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Turkey's role in the Middle East as a member of NATO: its importance for the Atlantic external security

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"Turkey is a concrete link between two continents.
The country is also at the centre of the intersection between the East-West
and the North-South arteries of the Middle East and Persian Gulf areas.
Finally, Turkey serves as a barrier which hinders Soviet access
to the Mediterranean and the Middle East"

CREMASCO, M. (1984)

"In political, economic and strategic terms,
Turkey will continue to be a potentially important actor
in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia"

LESSER, I. (1992).

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1.- RESEARCH PROPOSAL

TITLE

Turkey's role in the Middle East as a member of NATO: its importance for the Atlantic external security

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

- To clarify Turkey's new role in the international context, with special emphasis on security matters related to NATO. And of course, to what extent Turkey has been important for NATO in facing the problems of the region (for both NATO and the region).
- To study Turkish involvement in both local and international/regional conflicts, analysing reasons, main problems, importance of its role and present situation.
- To know and to describe the new framework where Turkey will develop its international relations in the next years.
- To analyse trends and prospects in this sense for Turkey, including its role in the NATO for the Atlantic security.

KEY WORDS

NATO; Geopolitics; Strategy; International Relations; International Security; Defence; New International Order; Turkey; Middle East.

HYPOTHESIS

Given Turkey's central role in the surrounding region, to what extent has the new world situation produced changes in this role in both the region and the world? Which is the real nature of the relations between Turkey and the surrounding area? Which are Turkey's real power and role in the Atlantic security system?.

SUMMARY

The introduction has to specify which issues are to be studied. A brief summary of the outline is as follows:

1.- It will be convenient to start the research with a summary of the historical background of the issues chosen as a previous step to a deeper analysis of the question.

2.- Analysis of the present situation has to follow, in order to clarify exactly the state of the question. It will be necessary a brief analysis of both NATO and Turkey's strategies in this sense.

3-Turkey facing the XXIst century: trends and prospects.

The new developments which are taking place in the world are already meaning a significant change of both NATO and Turkish positions, relations and strategies towards internal and external matters during the next years, and so will happen with the balance of power in the area. There are several obstacles for the future: GAP as a source of conflict with the neighbouring countries, for example.

This part is to be considered as a conclusion of the study.

NATURE OF THE END-PRODUCT

This research project will lead to the ellaboration of a report on Turkey's present situation in the world, putting the emphasis on its role in the NATO. Taking into account recent history, the final report will be a summary of the last evolutions of this issue, with a particular interest in the link between nationalism and security. Turkey's role in the region has to be described and evaluated.

It could be published either as a report or as a brief book. First results would be defended in conferences, seminars or reviews before the final publication.

It will have to offer a clear idea of the issue, contributing to the study of this "forgotten" topic.

DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY

It will be necessary a step-by-step approach to the topic chosen. Recent history and political implications will have to be taken into account when studying the present situation.

A first stage is a collection and reading of bibliographic sources as the better way of getting enough background on the issues to be analysed.

After establishing a clear framework, it will be necessary a further search for data in Turkey (primary in this case), together with interviews to politicians, academicians, burocrats, etc. able to offer a specialised opinion on the topic.

Ellaboration of a final report for publication will have to take into account the kind of data used in order to "filter" it; it will be necessary to offer a brief and clear idea of the topic, together with a critical revision of both sources and bibliography.

SCHEDULE

In a one-year long research, it is extremely important to organise the time in a way able to allow a step-by-step approach to the suject, due to the continuous changes of country necessary for this project. A first proposal in this sense, considering Sept. 1995 as the starting point, could be:

- Sept.-December 1995: Collection of bibliography in European institutions (Universities, NATO, etc.).
- January-June 1996: elaboration of the first schemes and theoretical frameworks.
- Oct-Nov 1996: collection of primary data and all kind of sources in Turkey.
- January 1997 to the end: elaboration of the end-product.

2.- INTRODUCTION

Definition of Middle East

It is necessary for the scope of this study to define clearly the extent to what the term 'Middle East' is understood and used, given the centrality of this concept to the topic discussed. Diverse problems arise when searching for a proper definition of this concept. First of all, because of its width, implying geographical, human, ethnic, political, religious and physical factors. This means in fact that, besides the obvious complexity, there is a variety of definitions depending on the interests, on the focus or on non-scientific considerations.

There are in this sense two interesting previous remarks:

- First, the fact that this term is obviously a Eurocentric one -hence 'East'- tells a lot about the nature of the region and its vision by the Western powers. What is highly relevant for this research project.

- Second, in line with the previous remark, there is the fact that the term derives from the military circumstances involving both the local populations and the Western powers, particularly during the First World War.

Following Held's analysis of the term (Held 1994, pp.7-9), it is also necessary to highlight the changes in the terminology used to designate this area in the recent decades depending on the changes in Western perceptions of the region. The term 'East' designating this region was in use during the Ottoman Empire, as opposed to 'Far East' (China, Japan and Indochina). During nineteenth century the term 'Near East" became more fashionable to designate the Ottoman world (including the Balkans) with the growing involvement of Britain and France in Persia and India, whereas "East" was applied to India and surrounding areas. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the World War I created an identity crisis for the Europeans' definition of that region.

It is in 1902 when Captain Alfred T. Mahan had first employed the term "Middle East" for an indefinite area around the Persian Gulf. But it was in the late 1930s when the potential applicability of this designation was reinforced by the British application of the term "Middle East Command" to its military forces in the area that extended from the central Mediterranean to the Indian subcontinent. Gradually, particularly after the Middle East Command Headquarters was moved to Cairo, the designation for the military command came to be applied to the area itself. An

example of this tendency was the foundation of the Middle East Journal in 1946, as well as the Washington-based Middle East Institute.

The National Geographic Society (Held 1994, p. 7) entitled its map of the area in the early 1960s “Lands of the Eastern Mediterranean (Called the Near East or the Middle East)”. By the mid-1970s, however, the society’s map of the region carried unqualified “Middle East” titles. The official designation of the U.S. Department of State geographic bureau responsible for the area is Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), but informal usage favours “Middle East”. The US military services followed the British precedent and used “Middle East” after the World War II, and the CIA has long used that designation in its public reports. Current usage is predominantly “Middle East” with some exceptions (e.g. Yapp 1987 and 1991) such as some UN statistical series using “Near East”.

In an effort to avoid the implication of a Eurocentric perspective, some specialists have sought more objective terminology, favouring the designation “Southwest Asia”. Taking this effort one step further, Cressey urged use of the portmanteau word “Swasia”, as short for “Southwest Asia” (Cressey 1960). But it seems clear that because of its usage and its applicability, the term “Middle East” is the most appropriate and understandable one when referring to the region, ‘middle’ connoting as well this region’s central location, its function as a tricontinental hub and its role as a strategic bridge. Other terms trying to be more geographically accurate have failed to cover the political complexity that such a term requires, including, for example, Egypt within the region. Egypt is an extremely significant actor in the Middle East stage, but other terms fail to include it as part of the rest of the area to where it belongs.

The delimitation of this region is almost as delicate as its own consideration as a real unity in political-strategic terms. Its geographical limits are even more debatable than its denomination, and it is possible to find huge variations in this sense from study to study. The problem, although periodically explored, is by no means settled (Held 1994). The limits of the Middle East vary from author to author. While some include Turkey, Afghanistan or Libya, others instead do not consider them as a part of the Middle East. Following Held again, the delimitation accepted has been that offered by the latest maps published by the National Geographic Society, Department of State, CIA, Bartholomew and other leading agencies. This means the inclusion of Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, the UAE, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Cyprus and other Gulf States (Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain). Turkey’s inclusion falls within the limits of the definition and, although widely accepted, creates a new dimension in the analysis of its importance for Atlantic defence in the Middle East, as an integral part of both sides.

For some of the histories of the Middle East, not only Libya but also Sudan or the whole North Africa is also included within it. There is appreciable validity in including the countries of North Africa. Since the early years of Islam these countries have been linked in many ways to the Middle East. Even Turkey has past links with the Maghrib (Western part of North Africa) because of onetime Ottoman holdings in that area, and Iranian lands were once a core area of the Abbasid Empire when it controlled the Mahgrib.

Nevertheless, despite the religious and historical links, certain differences have existed between northwestern Africa and the Middle East proper. The Mashriq has more intimate relations with Turks and Persians, given that Byzantine and then Ottoman political control was both stronger and lasted longer in the Mashriq than in the Maghrib. Christian influence has persistently been appreciable in the Fertile Crescent, much less so in the Maghrib. Lands west of the Nile have their own regional influences and, unlike the Mashriq realm, were subject to direct European colonization in the nineteenth century. Especially since World War II, the Arab states of the Mashriq have been increasingly interactive with one another, despite periodic divisive influences; and although each is locked in hostility rather than cooperation with Arab neighbours, Israel on the West and Iran on the East are increasingly involved in the region. Turkey is similarly becoming -or better: trying to become- interlinked with its pre-1918 imperial provinces.

Although the Middle East is the core of the Islamic culture realm, the “Muslim world” must be clearly differentiated from the Middle East and from the Middle East-north African Area. Lands in which the Islamic religion and civilization are dominant extend well into West Africa on the west and far into central and southern Asia and Australasia on the East. Central Asia, with its famous Islamic urban centres of Samarkand, Tashkent, Merv, Bukhara and Balkh, was more closely linked to the Middle East core areas from the seventh to the eighteenth centuries than was the Maghrib. However, conquest of Central Asia by Russia during the late nineteenth century broke virtually all of the links, and the five new independent states -Kazakhastan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrghyzstan and Turkmenistan- even though Muslim, cannot categorically be included in the current Middle East region. It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that Iran especially, but also Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, is vigorously seeking to interconnect with the new Muslim states that were formerly Soviet constituent republics, including Azerbaijan in the Caucasus (Held 1994, p. 9).

Besides the definitions, it is necessary to briefly analyse the main reasons why the Middle East is so interesting for the Western powers. These are several and varied, but it seems undeniable

that its importance is significant enough as to justify the game of alliances and interventions which has characterised Western approach to the region. First of all, it is necessary to take into account the fact that this region has always was always characterised by its capacity of 'export' its crises to the extent of escalating into a world-wide conflict (Hubel 1987, p. 97). Oil has been, particularly since the 70s, the centre of this situation. The Western world -including Japan- is heavily dependent on this area's resources, what creates an international dimension whatever happens in the region.

Given these circumstances, it is necessary to highlight some of their aspects:

- There has been a constant in this region's crises linking both the pre- and the post-Cold War periods. This has been the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian population, closely linked to the Israeli-Arab confrontation, similar but not always and necessarily identified.

- On the other hand, there were conflicts particular to the Cold War period. This was the case of the Iranian revolution, to a certain extent of an internal nature, but internationalise because of several reasons. First because of the regime it overthrew, openly pro-Western and with a widely developed framework of relations with the Western powers. And not least important because of the anti-Western nature of the new regime, trying to export its ideas to the rest of the region, therefore creating significant confrontations with its neighbourhood. Other example was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a clearly inter-state conflict which proved both the Western and the Turkish fears of Russian -Soviet- expansionism. Both conflicts, despite their differences in nature, had in common the capacity of creating an alarm in the West.

- Some other crises are on the contrary particular to the transitional period that the world is going through at present. Perhaps, they are even characteristic of the emerging new world order. The main example in this region has been the Gulf War, with all its implications and meanings. It has been so important due to many reasons:

1- It creates new dynamics and situations implying both an active and a passive roles for Turkey in the area, as it is the example of the Kurdish in North Iraq.

2- It has been a good indicator of the new world order, offering some light not only on the US attitude after the end of the Soviet threat, but also clarifying the different environment dominant in the Middle East. And the role of the international organisations in this new order -UN, NATO, etc.-

3- Hence, it has been too a good indicator of the Western powers' attitudes towards the Middle East and the Gulf. Whether these attitudes are new or simply an adaptation to a new set of circumstances remains to be studied.

