministre turc des affaires européennes Egemen Bayis n'a pas exclu que le nord de Chypre soit annexé par la Turquie si aucun accord n'est trouvé entre Chypriotes grecs et Chypriotes turcs.

7 mars: L'équipe de football *Apoel* de Nicosie s'est qualifiée pour la première fois en quart de finale de la Ligue des Champions en battant l'équipe de Lyon.

17 mars: Le *DISY* désigne son président Nicos Anastasiadis comme candidat aux élections présidentielles de février 2013.

19 mars: Remaniement ministériel. Vassos Siarlis remplace au ministère des finances Kikis Kazamias, qui quitte le gouvernement. Neoklis Sylikiotis succède à Praxoula Antoniadou au ministère du commerce. Hélène Mavrou devient ministre de l'intérieur.

5-6 avril: Visite à Chypre du Premier ministre grec Lucas Papademos.

6 avril: L'ancien ministre des affaires étrangères Georges Lillikas annonce sa candidature aux élections présidentielles de février 2013.

9 avril: Le ministre russe des affaires étrangères rappelle que le soi-disant Etat chypriote turc de Chypre nord est un Etat illégal et que les citoyens russes encourrent des dangers sérieux à acheter des propriétés en zone occupée.

26 avril: La compagnie pétrolière turque TPAO a lancé une campagne de prospection pétrolière et gazière au large de Chypre nord.

30 avril: Le gouvernement chypriote considère comme illégale la décision de la Turquie d'accorder des licences d'exploitation des ressources minières situées dans des secteurs faisant partie du territoire couvert par la zone économique exclusive de la République de Chypre.

2 mai: Le ministre turc des affaires européennes Bayis déclare que l'ONU doit convoquer une conférence internationale sur la question chypriote.

Selon Eurostat le chômage à Chypre est passé à 10% en mars contre 9,8% en février.

14 mai: Le président Christofias annonce qu'il ne sera pas candidat aux élections présidentielles de février 2013.

18 mai: Le gouvernement de Nicosie annonce que 15 sociétés et consortiums avaient déposé des offres lors des enchères portant sur 12 blocs d'exploration pétrolière et gazière au large de Chypre. Ankara appelle ces candidats à se retirer les menaçant de les exclure de tout projet de coopération en Turquie.

23 mai: Le cabinet ministériel de "la République turque de Chypre nord" décide de changer l'appellation de cette entité en "République turque de Chypre".

28 mai: Le président du Parlement européen Martin Schulz a critiqué la Turquie, qui a décidé de geler ses relations avec l'Union européenne lorsque Chypre accédera, le 1er juillet 2012 à la présidence tournante de cette organisation.

Grèce 15 novembre 2011 - 31 mai 2012

24 novembre: La Banque de Grèce indique que le nombre de touristes a augmenté de 10,4% de janvier à septembre 2011 et a encaissé 7,6 milliards d'euros de rentrées touristiques, en progrès de 10,6%. Toutefois on note une chute du tourisme intérieur. Le tourisme représente 15 à 18% du PIB selon le ministère grec du tourisme.

28 novembre: Déblocage de la 6ème tranche d'aide à la Grèce de 8 milliards d'euros (5,8 milliards versés par l' UE, le reste provenant du FMI).

1er décembre: 6ème grève générale contre l' austérité (la 1ère sous le gouvernement Papadémos).

5 décembre: Visite à Athènes de Joe Biden, vice-président des Etats-Unis, qui exprime son soutien à la Grèce.

La Cour Internationale de Justice juge que la Grèce ne s'est pas conformée à l'accord intermédiaire de 1995, qui régit les relations entre Athènes et Skopje selon lequel la Grèce ne s'opposera pas à l'adhésion de la FYROM aux organisations internationales. Mais la CIJ rejette la requête de la FYROM, qui souhaitait que la Grèce ne puisse plus s'opposer à l'avenir à une demande d'adhésion car selon le même accord Athènes a le droit d'élever des objections si une telle demande est faite sous une autre appellation que FYROM.

6 décembre: Le Parlement adopte le budget 2012 avec les votes du *Pasok*, de la *Nouvelle Démocratie* et de *Laos*), qui prévoit de ramener le déficit de 9% du PIB à 5,4%.

24 janvier: Décès accidentel à Athènes à l'âge de 76 ans du cinéaste Théo Angelopoulos, Palme d'or du Festival de Cannes 1998 pour son film *l'Eternité et un jour*.