There are some aspects to clarify before developing the main topic:

First of all, the reasons why Turkey has been chosen. It is the only country of the region who is a full member of NATO. This is a fact despite Turkey's vehement denial of its belonging to this region, it is a significant part of the Middle East. It is inside, but outside simultaneously, thanks not only to its proximity to the West -in geographical and ideological terms- but to its differences with the rest of the countries. Its military power has also been decisive in the recent history. And its position has changed significantly with the end of the Cold War. 'Turkey is among those countries most profondly affected by the recent revolutionary changes on the international scene. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey was a distant outpost on the European periphery, a barrier to Soviet ambitions in the Middle East, and a contributor to the security of Europe' (Lesser 1993, p. xiii).

From its foundation as a state (1923), Turkey has developed an important role as a bridge between cultures, religions, political systems, economic areas and even confronted superpowers (Mango 1994). This pivotal role seems to have been, to different extents, a constant along its seventy-two years of independent history. Even the Ottoman Empire before the foundation of the Republic, a true superpower on itself, based part of its success on its capacity to balance its foreign policy between different hegemonic countries/blocs (Yapp 1989 and 1991). From 1945, Turkey had been condemned to be one of the -many- secondary actors of the world scene, but its importance should not be underestimated. Cold War's Bi-polarity did not give many options to the rest of the states, and reduced Turkey's role to an intermediate position between both superpowers, although taking always a plainly pro-western attitude; this role obviously benefited from its central geographical position -amongst other factors-, following at the same time Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's ideas of westernisation (Kinross 1964). And it can obviously help to Turkey's involvement in NATO.

This important Turkey's role as a 'bridge' (Vali 1971) is due to several reasons. Its geographical position has been more significant in the role developed by Turkey -or the Ottoman/Byzantine Empires- in the past. This is in the roots of the present situation, although it is no longer the most important feature. The legacy of history, specially from the Ottoman Empire (Cleveland 1994), with its mixture of cultures, races and peoples, and all the heritage it has implied,

together with the strength of Kemalism, is nowadays as important as the present strategic position -if not more-.

This pivotal role has been one of the keys to Turkey's development and delicate both external and internal balances when analysing its geopolitical position; its importance and nature will have to be discussed in this piece of research, but Turkey's typical mixture of cultures, ethnic groups, ideas, etc. is likely to constrain this country's decision-makers to search for a balanced foreign policy -directed to keep good relations with all its neighbours- in order to be able to keep internal stability; and it makes a difference between Turkey and other countries of the region with a more clear tendency east or westwards. There are some directions in Turkey's foreign policy which are likely to point at this search for a 'medium role'. And this role might be the reason underlying these decisions. It can be stated that Turkey owes its geopolitical importance to this central -not only geographically speaking- position, which conditions enormously the development of its politics, economy and society. Hence, analysis of this pivotal role together with the related foreign policies will be the centre of this piece of research; not only its historical construction, but also the way it is influenced by internal and external circumstances. It is important to remark in this sense that it is necessary to focus on the 'real' intentions behind certain sets of foreign policy. And not less important, there is a vicious circle between this central role and foreign policy, relevant for the aims of this piece of research. While Turkey's pivotal role conditions foreign policy, the latter seeks to reinforce this role.

Not less important is the fact that it is not only strictly NATO the focus of the analysis is due to the fact that NATO has to be understood in the light of a series of Western interests that, despite not being directly mentioned or officially included in NATO's nature, they are a very significant part of both its way of operation and the reasons why it was founded. The identification between NATO and US interests, although not fully correct, can be used when analysing the nos-strategic aspects of the issue.

3.- HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: TOWARDS TURKEY AS A PIVOTAL STATE

INTRODUCTION

Dealing with Turkey's role in NATO, and hence with Turkey's pivotal role in geopolitics makes it necessary to offer a clear overview of the historical processes which brought about the present situation. Turkey's position, between different religions, ethnic groups, social and political systems has to a great extent been a consequence -amongst other factors- of her history. Turkey's geographical bridging[1] position made it possible her role as intermediate state -not so often as mediator- between all the actors involved in the different periods of History. The territory nowadays occupied by Turkey, heart of the former Ottoman Empire, had several geographical conditionings to make it historically valuable from a strategic point of view. Historical evolution made her to become both a central place respect of the surrounding cultures -or in some cases states- and a synthesis of all of them. These two features are considered to be one of the main factors conditioning Turkey's geopolitical role, in both the regional and the global levels.

As a way of approaching Turkey's importance in the Middle East for the Western interests, these historical perspectives will be reviewed, aiming to discover the historical background of the situation that Turkey had to face when it became clear that the Cold War world order was over, and hence that it was necessary to redefine power relations in the area. The aim of this section is not writing Ottoman or Turkish history, something which has already been made, but instead to make a historical approach to the question of the pivotal role, of Turkey's geostrategic interest and hence of Turkey's power and influence in the area. It is also necessary to clarify that explaining the nature of Turkey's central geopolitical role is by no means the aim of this nature; instead, an overview of its roots could offer an idea of the conditions leading to the present circumstances. This analysis will mean the establishment of a starting point respect of Turkish present position, before beginning a deeper analysis of the research questions. In order to do this, some of the models which take into account the historical factors will be used; through them it will be possible to check whether Turkey can be included in these interpretations, whether Turkey's case could be fitted into these global and in theory comprehensive patterns. After this short review, it will be necessary to analyse briefly why Turkish case-study does/does not fit these global historical models. And last but not least, to explain

[1] In this sense, it is very clear the question asked by Lesser *Bridge or Barrier?*, in LESSER, I.O. (1993): "Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After the Cold War". In FULLER, G.E. and LESSER, I.O.: *Turkey's New Geopolitics. From the Balkans to Western China*, pp. 99-140. Westview, Boulder.

to what extent these historical precedents have got a more or less important influence in today's situation; or perhaps in the situation inherited by Turkey when the Cold War finished.

TURKEY IN THE WORLD ORDERS

Turkey's position in the international stage has to be dealt with taking into account the different conceptions of world order. Geopolitics is widely discussed, and depending on the approach used when analysing it, different -when not opposite- conclusions arise. Political economy appears as the approach which takes into account more fully the different categories of interlinked events which give rise to what this approach calls 'geopolitical orders' (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p.19). This concept of order, following these two authors, is based in three premises. First of all, an order is constituted by the rules, practices and ideas governing the international political economy; they have been changing along the history, and hence different periods can be identified. Second, these rules, practices and ideas are based in the interaction between states and other actors, and so there is a possibility -a certainty- of a change, the term 'order' has to be understood differently depending on the circumstances of the moment chosen for the analysis. And finally, these changes already mentioned are intrinsically geographical; so, a certain geopolitical order is based on 'the changing geographical basis to the international political economy in different historical periods' (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 19). Therefore, in any analysis of the world orders arising from the present period of transition, there has to be a place for the historical perspectives in order to wholly understand their bases.

There are three main models trying both to explain and to understand the historical evolution of the world orders, based in different premises. First of all, there is the periodization chosen by Agnew and Corbridge (1995); According to the political economy approach, they establish a periodization as a result of certain mix of these former factors, depending on two geographical dimensions (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 23). These are on the one hand the geography of economic activity, with two tendencies: territorial -intensive- and interactional -extensive-. And second, the dominant space of political regulation, with three tendencies: national state, imperial state and international state. Different combinations of these geographical tendencies make it possible to identify the different world orders. They divide the recent historical evolution in three different periods: 1815 to 1875, 1875 to 1945 and 1945 to 1990. This scheme will be used as a general framework of analysis for the purposes of this chapter, given the fact that these authors offer a multicausal interpretation of the geopolitical orders, exploring causality in its historical manifestations, rather than taking a single factor -such as technology, economics, security, trade,

etc.-. It is much more comprehensive in its analysis of the reasons for the periodization than the remaining two considered here. However, it will be described more deeply later.

Respect of the remaining two main models to be taken into account in this respect, these are the ones designed by Taylor (1993) and Cox (1987). These two models establish a historical periodization too, although with some essential differences. Cox too works with a framework composed by three geopolitical orders: 1845 to 1875, 1875 to 1945 and from 1945 to 1965; He offers the possibility of a forth one, from 1965 onwards, still under construction, although this division was designed before the collapse of the Soviet Union. This periodization identifies 'the degree of geographical fragmentation or integration of the world economy' (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 24) as the main feature of a certain world order. For him the first and the third periods can be defined as hegemonic, with a particular state sponsoring a dominant mode of social organisation: Britain during the first one and the United States during the second. The second period and the one arriving to the present times are labelled as non-hegemonic, with a certain reverse to anarchy rather than a pure geopolitical order. And other basic difference with respect to Agnew and Corbridge's model is the fact that conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States is not considered as a central feature of the third period, but a mere backdrop to it.

Instead, Taylor's model is based on both Wallerstein's cycles of hegemony and Modelski's theories on long-cycles of world leadership. Basing his periods on a rhythm of boom, crises and restructuring, he identifies (1993) two different twentieth-century geopolitical orders; the first one, called 'World Order of the British Succession' (1907-1944) and the 'Cold War World Order' (1946-1989) (Taylor 1993, p. 75). The former had a precedent in the World Order of Rivalry and Concert (1871-1904), which replaced the World Order of Hegemony and Concert (1815-1866). Agnew and Corbridge consider it critically, as this model accepts that a geopolitical order depends entirely on the coercive potential of hegemonic powers, not as a 'historical structure based on the prevalence of certain practices and representations' (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 26).

These three periodizations are considered as the most interesting ones since they try to explain not only the present geopolitical (dis)order, but also to search for the historical roots of the different geopolitical orders beginning with last century, being the present situation both a consequence of the former circumstances and at the same time responding to the same kind of stimuli, to factors and schemes with the same kind of nature. However, all these periodizations have to be accepted as something relative, given the enormous variety of factors involved and the universalizing character they pretend to give to these models; apart from the fact that they are all

somehow artificial. With regard to Turkey, the fact is that she seems to develop a central geopolitical role nowadays; and, although the look to the historical perspectives could offer some light over its real nature, they will have to be taken as what they are: a way of making more understandable the present situation, not of explaining fully its real nature.

Before starting a more detailed analysis of these historical perspectives, it is necessary to take into account some important ideas when considering Turkey as the direct successor of the Ottoman Empire. First of all, the Turkish Republic is a relatively new reality, officially created in 1923 from the ashes of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire; this means that there is -at least- the need for making clear the difference between both terms. Therefore, the reality (geographical, historical, territorial, ethnic and political) of the Ottoman Empire cannot at all be fully identified with that of the Turkish Republic. There were even some pejorative expressions to designate the Turks inside the Ottoman administration[2], what makes clear that, if not an opposition, there was at least either a difference or a non-identification between both. This lack of identification becomes even more clear with a look at the process that brought about the creation of the Turkish Republic led by Mustafa Kemal. The breaking with the Ottoman tradition became one of the main axes of both the political and social lives of the country.

On the other hand, it is necessary not to forget that, despite the differences, despite the official efforts to change its character, the Turkish Republic is deeply rooted in the Ottoman Empire from every point of view. In fact, it occupies the heart territory of the former empire, with its most emblematic city (Istanbul). Even the process of Westernisation, one of the more distinctive characteristics of Republican Turkey, was a constant feature of the final period of the Ottoman history, from last century. The creation of the Turkish Republic meant a breaking with the Ottoman tradition, but this breaking was much more a need for survival than a historical/geographical reality. Lack of full identification does not mean, therefore, lack of influence or lack of a certain continuity. Therefore it will be necessary in this sense to accept the fact that the Ottoman Empire has to be considered as an 'ancestor' of its inheritor, the Turkish Republic, more identified with it than what republicanism seems to accept. But never forgetting that in any analysis of the Ottoman Empire regarding this issue of the historical perspectives, the term Ottoman has to be understood in a different way than the term Turkey.

[2] This is the case of *Türkler pistir* or *Türkler aptaldir* (dirty Turks or stupid Turks), terms used pejoratively for designating the Turks during the period of the Ottoman Empire.

Finally, there is a main problem when dealing with Ottoman history, especially with what has been labelled as 'the Eastern Question'. In the traditional European textbooks the Ottoman Empire has been presented as the Sick Man of Europe, as a corrupted decaying government just receiving in a passive way the European commands; its only ability was -according to these sources- that of occasionally managing to manipulate in its favour the conflicts between European states (Yapp 1987, pp. 92-96). This traditional picture exists because history has always been told from the viewpoint of the major European powers, based on their archives. European structures and ideologies were used to analyse this theoretically unnatural autocratic creation. It is necessary to add in this sense that the Ottoman Empire received always a peculiar antipathy from the Western powers due to the fact of being a Muslim empire. And finally, there has been no one interested in rehabilitating the Empire's image; even the Turkish nationalists persuaded themselves that the Empire had been a perverse construction with no direct relation with the state by them created. Although this image is to a certain extent true, it has to be both reassessed and understood without this 'Eurocentric' vision, pointing out the efficiency of Ottoman central administration -together with the importance of national feeling, especially in the Asian areas-, the importance of reforms during the nineteenth century, and to what extent the main problems of the Empire were caused by the European interests in the area it comprised.

Hence, according to this review, there are three main world orders in recent history, used by Agnew and Corbridge as an example. None of these periods is homogeneous at all; instead, they seem to respond to a series of patterns in the states' behaviour creating a certain world order. A brief overview of Turkey's position inside these different orders will offer a starting point to the deeper analysis of both her present role and perceptions of the international balance of power, and not less important, of her struggle for survival as a powerful state. So, it is necessary to put Turkey's history in relation to the wider framework of the historical global orders.

First period: from 1815 to 1875. The Concert of Europe-British Geopolitical Order.

This first one is a British hegemonic period, based on a series of territorial economies and national states in Europe with an interactional tendency to expand outside Europe. Hence, Britain is to be considered as the first international state. There was not a pure hegemony, but instead a polyarchy: Great Britain's leading role in the world did not translate into continental hegemony.

The creation of a Concert of nations, designed to handle revolution after French expansionism, achieved a certain consensus amongst the leading nations, despite their rivalry. First, there was an idea amongst the political European élites that 'no state in Europe could predominate within the continent'; and that 'Europe-wide wars were best avoided because of their potential for unleashing revolutionary forces' (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 26). Under this consensus, certain rules of behaviour became widely accepted and the main European states were managers of the balance of power, of international peace. A central feature to this period studied is the territorial equilibrium of power constructed in 1814-15. If Britain was to be the dominant state during this period is mainly because of her orientation towards external expansion, contrasting with the Euro-centredness of the rest of the European Great Powers. British Empire's internationalisation, based on open trading, proved to be successful throughout this period, with Britain as the head and leading force of the world economy. Comparative advantage, free trade and the gold standard were the main axes of this British universal influence. It was this emphasis in open trading what made Britain begin to lose its central position within the Concert of Europe, since it meant to sacrifice industrial strength on the altar of free trade. The political-economic rise of Germany and the growth of the United States threatened Britain's hegemony. And, although she still remained a central place to world commerce and finance for many years, it was no longer unquestioned as during the period 1815-1875. The creation of certain new states (Germany, Greece, Italy), called into question the general principles on which the Concert of Europe had been based. Nationalism and what it meant undermined the order of the Concert of Europe: 'this new system of states had no place for the rules that had governed the previous one' (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 31).

When trying to connect this period's framework with Turkey, it is necessary to take into account the 'game' of power developed by the European dominant actors, and to assess both its impact and its importance for the Middle East, at that time dominated by the Ottoman Empire. This area was somehow neglected by the hegemonic powers respect of the world order during these early stages. It was surprisingly left out of the European interests, since oil was not then an important source of power as it is nowadays. There is an exception in this sense: the question of the Straits -Bosphorus and Dardanelles-, linked both to the Eastern Question -the Ottoman Balkans- and to the Russian expansionism. This problems is of course central to the study of Turkey's role from her Ottoman times. As long as the Black Sea remained Ottoman, the Straits were considered by the international community as an internal affair; but Russia's expansion made it a matter of international concern and interest. At the beginning of the period studied, it seems to appear that Turkey's -Ottoman- pivotal role was more linked to the geographical position/situation from a

physical[3] point of view. And this continuous conflict caused by the question of the Straits is a good example in this sense (Yapp 1987, p. 48; Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 29; Zürcher 1993).

Hence this first period, characterised by a European territorial balance of power in which Britain came to be the hegemonic state, offers as the main feature in relation to the Middle East in general and to the heart of the Ottoman Empire in particular the fact that it was considered as a secondary actor in the world order; in both the economic and the political context, with almost no relation with British Empire from an economic point of view. Secondary does not mean insignificant, especially if taking into account the convergence of European interests in some of the areas then occupied by the Ottomans. But besides the question of the Straits in the relation between Russia and the rest of the European powers, there was the fact of an actual Russian expansionism. This meant to the rest of European powers that the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire as a buffer was the only way of stopping Russian ambitions. What can be translated to geostrategic interests in the area; but from a purely economic point of view, it is enough to offer a detail: at the beginning of this period, Britain's trade with the Levant amounted for about 1% of her total trade, being Britain the leading economic power during that period (Yapp 1987, p. 48). The Middle East had almost no interest for the European leading powers, except of a vague British fear for the access to India -problem not affecting Turkey- (Cleveland 1994). The Ottoman Empire was left outside the two main features of the period: the Concert of Europe and British mundialization of the economy.

Russian territorial claims, central issue of this period, deserved the most careful attention not only from the Ottoman Empire, but also from the main European powers. Russia carried out this expansion through three different ways (Cleveland 1994, p. 84); first, by using its religious ties with the Greek Orthodox communities inside the empire; second, by allying itself to the Balkan independence movements in an effort to become a leading power in the region; and third, by direct warfare against Ottoman armies. This issue was during the whole period a matter of concern for those who had established the balance of power, since Russian expansion would mean a serious direct threat to this order.

The beginning of the periodization in 1815 has to be considered as excessively focused on European powers, and it is not appropriate for the historical reality of the Ottoman Empire. The new order hardly affected the Ottoman system, apart from its already mentioned passive role. But it is true that from an internal point of view there was an important reformist movement as a result of

[3] 'Physical' has to be understood in this context as a synonym of spatial, always taking into account the fact that this central importance is due to the presence of certain human constructed entities and geographical realities.

foreign influence inside Ottoman administration and society. The beginning of a new period in Ottoman history has to be fixed in 1839. This period from 1839 to 1876 (Yapp 1987) -or to 1871 (Zürcher 1993)- is known in Ottoman History as *Tanzimat* (literally 'reorganization'), and generally speaking means an option for reform as opposite to Ottoman's official resistance to introduce changes in the system which had been working for such a long time. This is a period of transition for the Ottoman Empire during which internal questions and developments seem to have been more important than the external events when assessing the periodization.

Turkey, as a first conclusion for this period, does not seem to fit into the chronological division established. Its separate and distinctive history makes her to have to be included in a different periodization, given that all the chosen ones, and especially Agnew and Corbridge's, have been designed to explain or understand a global western order. The fact that Turkey's history does not fully match in the dates established for this first period, does not mean at all a lack of links with that time's world order. As it has already been commented, the Ottoman Empire was not considered as a major actor in the world order; it was neither significant as part of the states of the Concert, nor as a part of British world economic system; but it was a centrepiece of the main powers' policies towards the area, as a way of stopping Russian expansionism; treated, that is true, as a decaying empire which could act just as a mere buffer. Ottoman's economic links with the leading world economies, especially Britain, were not important enough as to make this empire a part of this world order. It is through the *Tanzimat* and the growing role of the Middle East in the World that the central area of the Empire starts becoming of major interest for the world powers from several points of view.

It also seems to arise from this first period that the Ottoman history is in the root of Turkey's present central geopolitical role. In fact, Ottoman adaptability was the key of its long lasting history (Cleveland 1994, p. 157-158). This Empire's survival and power were based on the capacity of governing with different degrees of intensity the various regions under its control, depending on the needs. A great deal of internal diversity (ethnic, religious, certain degree of political autonomy...) was tolerated to avoid the resort to coercion, so dangerous for a non-so-strong empire. Even not being considered as a strong force, the Ottoman Empire could survive for longer than any other imperial state at that time.

Second period: from 1875 to 1945. The Geopolitical Order of Inter-Imperial Rivalry.

After the collapse of the previous order, there was an explosion of the inter-imperial rivalries amongst the main European powers, Japan and the United States for an effective control of the rest of the world's economy, from 1875 to the end of the Second World War. During this period, the German and American economies worked very differently from the formerly dominant one, Britain. They had a strong competitive advantage in the size and dynamism of their domestic markets, while British economy was much more based on international transactions. This created an unstable situation, for which the former order could not find an answer. The result of these circumstances was the emergence of a set of competitive imperial states trying to divide the world into zones of influence based on economic accumulation. In this sense, the late nineteenth century saw an extensive enlargement and deepening of the world economy through the 'new imperialism' of this period (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 33). Whole regions of the world became specialised in certain productions (manufactured goods, raw products or food products); it meant a regional industrial specialization inside Europe and the United States and a regional specialization in raw material elsewhere. This uneven share of the world economy between core (Europe, North America) and periphery producing raw materials, produced an axis of capital accumulation as a result of the core-periphery structure of the British Empire and the US-Britain relationship. Germany built an alternative scheme to this system through government support to help the spread of private investment. This policy led British governments into a more aggressive role by the 1890s. What had the effect of undermining free-trade imperialism, as both trade and investment came to have direct government support.

The real importance of British economy had been eroded since the 1870s, but it is not until 1914 that became obvious that the dependence on national states had taken the central role in the world order's landscape. Between 1914 and 1939 the system of multilateral trade was becoming weaker. Certain events were in the origins of this weakness: militarization of the leading European economies during the World War I -it undermined trade within Europe-, the overall decline of trade between Britain and Asia -emergence of new competitors like Japan, China or India is the main reason-, and finally the overproduction of export crops and raw materials. The fall in the commodity prices meant also a reduction of the local demand for manufactured goods, base of the British imperial economic system.

Hence, other European states challenged British policies and so her hegemony. Protectionism, autarky and division in blocs were the three main features characterising this period.

There was a rise of two opposite blocs; the first one, led by France and Britain, was oriented towards maintaining free-trade imperialism, while the second one, headed by Germany, was primarily concerned with expanding its territorial possessions and challenging British financial leadership. According to this model of world order, the two World Wars were to a great extent a consequence and a part of this system.

When trying to relate Turkey to the international circumstances of this period, it comes evident the fact that internal evolution, partially -only partially!- independent of them, can be more important than what has been called here the world order. Internal political evolution surpasses the importance of external events, being at the same time a consequence of them. It does not mean that world evolution does not influence the Ottoman Empire. The question of the Straits became a centrepiece of European policies; the Black Sea was no longer Ottoman, and the Straits were now a matter of international concern. And the 'eternal' question of maintaining or splitting the Ottoman Empire was at its final stage in this period. The weakened Ottoman Empire suffers the consequences of the world instability. The division of the world into different spheres of influence, a central feature of this period, affects directly to the Empire's survival. The First World War meant the end of the Ottoman Empire, finally divided amongst the European powers; 'at war's end, the Sick Man of Europe was in his death throes' (Kuniholm 1980, p. 8). But this division also meant a strong reaction inside the heart of the Ottoman Empire; it is Turkey's internal evolution what, linked to this international context, means a real shift in the country's history. Mudros Armistice divided the Ottoman Empire amongst Italian, French and British occupation, what aroused the Turkish national spirit; but the fuelling force of the gathering of the nationalist movement under the aegis of Mustafa Kemal was the Greek occupation of Izmir. The Treaty of Sèvres (1920) signed by the Sultan, was rejected by the nationalist government, meaning the beginning of the final struggle.