10 février: Décision du parti d'extrême droite *LAOS* de retirer ses ministres du gouvernement dont démissionnent aussi deux ministres du *PASOK*, qui refusent d'accepter un nouveau plan d'austérité.

12 février: Le Parlement adopte de nouvelles mesures d'austérité, dont une diminution de 22% du salaire minimum. 45 députés du *PASOK* et de la *NOUVELLE DÉMOCRATIE* sont radiés de leur parti pour avoir refusé ces mesures. Emeutes à Athènes.

24 février: Lancement de la procédure de l'échange de la dette privée pour effacer 53,5% de cette dette. Le 12 mars, 107 milliards de cette dette privée sont effacés.

18 mars: Election de Evangelos Vénizélos par 240 000 personnes à la tête du *PASOK*. E. Vangelos, candidat unique, remplace Georges Papandréou et démissionne, le 19 mars, du gouvernement.

20 mars: La Grèce obtient un prêt de 5,9 milliard d'euros des pays de la zone euro provenant d'une première tranche de 39,4 milliards d'euros ainsi qu'un autre prêt de 1,6 milliards, accordé par le FMI.

25 mars: De nombreuses forces de sécurité s'efforcent de contenir des manifestations de protestation contre les autorités politiques présentes aux défilés de commémoration de l'indépendance de la Grèce.

11 avril: Arrestation d'Akis Tsohatzopoulos, ancien ministre de la Défense nationale du *PASOK*, poursuivi pour corruption dans le cadre de l'achat par la Grèce de sous-marins à l'Allemagne fédérale.

19 avril: Le Président José Barroso déclare au nom de la Commission de Bruxelles que d'ici 2013 la Grèce doit baisser de 15% ses salaires pour être plus productive. Il précise qu'il y a 12 milliards d'euros provenant des fonds structurels européens que la Grèce n'a pas encore utilisés et qui pourraient contribuer à une relance de l'économie hellénique.

6 mai: Elections législatives. Abstention de 34,91 %. Sept partis entrent au Parlement: *NOUVELLE DÉMOCRATIE* (18,85% et 108 sièges) *SYRIZA* (16,78% et 52 sièges) parti socialiste *PASOK* (13,18% et 41 sièges) *GRECS INDÉPENDANTS* (10,60% et 33 sièges) parti communiste *KKE* (8,48% et 26 sièges), parti neo-nazi *CHRYSSI AVGHI* (6,97% et 21 sièges), *GAUCHE DÉMOCRATIQUE* (6,11% et 19 sièges).

7-11 mai: Antonis Samaras (*NOUVELLE DÉMOCRATIE*), Alexis Tsipras (*SYRIZA*), Evangelos Venizélos (*PASOK*), chacun chargé d'une mission exploratoire par le président Papoulias échouent dans leur tentative de former un gouvernement.

15 mai: Echec du projet du président de la République, Carolos Papoulias de formation d'un gouvernement de technocrates. De nouvelles élections législatives sont annoncées pour le 17 juin avec un gouvernement de service dirigé par Panayiotis Pikrammenos, président du Conseil d'Etat.

18 mai: La chancelière allemande Angela Merkel a suggéré au président Papoulias d'organiser un referendum sur le maintien de la Grèce dans la zone euro, couplé avec les élections législatives du 17 juin.

21 mai: Alexis Tsipras, chef de la gauche radicale (*SYRIZA*) en visite à Paris réaffirme la souveraineté de la Grèce face à Angela Merkel. Jean-Luc Mélançon, président du parti de gauche apporte son soutien à A. Tsipras, qui n'a

pas pu être reçu par le président François Hollande.

22 mai: Le président Hollande a reçu à l'Élysée Evangelos Vénizélos, le président du *PASOK*, pour "un échange de vues.

23 mai: Conseil européen informel à Bruxelles. Les dirigeants européens ont réaffirmé leur souhait de voir la Grèce se maintenir dans la zone euro.

26 mai: Dans une interview au *Guardian*, Christine Lagarde, la directrice générale du FMI demande aux Grecs de payer leurs impôts. Cette déclaration provoque de vives protestations des milieux politiques tant en Grèce qu'en France.

30 mai: Selon l'Institut International pour le Développement du Management, qui se fonde sur des données macro-économiques de 2011, la Grèce occupe la 58ème place sur les 59 pays du classement mondial de la compétitivité, juste devant le Vénézuela.

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