An analysis of the implications of this nationalist movement is basic when trying to understand Turkey's present situation, and hence its pivotal role. It means the beginning of a new period for this state's history, now much more independent respect of the world order. Turkish process of state creation seems to be to a certain extent isolated of the evolution of the general international environment. And political evolution has to be considered as the centrepiece of this process of change. 'When one looks for the dynamics of change in Turkey before 1950 one should not look at the economy or at the society but at politics. Change still came from above' (Yapp 1991, p. 149). But at the same time, it was becoming increasingly inserted in the international context. First because it suddenly appeared in the international context as a conventional state, similar to the

European standards. An also because Turkey's economic relations with the European states were now improving, taking advantage of the intense competition.

Change in Turkey has not been something sudden, something just linked to Atatürk's personality influence. Instead, it was accomplished over a long period of time by successive waves of reformers and radicals (Lewis 1961, p. 473-474). This is what he labels 'the Turkish Revolution'. The already mentioned *Tanzimat* period is an early example of this reformist attitude. The beginning of this period in Turkey was conditioned by anti-reformist policies by the Sultan and the Ottoman central administration, until the arrival of the Young Turks in 1908 and their brief stay in power.

But to an enormous extent, Atatürk's ideas were the ones which meant a modernisation of the Turkish Republic (Kinross 1964) and, not less important, the beginning of the westernisation process. This fact splits the period established by Agnew and Corbridge, since its importance cannot be underestimated.

The new Turkey emerging from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, after the long wars of 1912 to 1922 was a territorial accident. It comprised those territories which the nationalist leaders were able to claw back from their opponents (Cleveland 1994). The majority of those who followed Atatürk thought that they were fighting for the freedom of Ottomans and Muslims, when they were actually fighting for the Republic and the secularist movement. This process of state formation is the main feature giving birth to what Turkey has been ever since: a mixture. 'Atatürk's realism in adopting the 1918 armistice boundaries as the basis of his claims and in stopping the war when Anatolia and Thrace were liberated created a state which could not be rationalized in either Ottoman or Muslim terms but which made sense in terms of ethnic Turkish nationalism' (Yapp 1991, p. 147 and 156). Even history had to be rewritten to justify both the existence of the Turkish Republic and its international boundaries.

This creation means the final breaking with the Ottoman Empire; apart from the ideological one, there is the fact that a state is different in nature respect of the Ottoman 'phenomenon', with its several peculiarities. Six were the main commitments adopted by Turkey's Republic: secularism, statism, reformism, republicanism, populism and nationalism. Turkey was a completely different and new entity, and so were her new policies towards the international environment. Internally, there was a need to bring the army under control, reducing military expenditure from a 40% of the budget in 1926 to a 28% in the early 30s. But the deteriorating international climate of the 1930s led to a new growth of the army to a 59% of the budget during the period 1940-45. This fact offers a clue of

two tendencies. First, the growing -and sometimes conflicting- complexity of Turkish situation, between internal and external needs and tendencies. And second, the growing integration of Turkey in the international community, sharing now its fears and problems as a more active actor.

On the other hand, there some tendencies which make Turkey's case different to the international environment. This state emerges from the 1920s with a clearly geopolitical foreign policy, probably as a need for her own survival during her early times as a Republic. Opposite to the general international attitude towards expansionism and division of the world by military means, Turkey adopts a policy towards peace and a good relation with the neighbouring states. In this direction can be understood the strong control over Pan-Turk ideas, which succeeded only with the cession of Hatay, and the devolution of Mosul to Iraq, in the interest of peace with Britain. Intense diplomatic activity was developed during this period until the end of the Second World War, as a way of securing peace. This is the case of both the Balkan Pact (1934) to protect the western frontier and the Saadabad Pact (1937) which gave security to the east; these regional pacts, together with a conciliation policy with the USSR and a search for protection under Britain and France, was the way chosen by Turkey to protect herself against Soviet threat. The break out of the war meant some difficult options for Turkey, who tried to keep the balance necessary to her survival. Although remaining neutral, Turkey signed a treaty of friendship (1941) with Germany -mainly due to the valuable trade they conducted-, and only when it became obvious that Germany was defeated, did Turkey declared war on Germany (23 February 1945) in order to earn some gratitude and to get a place at the United Nations (Yapp 1991). Turkey's involvement in the international community was increasingly active and significant at the end of the war.

It is important to point out the fact that Turkey's manoeuvres above described during the war and early post-war periods were setting the bases of her position in the Cold War world order, with an open pro-western orientation.

Turkey's commitment to the west was already clear by that time, especially due to Soviet threat to the territorial integrity. Although from the very beginning the West was seen as a model for the development of the Republic, there were clear examples of Turkey's use of her central role. One of them is the fact that Soviet advice was sought in drawing-up Turkey's first five-years plan. And the early period of the Republic had a strong role of the State -*Baba Devlet*[4]- as a central feature, following Soviet example. A significant question arises in this sense from the very beginning of the nineteenth century: was Turkey's shift to the West an ideological option or just a need for her

[4] Literally 'Father State'.

survival?. Ottoman Empire's conflict with Russia dates back three centuries, and the states emerging from the collapse of both empires seem to have continued that confrontation: Soviet Union and Turkey. According to Kuniholm (1980, p. 8), 'whatever the motivations behind her foreign policy, tsarist Russia expanded southward, forcing the Ottoman Empire to resort to geopolitics in an effort to contain her'[5].

Turkey's particular evolution makes it difficult to fit it in the wider framework of the periodization chosen. International environment of this period of inter-imperial rivalry has got a direct influence over Ottoman evolution and internal events. But from 1923, internal evolution of the new Republic seems to take the lead in the development of both the internal organization of the new state and its role in the international environment, with a certain degree of independence respect of the global stage. But as a matter of fact, it is possible to state that Turkey is becoming more and more involved in the world order, parallel to her consolidation as a republic.

Third period: from 1945 to the end (?) of the Cold War (1990). The Cold War Geopolitical Order.

The world order emerging from the Second World War known as the Cold War was characterised by a competition between two imperial states in military and ideological terms. American-Anglo-Soviet total victory over Germany and Japan brought about as a main consequence -from a geopolitical point of view- the extension of Soviet influence as far as the River Elbe, including Eastern Europe and Germany. This fact was the main reason for a continuing American military presence in Europe, linked to a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, as a military and ideological competitor for world hegemony. The United States was without any serious competitor in imposing its vision of the world, based on an increase of international trade and investment. Its liberal international order imposed from the early post-war period, rested on three main economic features. First, economic concentration, the control over market being exercised by ever fewer American firms since the 1880s. The growth of government, related to military expenditures as a way of meeting the Soviet threat, is the second economic characteristic of this American hegemony. And last but not least, the direct investment of US corporations overseas, mainly in the core, instead of a core-periphery model. The whole model was regulated by a series of institutions which helped to spread this model: GATT and NATO, for instance.

[5] The term 'geopolitics' is used here in the classical sense (O'Sullivan 1986, Parker 1985).

But above all the purely economic characteristics, the vital element in allowing the US to have a dominant presence within the world economy was the threat of a military confrontation with the Soviet Union. The duality between US and Soviet Union created a new model, where the world map was no longer a vacuum waiting to be filled by a small number of powerful states, as in the second period of the model chosen. In fact, time has proved that the United States was by far the more important world power, if not the only one. Agnew and Corbridge (quoting Nijman) suggest in this sense that the indirect conflicts between both superpowers took place in the vicinity of the Soviet Union (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, p. 43)[6].

In this search for the most recent and significant historical roots of Turkey's present pivotal role, this period comes to be vital for a comprehensive understanding. The Cold War world order is the most important factor influencing Turkey's geopolitical importance nowadays, and so it will be more deeply reviewed, as the direct precedent of the present situation. The early post-war period had an enormous importance due both to its uncertainties and to the fact that it was the moment when the ruling system for the region was established for the next decades.

After the end of the World War II, the leading Great Power in the Middle East were the USSR and Britain. Even before the end of the war the USSR began an attempt to gain greater control over Turkey. The old issue of the Straits together with Soviet claims to Kars and Ardahan -in Eastern Turkey- were the main reasons for conflict, as far as Turkey was concerned. Turkey and a weakened Britain turned their eyes to the United States to persuade the Soviet Union to desist. Although the United States was still not wholly convinced that a major American interest were at stake in the region. Soviet's attitude in Eastern Europe finally awakened the US to Turkish strategic importance as a way of stopping Soviet expansionism. The establishment of the Truman doctrine meant the definitive shift of Turkey to the west, and a decisive American intervention in the region in relation with Turkey and Iran. Turkey was since that moment one of the most important American allies in the region. It consisted on providing Turkey and Greece financial and military assistance to forestall communist influence in the area. The importance of the Truman Doctrine (Kuniholm 1980, p. 434-439) cannot be underestimated when dealing with Turkey's geopolitics. This first application of containment (1947) was a first step in a series of measures which meant a deeper involvement of the region in the emerging new world order (Boyle 1993). Other landmarks in this period were Turkey's membership of NATO (1952), membership of the Balkan Pact (1954), the creation of the Baghdad Pact (1955) and the location of US Jupiter missiles in Turkish soil. In this

[6] However, this fact can be related to the different nature of these countries' power, being the Soviet Union a more continetal one.

political framework, Turkey was getting also more and more involved in the new order from an economic point of view, thanks to her increasing trade with the European states. Statism was losing its importance, giving way to an increase of the private sector.

However, within this new established order, there was a clear evolution not following the general bi-polar tendency. Turkey, after turning her eyes to the United States in the early postwar, starting improving the relations with the Soviet Union. First, there was a change in Soviet's attitude towards Turkey. After the failure to dominate the Northern Tier (1945-47), the Soviet Union needed to change her approach. Failing also some attempts of overthrowing Turkish and Iranian government by communist groups supported by the Soviet Union, it launched in 1953 a new policy towards the establishment of good relations with these governments. In 1953 the territorial demands made on Turkey were withdrawn, and a request for a revision of the Straits regime was dropped. This policy was slow to offer results, but in the 1960s it began to achieve better relations with Turkey and Iran. A trade agreement was signed with Turkey in 1965, together with economic aid. Relations were getting closer, with several cultural and technological agreements made.

An important event reinforced this tendency. The Cyprus crisis produced an enormous disillusionment with the United States. The development of the conflict was quite clarifying of American position towards Turkey. Cyprus independence, reached in 1960 after negotiations amongst Turkey, Greece and Britain could not be successfully completed because of the conflict between the Greek population and the Turkish minority -18% of total population of the island-. A first Turkish attempt to occupy the island was disapproved by Lyndon Johnson, then president of the United States. Americans make clear that if the invasion 'brought the Soviet Union into the crisis, Washington would reconsider its NATO obligations to protect Turkey' (Cleveland 1994, p. 270). The Turkish invasion was then cancelled,. But after a new escalation of the conflict, Turkey occupied (1974) 37% of the island, opening a deep gap between the US and Turkey. The former suspended all military aid to Turkey, and she reacted closing several US bases in her territory. From 1979 the relations became warmer again, but in the meantime there had been first a Turkish diplomatic approach to other countries, amongst them the Soviet Union. Ecevit, then prime minister, said in 1977 that the Soviet Union was no longer a threat for Turkey (Yapp 1991), and permitted the Soviets an easy use of the Straits. Second, an almost definitive breaking with Greece, another member of NATO. And third, this conflict awakened Ankara to the dangers of a single ally. During this period Turkey, without ceasing to look to the United States for military and financial assistance, increased her options. After signing an association agreement with the European Community in 1963, in subsequent years Turkey worked towards eventual membership. And, what is more

important, more of half her trade was conducted with this institution. Even the Arab countries began to be seen as potential allies, especially after the wave of solidarity awaken amongst Turkish population against Israeli attacks.

This moment is especially significant for a better understanding of Turkey's present central role. After the slow increase of Turkey's geopolitical importance in the world order, this seems to be the first time when it is possible to appreciate a clear and conscious option of the Turkish leaders for a central role as a way of taking advantage of the country's pivotal position. From that moment and until the end of the cold war, although keeping a clear pro-western attitude, Turkey has sought a more balanced eternal policy, taking into account her privileged position in the so called 'cold war order'.

CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS TURKISH PIVOTAL ROLE.

The importance of the history cannot be underestimated when dealing with geopolitics; the complexity of both the elements and the factors which condition geopolitics makes it necessary to have a clear idea of the historical precedents; and even more when this variety comes together with the complexity of Turkey's case-study; history has had an enormous influence in the circumstances creating the present Turkish state. Ottoman Empire's mixture of nations, ethnic groups, cultural backgrounds and peoples is something still possible to find -to a certain extent- inside the Turkish Republic, as a reflection of the print that history has left. But not only as an internal feature of this peculiar state; instead, this mixture has got an enormous influence in the external order, in the foreign policies of which it is at the same time a consequence. Therefore, present pivotal role is something deeply rooted in the history of the area. It seems to developed from the last century, it is not at all a new creation, but an end-product of the historical evolution.

Slowly, step by step, this historical evolution has been creating the conditions for the present situation. Turkey's perceptions have been obviously highly influenced by the historical experience. In fact, the rewriting of history after Atatürk's victory confirms the importance always conferred to its perception by Turkish dominant class from the very foundation of the Republic. Apart from internal or external perceptions, in a general assessment of the historical evolution of Turkish role in the international stage, it appears obvious that Turkey's role becomes more and more important along the lapse of time reviewed. From the beginning, with an important geopolitical role -but a very passive one- due to the strategic position of the Straits, to the end of the Cold War; at the end of this final period Turkey is to a great extent a dominant regional power with a strategic value

for several different blocs; and this strategic value has to be accepted from several points of view: cultural, political, ethnic, military... Both national and international circumstances came together to bring about Turkey's importance from a geopolitical point of view. Before this century's events, Turkey's (Ottoman Empire's) role was a different one as a superpower, both global and local ones. Role based more on European fears and manoeuvres than in actual military, diplomatic or political capacities to be a major actor in the international order.

Particularities of Turkey as a case-study immediately arise when trying to fit it in the pre-established models. It becomes almost impossible to make it coincide with the periodization given its quite peculiar evolution. But even in the world order arising from the end of the Cold War, it is not possible to find a clear position for Turkey when looking at the models/possible scenarios established by existing literature (see Chapter 2). This means, when referring to the historical models, that on the one hand there is a peculiarity of the case-study chosen for this piece of research as one of its central features; on the other hand it means that these models -in this case the chosen one- are based in either different or imprecise -if not wrong- premises (Eurocentrism, lack of importance of the Ottoman Empire...).

Some more precise criticisms arise from the use of Agnew and Corbridge's model. The first period (1815-75) is to be considered as too Europe-based, too Euro-centric on its conception of world order: "is one of a European territorial balance of power in which Britain came to command" (p. 19). Ottoman peculiar position, both central and peripheral to this world order from a strategic point of view, fits difficulty into this conception. What becomes even more obvious when trying to find this empire's place in the economic world order. About the second period, internal evolution is so complex as to make unsuccessful any attempt to comprehend this local case-study from a global perspective. Atatürk's foundation of the new Turkish Republic means the beginning of a completely new era for Turkey, with a certain degree of independence respect of the international context. Finally, about the third period, it is probably the most accurate one when relating both the national and the world orders. Turkey seems to fit this periodization. The only criticism is the fact that Agnew and Corbridge establish only one phase from 1945 until 1990. Perhaps Cox (1987) is right when he accepts a new period from 1965. The Cold War geopolitical order was under threat from the 1970s, not only at the global level; an example could be Turkey's spacing out from the United States after Cyprus, coming closer to the European Community. Apart from that, Soviet system's collapse is only one in a set of major changes in the world.

About the historical origins -and hence nature- of Turkey's role, this brief historical overview seems to confirm that Turkey's present pivotal role can be linked, first of all, to the one developed internally by the central administration of the Ottoman Empire; the fact that the collapse of this empire produced the emergence of several 'new' states surrounding its former heart made it become the centre of a new regional system. Centre does not mean ideological leader in this case, given these states' reactions against the state which inherited the heart of the Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand, there is a more international[7] dimension, and it is possible to conclude that in this scale Turkey's pivotal role is, at least partially, a consequence of three sets of circumstances:

a) The former international relations of the Ottoman Empire, partially continued by the Turkish Republic after the short interval of the war of independence. Despite Turkey's efforts to break with the Ottoman heritage, some of the relations kept by that empire were to condition her diplomatic development, in both positive and negative ways.

b) The initial struggle for survival of the Turkish Republic. This struggle created a series of perceptions still in use nowadays, probably as a product of the historical need for survival. In these sense can be quoted the importance of history as a justification of the state and its mission in the area, despite the breaking with the Ottoman tradition. The shift to the west is also a product of a certain set of circumstances which were threatening the Republic's territorial integrity; amongst them, Soviet threat has to be considered as the most significant and influential one.

c) The new relations created by the diplomacy of the new state, immediately after the creation of the Republic; already mentioned, these relations were especially difficult with the former Ottoman provinces, due to the negative connotations of the term Turk. But the search for a balance based on peace with the neighbouring states influenced a slow change in these negative attitudes. However, Turkey's insertion in the international community, in the wide framework of world order was a slow but inexorable process on its way after the creation of the Republic.

Concluding this part, some questions arise from the historical review of Turkey's geopolitical role. First of all, there is the doubt whether Turkey has had a role as a mere buffer used by the external powers in their own interest. And, in case it were, whether this development allowed

[7] The term 'international' is used here taking into account that during the Ottoman period, most of Turkey's present neighbouring states was under this common administration, and so these nations could not be considered as separate states at that time.

Turkey to become a sort of regional superpower, thanks to a clever use of this position and a gradual realization of its importance and centrality. It is also necessary to assess this role's importance both nowadays and historically, and to define its impact and extension -regional or global-.

Other problems arise when looking at the general framework used for this analysis. To what extent can anything be deduced out of this comparison between these global models and the more local Turkish case-study?. It is necessary to clarify the fact that the findings are limited by an essential starting doubt: is Turkey really important in the world concert?. It is indeed, without any doubt. This has been clarified in the theoretical part. But apart from the limits, some positive findings have to be pointed out. Sometimes it seems to be simply a buffer state; and perhaps it was like that under the Ottoman Empire and partially during the Cold War, but Turkey knew how to take advantage of this situation to become a real power, managing her influence.

The end of the Cold War, although not unexpected by many analysts, came in a traumatic and quick way. This made the countries involved in the frontline to be unaware of the consequences that a hypothetical end like the actual one could have for their position in both the world and the regional orders.

This relation, this alliance between Turkey and NATO has always been operating in a double direction: Turkey co-operated with NATO and NATO protected Turkey -during the Cold-War period-. But NATO is considered as extremely important for Turkey for many reasons. First of all, there is the fact that it is the only Western forum -significant one- where Turkey has obtained full membership in conditions of equality with the remaining partners. Belonging to Western forums has always been an obsession for the Turkish Republic since its foundation, and it explains the importance that Turkish decision-makers place in preserving the quality this privileged relationship. Second, the importance of NATO in the global context, membership has meant to have a heardable voice in the international community as a way of breaking many perceptions about Turkey's 'otherness', about its belonging to the West. And of course, strategic considerations cannot be left aside, even after the end of the Cold War, if the presence of Russia is taken into account. Russia's traditional territorial ambitions are still highly taken into consideration by Turkey's decision-makers. Fears of further territorial claims based on past expansionism are still powerful when assessing NATO's importance. But not least, the presence of an unstable neighbouring Middle East has meant for Turkey that NATO is a guarantee against the instability -both political and economic- that characterises this region.

4.- TURKEY'S GENERAL RELATIONS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST

Turkish presence in the Middle East has been particularly rejected by the counties of the region since the creation of the Republic in 1923. The presence of the former dominion of the Ottoman Empire over the countries of the area is still in the base of the animosity with the Arab world -particularly Syria and Irak. This Ottoman factor is in fact a limiting one for the real possibilities that Turkey has got of exerting a certain influence in the region. This historical confrontation has left as a heritage a series of unsettled conflicts between both parties which continue making their relations more and more complex. Turkey's relations with Iran have been conditioned by several different events recently, quite different of the problems affecting Turkey's relations with the Arab world.

The fact that both parties share the same religion has not been a unifying element. On the contrary, Turkish secularism and its distancing from any type of pan-Islamic movement has created a new set of conflicts (Aykan 1987). Turkish alignment with the West has been perceived by its Middle East neighbours as a challenge to the region's identity and interests.

The differences between Turkey and the Arab states of the region reveal certain interesting aspects of the wider problems which are characteristic to this relation (Bozer 1990). They reflect not only both the relations and dynamics of the region, but aslo the main lines of Turkish foreign policy regarding the surrounding Islamic world, and not less important, Turkey's own internal peculiarities.

A summary of the main field of conflict between Turkey and the Arab/Persian world would imply the analysis of a complexity of cultural, historic and social factors, but there are some elements which can help to simplify this complexity. First of all, the fact -already mentioned- that the Ottoman Empire has a long history of dominion in the region. The Turks, as the main Ottoma administrators have been perceived by both Arabs and Persians as an invader element, associated usually with some of the Western powers. From its independence, Turkey has no longer been threatened by Western Europe -with the exception of the World War II-, what makes a difference with the rest of the countries of the region. The region's anti-Western feelings are deeply rooted and are not at all shared by Turkey. Turkey's alligment with the West, as it has already been analysed, has been to a great extent due to the defensive constraints dictated by the Russian/Soviet threat. The

creation of Israel can be included in this environment of anti- or pro-Western feelings, with no effect in Turkey's perception of the regional threats (Fuller and Lesser 1995).

While the Arab world, despite its internal differences, has historically shown a certain tendency to alliances and regional unions -usually a completely failure-, the lack of a common culture or ehtnic identity has kept Turkey away of this dynamics, and has been perceived as different when not as simply an enemy (Bishku 1992).

Turkish approach towards the Arab world has therefore been extremely distant until the sixties. Turkey's viewpoint when explaining this option has been based in several reasons. First, the already mentioned weight of the Ottoman legacy is not only significant for the Arab side, but it has also conditioned Turkey's approach to its relations in the region. Turkey has considered these states as 'rebel' against the Ottoman Empire, what is highly paradoxical given the new republic's denial of its Ottoman past. But even the most advanced kemalists consider these countries as enemies, given their religious orientation, radically opposite to Turkish new direction after 1923. The complexity of Turkish approach to the Arab/Muslim world is also conditioned by some stereotypes which can be understood in line with Turkey's need of a break-up with this region in order to reassert its European identity (Bishku 1992).

But without underestimating neither the negative elements nor the obstacles to the relation, Turkey's official policy toward the Arab world begun to change its direction in the seventies. The reasons of this change are complex (Yapp 1991), but Turkish intervention in Cyprus had a decisive weight. It had as a result, first, a certain degree of disappointment from the Turkish side regarding the West in general and the US in particular (Sander 1990). But not less important was the support that Athens obtained in the international organisations from the Arab countries. The need of a new approach towards these states would mean for Turkey a possibility of a shift in their pro-Greek stand. The oil crises, too, obligued to Turkey to adopt a different stand regarding the Arab countries.

Regardless of the negative elements always present in this relation, it seems evident that from the seventies the Middle East is a significant economic partner for Turkey, and it is this economic power what will condition the relation in the future. Instability and lack of continuity makes the establishment of economic relations extremely difficult. Trade models are often distorted by official policies rather than being driven by market forces, what makes trade a high risk activity in the region.

Regarding the economic issues, one of the main reasons of this still timid reorientation of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East has been the certainty that its option for the alliance with both Europe and the US -hence with NATO- has meant the loss of enormous economic opportunities in the Arab world, besides the loss of the chance for extending its influence to the newly created Central Asian republics. In order to be more precise, it is necessary to expose the main lines of Turkey's foreign policy towards some of the countries of the region (Fuller 1993, p. 53).

TURKEY AND SYRIA

When assessing the general relations between Syria and Turkey, it is not possible to avoid the presence of several frictional elements, with different nature and origins: political, historic, strategic... A historical problem that has limited the improvement of the relations between theses two countires has been the confrontation produced by the question of Iskenderum. This province was given to Turkey through an agreement with France and as a result of a plebiscite in 1939. But despite this, Syria still claims its sovereignty over this province, in fact of majoritarian Arab ethnic composition- with the support of other Arab countries against the Turkish stand. Although the confrontation has been limited for the moment to the diplomatic field, it is a fact that it poses a serious obstacle to a more fulid relation.

Secondly, the main problem at the moment in their relations can be considered the issue of Syrian support to the terrorist movements as a part of its anti-Western stand. The support given to certain terrorist organisations openly hostile to Ankara, ASALA and PKK amongst them. This, together with the water issue, has been a permanent element of tension between the parties (Bolukbasi 1993).

It is a fact that given the existing problems an improvement in the relatinons does not seem to be foreseable in the next future. It is also true that the possibility of a violent confrontation is almost impossible under the present conditions given Turkish superiority. It has never been the system chosen in the past to solve the disputes between these two countries. Turkey, ready to assume the dominant role in the region, could adopt a less tolerant attitude towards terrorist activities, what would be a further problem.

TURKEY AND IRAQ

The neutrality that Turkey chose during the conflict Iran-Iraq brought undeniable economic benefits, and above all implied a transformation of its foreign trade patterns in the Middle East, five-fold during the period 1982-1987 (SIS 1994). But the war between Iran and Iraq brought about a series of territorial and ethnic problems in relations to Mosul and the Kurdish question. The achievement of a higher degree of autonomy by North Iraqui Kurds, as a consequence of the weakening of the state had as a negative result for Turkey the increase of the anti-Turkish activities -PKK was considerably strengthened in that period thanks to the Iranian support-.

The question of Mosul is in many ways similar to the problem of Iskenderum due to its historical and territorial implications. This region, given to Iraq in 1926 under intense British pressure, has meant a factor of confrontation, just at a diplomatic level for the moment. Turkish claims to this territory are not only based in the old Ottoman control of the region, but also in the presence of some 500,000 inhabitants of Turkmen ethnic origin who account for 2-3% of the total population of Iraq (Fuller 1993). The presence of important oil resources in the region, together with its oil pipelines -continuos target of the anti-Turkish terrorist groups- is a further complication that increases Turkish pressures for intervention.

The future of these relations will be to a great extent conditioned by a series of issues that mean an obstacle to the possible improvement: Kurdish issue, Mosul, oil resources, control of waters, etc.

TURKEY AND IRAN

Some of the problems and main differences between Turkey and Iran are at the moment related to increasing competition over the newly opened areas of Central Asia. The regime of the Shah meant, despite historical differences, a great improvement of their relations due to this regime's pro-Western orientation. But the Iranian revolution had an enormous impact in these relations, significantly as a consequence of Irani efforts to export its Islamic revolution. The opposition that ever since has marked these relations has been based in most cases on purely ideological issues. Mustafa Kemal has been considered in Iran as an enemy of Islam (Bolukbasi 1989). Soviet support to Iran was perceived by Turkey as a direct threat. But other issues complicate even further the situation: common animosity against Iraq, distribution of oil, etc.

Some nts seem to point towards an improvement of the situation. The creation of ECO (Economic Cooperation Organisation) and the new approach adopted by Erbakan's government are clear examples. But it is also true that the immediate future of these relations can not be seen with optimism given the differences created by the Kurdish issue, Islamic fundamentalism, competition over a leading role in the region and the question of Azerbaijan.

TURKEY BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS

Turkish approach to Israel has been historically characterised by its ambiguity. Its acceptance of the state of Israel happened in 1949 -the first muslim country in doing so- and it meant a break-up with the Muslim world, still a reason for controversy both in the region and in the domestic stage. It was justified as a purely pragmatic measure, end-product of common strategic concerns and important economic links.

History also proved its weight in this approach given the Ottoman tradition of religious tolerance, particularly towards the Jewish minorities, what has conditioned the establishment of overall good relations. Political factors, such as the importance that Israel has acquired for the US and its efforts against radical Muslim groups have been highly significant. An example of these good relations has been the signing of the agreement for defence matters in 1996, ratified even by the fundamentalist government of Erbakan.

The contradiction of Turkish position comes obviously from its undeniable links with the Muslim world (Aykan 1993). Although the Turkish state and the succesive governments have given a very limited importance to the concepts related to the Islamic solidarity -until the arrival in power of Erbakan-, the pro-Islamic feelings amongst the Turkish population is significantly strong as to have a certain influence in Turkish foreign policy.

The possibility for Turkey to have a voice in the Arab-Israeli conflict through the so-called 'peace pipeline' is, finally, extremely reduced.

These relations limit considerably the extent of Turkey's influence in the region, although they offer a certain framework for improvement and a hope for a future as a dominant power, hardly as a leader.

5.- TURKEY AND THE US AFTER THE GULF WAR: TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW FRAMEWORK OF RELATIONS

The fact that an identification between the US and NATO when coming to their interests in the Middle East is substantially wrong does not prevent a series of common places in them. These common places make the analysis of Turkey's relations with the US quite significant when trying to analyse which the new position of both Turkey and the Atlantic Alliance will be after the recent changes in the region.

'Despite certain continuities in Turkey's perspective of the state of its alliance with the US in the new era, the alliance between the two countries in moving in new directions filled with unprecedent challenges' (AYKAN, M.B. 1996, p. 344). It is actually significant to observe how the two countries have understood the new situations in a similar way, from a similar point of view. but they have adopted radically different approaches to the challenges they pose. Two main events are central to these changes. First of all, the disappearance of the Soviet Union, with all the influence that it had in the Middle East. And not less important, the Gulf crisis (1990-91) and its consequences.

Both events had a considerable impact on Turkey's perception of its relation with the US, till that moment quite conditioned by the Soviet threat and by the American cautious approach to the region. A good example in this sense is DECA (Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement), signed in March 1980. DECA was designed between Turkey and the US in order to face two different crises that occured in 1979. First, the revolution in Iran, a new challenge to Western interests in the region. And second, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a confirmation of the fears of Soviet expansionism. Both crises could, according to Turkey and the US, endanger stability not only in the region but also in the whole world. The reaction, DECA, consisted on a set of measures designed in order to reinforce the position of the West in the area through a strengthening of Turkey. In the American side, it implied the supply to Turkey of defense equipement and military training, besides economic and advisory services in order to collaborate with the Turkish government in its struggle for the stabilisation of the economy. In the Turkish side, it implied the use of the military instalations, although only for specifically designed NATO missions. However, other bilateral aggements allowed the possibility of certain non-NATO uses of these instalations.

In 1985, when the first part of the agreement expired, it was renewed with a significant increase of the American funding. In 1988, Turkey accepted the renewal as something necessary

from an economic point of view, but at that time the decline of the Soviet threat begun to be obvious, as they were the growing differences between Turkey and the US. From 1992, when the agreement had to be renewed again., it started being renegotiated, renewing only yearly automaticly ever since. The situation had dramatically changed. The absence of the Soviet Union was obvously the most important amongst the new features, but other changes were also significant. Iran was already a consolidated challenger to regional stability, and Iraq had become the main challenger in the region against Western interests. Besides this, the US were drastically cutting their military expenditure, and even more important, they were reducing their military presence both in the world and in the region.

According to Aykan (1996), the reduction of US military support to Turkey -by 1994 eight out of twelve NATO bases in Turkey had been closed- was partially -and only partially- linked to the main problems of Turkey's foreign policy: the Cyrpus conflict, particularly since 1974, and the Kurdish issue, which keep Turkish balance in the international stage in a quite delicate position.

The operations Provide Comfort 1 and 2 fall outside NATO's scope, and hence can be hardly related directly to it. One of the reasons for Turkey's support to the West during the Gulf War was actually the need for stopping the Iraquis from attacking their own Kurdish populations in the Northern area of the country, strategy that was pushing them into Turkey with the negative consequencies it had for its own Kurdish problem.

In summary, it can be said that all these events have changed Turkey's perception of its role in the security of the Middle East. Turkey passes from being a flank member ot NATO to becoming a frontline country, much more exposed to internal factors of instability in the region. Such are the cases of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the economic and military imbalances, several ethnic conflicts and, as one of the main problems, the rise of terrorist activities. The end of the Cold War brought these factors to the forefront. There are threats also from outside the region, not less significant: the unclear position -quite unstable- of the Russian Federation, the conflicts in the Caucasus, etc., all them end-product of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. According to Aykan (1996, p. 347), 'all this has made support of the united States for Turkey even more important than during the Cold War era', what is by all means relevant to Turkey's role in NATO when analysing the Middle East. Turkey is hence convinced of the importance of its strategic role despite the end of the Cold War. But the post-Cold War cooperation between Turkey and the United States will by no means imply a return to the already described period of dependence on the United States (fifties-sixties).

The United States wanted with this set of policies, according to Aykan, to obtain a certain neutrality, product of balancing the requirements of Turkey's NATO alliance with the need for good neighbourly relations, usually so delicate. In this sense, Turkey's approach included a strict limitation for the role of the Western military help and presence in the region. This has to be achieved through just a presence in cases of special request from the regional states, who would be actually in charge of the regional security. This would leave both NATO and the US out of the region in pure theory, but it offers other possibilities of intervention. First, through the control of the states in charge of the regional security and the military cooperation with them; and second, through Turkey's mediation, considered as a part of the Middle East, although with the already mentioned limited influence.

THE KURDISH ISSUE

The Kurdish issue deserves a special mention since it is the main obstacle to a normalization of Turkey's relations with its neighbours and a not less significant problem for Turkey's foreign policy regarding the Western powers in general. It has got the potentiality to undermine Turkey-US relations, basically because their different understanding of the problem. Once the Cold War was over, the two countries seemed to agree that terrorism by the PKK was both destabilising for the region and, of course, highly dangerous for Turkey as a threat to its national integrity. But on the other hand both have got radically different cultural and political traditions. This was also obvious during the Cold War period, but it was hidden by the strategic needs of that era. Now instead, these differences have come to the forefront with the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, Turkey renounced to a significant part of its strategic, economic and political independence in exchange for US protection, while the US did not put a special emphasis on the human rights issue, worried as they were with the Soviet threat.

Once the Cold War was over, both countries have agreed that the Kurdish terrorism is a threat to both regional stability and Turkey's internal security. But there was a significant disagreement in the understanding of the problem The Turks have considered the question as a simply terrorist one, while the United States wanted a non-military solution. This implies the acceptance of the creation of a certain degree of autonomy for the Kurds. This idea is, of course, perceived by Turkey as a threat to its 'holy' territorial integrity. Regarding the American proposal of democratic reforms, Turkish leaders agreed that they should be extremely limited given both the peculiarities of Turkey's democracy and the delicate nature of its situation. This, together with the Cyprus issue, has been in the root of an increasing American pressure, realised though the

suspension of part of the military aid to Turkey. Measure that has been highly negative for Turkey's fight against PKK terrorism.

6.- THE SOUTH EAST ANATOLIAN PROJECT (GAP)

'...God has been generous to the Middle East in this century with his blessing of oil and gas, but not so much with water...' (Tashan 1989, p.151). This scarce resource, water, is gaining importance in the Middle East as a source of conflicts even as oil has become secondary in this respect (Starr 1991, Sironneau 1993 and Savage 1991). Turkey's South-eastern Anatolia Project provides a good example of such conflicts, since it involves reshaping of the balance of power amongst the states in the region, mainly due to an increase in Turkey's control over this resource. In order to diffuse the potential conflicts, Turkey has proposed a compromise solution, offering to send water to the Arab countries of the region through the so-called "peace pipeline", as a form of compensating for the effects of the South-eastern Anatolia Project. The proposal has been poorly received, mainly because it could further strengthen Turkey's role in the area, but also because of the vulnerability of the pipelines in any future conflict with Israel. This project can be considered as extremely clarifying of Turkey’s possibilities and problems in the region, what obviously is of interest for its importance as a member of NATO.

THE GENESIS OF A PROBLEM: THE SOUTH-EASTERN ANATOLIA PROJECT

The geographical situation of most of the water resources of the region has, historically, given Turkey a dominant influence over this resource (table 1). The GAP, South-eastern Anatolia Project (*Güneydogu Anadolu Projesi*) will enable it to realise this potential. In fact, a major development project for the area has been a significant objective of the Turkish government since Atatürk's creation of the Republic. From the 30's, it became clear that water would be the key to development of the region. Initially, there seemed little possibility of the project being realised given the limitation of Turkish technological and economic capacity. The first economic feasibility studies -by the State Water Works (DSI)- which were concerned with power generation and agriculture, were not undertaken until 1963 but no funds were allocated to the project. Between 1977 and 1986 another feasibility study took place, and this has provided the framework for the present project. At first, despite the social and economic needs of the region, it was conceived of simply as a way of securing water supplies, power generation and improved irrigation. But from 1989, when the first two dams were being built, the early aims of the project were expanded so as to take into account the social, economic and political problems of the region. It has now been recast as a comprehensive

regional development project, including industrialisation schemes, creation of new economic axes and new communications network, and social development programmes.

Funding has been troublesome throughout because, contrary to expectations, the World Bank and the United States, decided not to co-operate, in view of the political sensitivity of the project. Turkey therefore decided to finance the GAP programme from its own resources. Despite these problems, GAP has become a major axis of both the Turkish economy and of domestic and international politics. It is now the largest construction project in the Mediterranean basin (Nasrallah 1990). Basically, it consists of controlling the waters of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates with three main objectives: the generation of hydroelectric energy (Allan 1989), providing water supply for human consumption and expansion of irrigation. It has also belatedly been ascribed regional development objectives. The project will mean the construction by 2030 of 21 dams, and 19 power generation plants (producing 27 billion kWh/year) and the irrigation of 1.7 million hectares of land (one third of the total irrigated land in the country) (Kamran 1989). To date, only two dams have been built, with another sixteen feasibility studies having been completed, and three dams still in the planning phases. It will have diverse consequences, not all of which will be positive, particularly in respect of the environment and agriculture (Del Río 1993).

One of the initial objectives of the GAP was to restore the agricultural production and productivity of the once "Fertile Crescent". However, while several positive changes in output are anticipated in south-east Anatolia, it has also become evident that the process of environmental change in the area is almost impossible to reverse. Intensification of forestry, agricultural uses and overgrazing had led from the classical times, and especially from the Middle Ages (11th century) to a gradual transformation in the natural environment of the area, which has been denuded of its former woodland coverage. This, together with the cumulative effects of the droughts of the 18th and 19th centuries has produced the present situation (Brice 1978). The GAP signifies a further step in this negative process of change. Irrigation is already causing water pollution due to the excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers; and it is also producing a fall in the water table, even if, on the positive side, it is helping to control the interannual variability in river flows.

The irrigation techniques employed are also affecting the environment. 70 per cent of the irrigation canals will use gravity surface techniques, whilst the other 30 per cent will use pressurised drip or sprinkler systems. While the gravity system is lower cost, it consumes far more water than the remaining systems; drip, for example, is up to 50 per cent more efficient in the use of water. More generally, if the irrigation system is not well managed, it could result in damagingly high

levels of salt deposits in the soils (Yamanlar 1962). Excessive exploitation of water resources by the countries involved is also leading to the drying out of certain humid areas downstream, such as the formerly fertile Shat-al-Arab.

Levels of atmospheric humidity are expected to triple in the GAP region in the next 25 years, as a result of evaporation once the irrigation canals and reservoirs have been filled. 14,432 hectares of new water surface have already been created. The effect this will have on the micro-climate can be only guessed at and it will not be necessarily a negative change. The rise in the water levels (in both the atmosphere and the soils), together with the existence of extensive new green areas, will produce a less harsh climate. A temperature fall of 2-3ºC is expected to be one of the short term consequences. On the positive side, this implies lower evapotranspiration to the benefit of crop production. But on the negative side, the temperature and humidity changes will affect more than 50 endemic fauna and flora species, and the increased humidity will facilitate the possibility of disease transmission (interview with Mr. Harum Tanrivermis, April 1995). Last, but not least, the project has negative consequences for the extremely rich archaeological settlements of the area, where over 200 historic sites have already been flooded (Financial Times 1992).

There also are and will be important changes in agriculture. The rapid transition from extensive livestock farming to irrigated agriculture is causing difficulties of adaptation for the population of the region employed in agriculture, accounting for 80 per cent of the 5.2 million inhabitants (1985 census, before the first results of the project were obtained). Firstly, new techniques and crops will mean important modifications to agricultural production. The choice of new crops, appropriate to the physical conditions, has proved to be one of the main difficulties facing the project (Beeley 1985).

Surpluses will also become a significant issue for the Turkish government as output is predicted to increase by 50 per cent in the case of wheat and 400 per cent for cotton by the year 2005. This is particularly important given that agriculture has already proven to be problematic in the negotiation of a full customs union with the European Union. However, the main agricultural challenge for the GAP is land reform. There is a clear need for intervention to help the landless peoples of the region (Mülayim 1992), who are mainly Kurds, in order to avoid further internal conflicts. Although the government has expressed an interest in this issue, it seems likely that the dictates of productivity will prevail over equity.

THE GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSION

The GAP has external and internal geopolitical dimensions. Relationships with the Kurdish minority are the primary internal dimension. The PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) has sustained a civil war during the last twelve years, during which, although estimates vary, more than 10,000 people have been killed. The roots of the conflict are complex but it is essentially an issue of contested territoriality, since the PKK is intent on creating, by violent means, to create a separate Kurdish state. This violence has been met by the deployment of the Turkish army and the security forces in the region. The area affected by GAP occupies a pivotal role in the territory where the PKK is challenging the sovereignty of the Turkish State.

Social and economic issues also have to be taken into account when analysing the reasons of the conflict. It is the official view of the Turkish government that appropriate management of the GAP could improve the material situation of the region's Kurdish population; and it could also support the economic development which is necessary to solve, at least partially, the conflict. Although the region's levels of development are well below the national mean, GAP could bring economic benefits to the agricultural population. Thus far, however, the conflict has created important new problems, such as mass migration to the urban centres of both the region and the more developed western areas of Turkey.

In terms of the external geopolitical dimension, Turkey's downstream neighbours are obviously concerned with the situation. Water has been used as a political weapon by Turkish governments. Above all there is a high level of dependence on Turkish water resources by Syria and Iraq. A decreased water supply in either the Tigris or the Euphrates would be damaging to the downstream states (Abu Daud 1990). This, together with the risk of pollution due to agricultural intensification, has strengthened the opposition of Syria and Iraq to the GAP. In order to diffuse such tensions, these two countries and Turkey established the Trilateral Technical Committee in 1980. Although Turkey initially recognised that Syria and Iraq had certain rights with respect of water, her position hardened during the negotiations. This was due, firstly, to her failure to become involved in Arab matters at a broader geopolitical level, and secondly, because of the lack of a clear legal framework for international water use.

The only agreement reached so far has been a bilateral one between Turkey and Syria (1987), committing the former to release 500 cubic metres per second at the border during the filling of the Atatürk dam. Once the dam is full, Damascus expects average flows of about 600-700 cubic

metres per second. Despite this agreement, technical experts expect the total flow at the Turkish-Syrian border to be about 300-400 cubic metres/second by the time the project is due to be completed in 2030. Iraq has objected to the low figure agreed.

In 1990, the commencement of the filling of the Atatürk dam caused the first serious water-crisis related to the GAP (Robins 1991). On the 12th of February 1990 the flow of water downstream was cut and Syria was receiving flows only from the rivers Gösku, Araban and Nizip, all of which lie south of the dam. Not surprisingly, this generated protests from all parts of the Arab world.

A first conclusion which can be deduced from this conflict is that it has clearly marked the end of Turkish timidity in relations with Middle Eastern countries, who have pointedly noted that Turkey has used the Technical Committee merely to explain details of the project rather than as genuine platform for negotiation. Turkey has maintained its initial position, and the river was closed without heeding Iraq's request, in December 1989, to reduce the duration of the closure. Turkey's inflexibility can be interpreted in several ways: the importance of the project for both the national economy and the dominant elite of engineers; the opportunity it seems to offer to alleviate "the Kurdish (PKK) problem" in South Eastern Anatolia; and as enhancing Turkey's reputation in both the regional and international arenas.

This issue being considered as *casus belli* by both Syria and Iraq, Turkey's present strength assures that war will not be used to resolve this problem. These countries' internal difficulties weaken them considerably, while they also both require transit rights across Turkey in order to reach some of their major oil markets, Turkey itself being one of these.

Despite its overall determination to proceed with the project on its own terms, Turkey has appeared to be more open to discussion with its Arab neighbours. One gesture has been the timing of the operation, with winter being chosen as the season when the need for irrigation is lowest. In addition, Syria has received some compensation, being provided with a larger flow than usual between 23 November 1989 and 13 January 1990, while water was also released from two dams further upstream (the Keban and Karakaya dams). This could mark the beginning of a new chapter in their foreign relations. However, it did not prevent the continuation of a campaign against the project in the period November 1989 to January 1990, relating not only to the consequences of the shut-off; but also to the demonstrable strength of Turkey.

In contrast to the highly regulated international maritime legislation, there is a lack of an international legal framework for rivers whose waters are shared by several countries. This failure of International Law to offer a clear guidelines is evident in the current conflict, as also are the environmental consequences. Lake Assad, for example, has been damaged by the lack of water (the level was three metres lower than usual during the shut-off). Agriculture as far as the Qadisiyah Dam at Hadithah has also been affected, with a clear threat of salinisation, environmental damage and reduced short-term water supply. And last but not least, the international relations amongst these states have been deteriorating.

THE TURKISH PROPOSAL: THE 'PEACE PIPELINE'

Turkey's response to these international challenges has been to offer piped water to the other countries from alternative sources, guaranteeing the supply of drinking water in the main cities (Robins 1991). Although considered as one of 'Özal's typically creative departures' (Fuller 1993, p.55), this offers enormous possibilities of developments in the regional balance of power. The project consists basically of piping water from two Turkish rivers (the Ceyhan and Seyhan) to the Arab countries to the south. These rivers had a number of features which made them suitable for such a project: their short courses from the mountains of central-eastern Anatolia to the Mediterranean sea between Mersin and Iskenderun means there is little pollution and the water quality is high; the mountainous origin of the rivers guarantees a regular supply, thanks to winter snow; these two rivers are not integral to any other important project (such as the GAP), and therefore represent under-utilised potential; and their use will not generate conflicts with neighbouring states, since they do not cross national boundaries.

These rivers supply about 39.17 million cubic metres of water per day. From this amount, Turkey's planned domestic needs will account for 23.4 million cubic metres (Tashan 1989); and Turkey is prepared to send some 6 million cubic metres per day of the remainder through these pipelines. This represents an enormous proposed transfer of water to the surrounding region, sometimes to quite distant places (table 2). It is proposed that the "Western Pipeline" should run across Syria and Jordan to Mecca, carrying three and a half million cubic metres of water daily. Its main objective is to supply drinking water to Damascus and Amman, which would receive 600,000 cubic metres per day each. It is proposed that Saudi Arabia would receive about 2.3 million cubic metres per day, but a more realistic figure is 1.5 million cubic metres/day. The so called "Gulf Pipeline" would carry about 600,000 cubic metres per day to Kuwait, and smaller quantities to other Gulf states.

This project does not involve insurmountable technical problems, and the US consultants Brown and Root estimate that it will be profitable to spend up to 21 billion dollars on the pipelines, assuming these have an estimated operating life of 50 years.

The so-called peace pipeline offers the possibility of new political developments in the area. The fact is that in another twenty years the problem of the imbalance between water resources and demographic growth could become literally a matter of life and death for some countries. The need for these countries to secure an agreement in relation to this pipeline, especially if Israel is included, could give it an important role in the wider regional peace process. This political use of the water could be a 'further stimulus to the Arab-Israeli reconciliation process' (Lesser 1993, p. 55). This search for a multilateral agreement is the reason it has been named the 'peace pipeline', although this should not disguise the fact that it also offers Turkey new strategic possibilities.

The main obstacles to the peace pipeline are political rather than economic. The balance of power in such a troubled region could easily be disturbed by the high level of dependence on Turkey (Tashan 1989). This and the possibility that Turkey will charge for the water -an issue as yet unresolved- has produced a negative reaction to the proposal. Many Arab states would prefer to depend on their own desalinisation plants which, although more expensive, do provide greater independence.

The present political situation does not inspire confidence that the project will be realised. A further worsening in the Kurdish conflict, including the occupation of North Iraq, has hardened Turkey's attitude to the water issue, especially towards Syria. There are also other obstacles to its realisation. Despite the polemics surrounding the project, it has still not advanced beyond the pre-feasibility studies stage. Moreover, the opportunities for implementing the peace pipeline are very limited and, if missed, will be difficult to recreate since Turkey will probably begin building dams on both rivers for its domestic purposes. This is a real possibility for Turkey's water needs are likely to rise, sharply given its high population growth rates. In addition, despite all the advantages, the pipeline only offers a partial solution to the water requirements of Turkey's neighbours: it only provides drinking water and it does not at all reach all the places in need of water. Last, but not least, it creates too much dependence on Turkey's water resources.

CONCLUSIONS: WATER AS A SOURCE OF CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The proposed 'peace pipeline' is unlikely to provide the solution to the regional water issue, mainly due to the lack of understanding amongst the countries of the region. First of all, some of the potential recipient countries do not trust Syria which will be crossed by the pipeline and therefore could exercise a high degree of control over the flow of water. Israel is also considered to pose a potential threat to the project due to the high vulnerability of the pipelines to military attack. The fragile peace agreement reached by Israelis and Palestinians may help to change the situation, buy it is too early to form a clear view on this matter.

There is also a complete lack of agreement (and even a lack of concrete proposals) in several matters relating to water in the region (Del Río 1994). This of course applies to the pipeline, particularly the amount of water to be distributed, the internal quotas, and whether the water will be given or sold to the recipients. An example of such disagreements has already been seen in the dispute over the water of the Tigris and the Euphrates when the Atatürk Dam was filled in 1990.

If both the GAP and the "peace pipeline" are realised (the former is already quite advanced), this will result inevitably in a new balance of power in the near Middle East, strengthening the Turkish position with respect to the neighbouring state. Dependence on water from Turkey would result in a new geopolitical configuration in the region (D'Armaille 1992), with Turkey emerging as a regional superpower capable of dominating the adjacent Arab states. Such a situation has started to become a reality thanks to Turkey's role in the Gulf War. Turkey is too strong and the other countries are too weak for the possibility of an equal balance of power between both parts to be considered.

What is becoming obvious in the Middle East is that future conflicts in the region could be caused by disagreements over the troublesome issue of water use as a political weapon (NAFF and MATSON 1985). Water as a source of conflict is nothing new to this territory. Robins states '...For countries outside the area the Middle East is important as the prime source of oil. Within the region the strategic resource is viewed rather differently. The problem of securing adequate supplies of water for personal consumption, irrigation and power generation is more pressing...' (Robins, P. 1991, p 87). The control of water seems to be back as the most important source of conflict in the delicate geopolitics of this territory.

7.- CONCLUSIONS: TRENDS AND PROSPECTS: FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR TURKEY AND NATO IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Turkish importance for the Atlantic Alliance seemed to have decreased after the end of the Cold War. And it actually did in many senses. First of all, the disappearance of the Soviet threat obviously affected Turkey, the most benefited country of those implied by the Truman Doctrine. But some other signs seem to point in a different direction. The collapse of the Soviet Union has meant for Turkey a direct access to competition for the recently opened Central Asian republics, what means challenging other states: Russia, Iran and Pakistan.

This apparent decrease of importance has been fairly arguable in the Middle East for several reasons. The Kurdish issue, not only in turkey's territory but also in North Iraq has attracted international attention and Turkey is obviously in an excellent position to have a significant role in it. The Gulf War has left Turkey in a position of military dominance in the region, what has to be added to its strategic importance given Iraquis hostile attitude to both the Western powers and its Middle Eastern neighbours. And there is finally the growing importance of Iran as an enemy, as a challenger to the West. Turkey's geographical position leaves it in the forefront of all these areas of regional friction.

It is true that these changes have brought about further implications. Frist of all, a clear comfrontation with American interests. The clash has come about how to understand the region and how to solve its problems. And not less important, the changes have also implied Turkey's more clear option for its own policies regardless of American interests. Turkey's own interests are to be considered as the main element in the progressive widening of this gap respect of the Western -therefore: NATO's- interests.

From this analysis it appears very clearly that, despite Turkey's privileged position, it will have a very limited influence in the region in the foreseable future. Turkey can only try to be a dominant power, hardly a real leader in the region because of the exposed factors. And so has to understand NATO Turkey's role in the region. It can be no more than an advance position for the Western interests in the Middle East, never a fully integral part of it. And even this position has to be handled with extreme caution. Turkey's new approaches to both the region and its partnerships with the West have meant that this country no longer seems to be the unconditional ally that it used to be.

Although the facts point to a maintenance of this partnership, Turkey's growing awareness of its role in the region as a pivotal state and of its possibilities of independence from the Western powers is creating a series of obstacles to a smooth future partnership Turkey-Nato not only in the Middle East, but in general. In this sense it is worth to mention as an external example of the general deterioration of this relationship Turkey's veto on NATO enlargement. The reason why this has to be mentioned is basically because it might undermine -if it did not do so already- Turkey's importance for NATO -or NATO's opinion on Turkey's feasibility as an unconditional ally-. And this is to affect Turkey's weight in the area regarding NATO's interests. This attitude, although not applied, had several negative impacts on Turkey's position within NATO, not only regarding the Middle East:

+ It has meant the establishment of a precedent of linking political issues with NATO membership, being NATO a -theoretically- military/strategic organisation.

+ The evidence that, after threatening with this veto, Turkey is no longer the unconditional ally of the Western powers has not helped Turkey's position in NATO. The fact that it has happened under a government characterised by Islamic views does reinforce this idea. All this can be said despite the fact that it does not seem to be any connection between both facts.

+ Besides everything else, this confrontation over the veto has brought about the future problematique of the operationalisation of an enlarged NATO. Clashes between Turkey and the Eastern European countries can happen over issues not strictly strategic, more linked to their competition to obtain, and this for sure will affect negatively Turkish role in the Middle East from a Western viewpoint.

Therefore, Turkey's veto on NATO enlargement seem to have been simply a threat not fulfilled. It has been an example of the linkage of NATO -a purely military organization- to other political questions, in this case the EU's membership. The main reasons on the bases of this are

- NATO is the only Western forum where Turkey has got this power.

- It was the last -desperate- and perhaps the only possibility for Turkey to exert some pressure on the EU in order to achieve full membership.

- The moment was specially delicate. After the signing and beginning of the implementation of the Customs Union, the next logical step seems to be full membership. But the Islamist forces, partially as a reaction to European continuous rejection, are posing a serious threat to the whole process of westernisation.

Regardless of NATO strategy and activities, this veto was thought to exert pressure on the EU in the short term -before the Madrid summit- in order to achieve progress in this relation. Other reason behind this is the fact that most members of the EU belong also -in a way or another- to NATO. And it was a good opportunity for creating this pressure, since NATO was about taking the final decision on enlargement.

This strategy has proved to be a complete failure. It effectively exerted some pressure on the EU, but the reaction was radically different than expected. The approach to the Madrid summit caused several statements from EU member states' high officials against Turkey's membership. This change of orientation in the speech -directly and clearly opposed to Turkey for the first time-, while not entirely due to this possibility of veto, can be to a great extent linked to it.

The working environment in NATO would have become extremely hostile to Turkey, given NATO's operational system of unanimity. Turkey could not face the consequences of such a deterioration of its position in the only Western forum where it has got a real power and a word. And even less because of a hard to realise objective.

The obvous consequence of these negative conditions has been Demirel's change of attitude, basically after Turkey's realisation of the importance of NATO: it was considered as necesary not to put this relation at risk. Linking NATO to other sets of Turkish foreign policy, therefore, has not been considered to be a good idea.

Coming back to the advantages of a future partnership Turkey-NATO in the Middle East, Turkey's economic power in the region has to be considered -besides the military questions- the main asset. The importance of Turkey's economic relations with Middle Eastern countries is significant when trying to assess its weight in the region in any field. Economic influence can obviously lead to a deeper implication from a strategic point of view and it has proved one of the leading forces for the regional balance of power.

But the nature of the regional political situation, both international and domestic, has created an economic environment where it is difficult to make a clear assessment of its importance, evolution and prospects, as well as its weight in the region. Turkey's economic relations with the leading states of the Middle East have been consistently dependent on the political environment rather than on purely economic trends. It has been, therefore, a quite volatile one, not only because its basis was highly distorted but also because the high price of oil after the crises of the 70s and the 80s. It is from 1987 when, despite these negative conditionings, this economic relationship has begun to stabilise. A complementary economic relationships. " In much of the Middle East then, trading patterns trend to reflect state trade policy of the countries involved rather than market forces, making market predictions nearly impossible when it may be so closely tied to the political whim of rules who tomorrow may decide that they are unhappy with Turkey. Commercial arrangements often depend heavily on the role of the single leader as opposed to solidly institutionalized commercial relationships, especially in states like Syria, Iraq and Libya. As long as political rather than market forces reign, there can be no reliable pattern of commerce with the Middle East on which businessmen can build. These factors complicate the normal kind of market research on which Turkey trade depends in Europe and the United States" [...] "These views represent a slightly simplistic formulation of course" (Fuller 1993, p. 52).

Why Turkey can be considered as an interesting ally for NATO in this area?. The end of the Cold War has prevented the Middle East from being a scenario for the confrontation between the US and the USSR, and hence Turkey's influence seems to have been diminished. But here are several circumstances, already mentioned, which make Turkey an important ally for NATO facing the Middle East and its instability. The fact that Turkey is a pivotal state has got a significant weight in this alliance. Pivotal does not necessarily mean simply a tool for American foreign policy, as some authors seem to suggest (CHASE et alii 1996), but an intermediate -not mediating- position in different fields:

- Cultural, ethnic and religious. Turkey is obvously one of the main melting pots in the region, with elements belonging to all the surounding regions: Islamic and Christian, European and Asian, Mediterranean and Central Asian, etc.

- Strategic. Turkey's geographical position makes it a desirable ally for both sides, since it has proved to be a bridge -perhaps a barrier?- for access to the other side.

Turkey's peculiar relations with the Arab world, although not particularly smooth, has meant a further asset for its pivotal role. As it has been Turkey's military agreement with Israel, a good example of the different -exceptional- nature of this country within the Islamic states. Even Erbakan despite his electoral promises was forced to respect this agreement because of internal pressures, not even because Western intervention or mediation.

Finally, as a general conclusion, not necessarily directly related to the Midle East but obtained through this analysis, it can be stated that Turkey's attitude towards the Western powers is different respect of its approach to NATO.

Its approach to NATO has been always more moderate, openly pro-Western and extremely cooperative. This might be due to the fact that this is the only Western forum where Turkey can exert fully its power. Even the threat of a veto was managed in an extremely cautious way. The fact that it is the military who control these relations has got a significant weight in this approach. They are one of the most significant and powerful sectors of Turkish society and probably the most deeply imbued with the Kemalist ideas.

On the contrary, Turkey's relations with the West in general and with the US in particular are much more realistic from any point of view, more economic and political than purely military, what has produced a more dialectic relation, which landmarks are more related to confrontation than in the relations with NATO.

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