

Turkey and the Gulf War, 1991: Reactions to the Imposition of Adventurism in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey

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ABSTRACT

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One of the first serious international developments of the post-Cold War era occurred in the 1991 Gulf War. The Gulf War has taken on the character of a war that served the interests of the United States's Middle East policy, and in this process, the US had various demands from Turkey, the country in the region, and its President, Özal. This article presents an analysis of efforts aimed at persuading a highly competent person in Turkey's administration not to engage in armed action, while also addressing fierce opposition to the war from opposition parties and the bureaucracy. This study tries to explain both the fulfillment of a dream and the complete ignorance of the opposition by President Özal and the government under his control in the struggle between fantasy and reality. In the face of the attempts to introduce a major change in the basic tenets

of the traditional Turkish Foreign Policy, the article focuses more on the political reactions, including which powerful arguments were provided by the opposition against the hawkish.

Keywords: The Gulf War 1991, Turgut Özal, Turkish Foreign Policy, Türkiye, George Herbert Walker Bush.

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Soğuk Savaş sonrasındaki dönemin ilk ciddi uluslararası gelişmelerinden biri 1991 Körfez Savaşı ile yaşanmıştır. Körfez Savaşı, ABD'nin Orta Doğu politikasına hizmet eden bir savaş niteliğine bürünmüş; bu süreçte ABD'nin, bölge ülkesi olan Türkiye'den ve onun Cumhurbaşkanı Özal'dan çeşitli talepleri olmuştur. Bu makale, Türkiye'nin yönetiminde son derece yetkin bir kişiyi, silahlı bir eyleme girişime yönünde ikna etmeyi amaçlayan çabaların bir analizini sunarken, aynı zamanda muhalefet partileri ve bürokrasiden gelen savaşa karşı sert muhalefeti ele almıştır. Bu çalışma, hayal ile gerçek arasındaki mücadelede, hem bir hayalin gerçekleşmesini hem de Cumhurbaşkanı Özal'ın ve kontrolü altındaki hükümetin muhalefeti tamamen görmezden gelmesini açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Ayrıca geleneksel Türk Dış Politikasının temel ilkelerinde büyük bir değişiklik getirme girişimleri karşısında, daha çok muhalefetin şahinlere karşı hangi güçlü argümanları sunduğu da dâhil olmak üzere siyasi tepkilere odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 1991 Körfez Savaşı, Turgut Özal, Türk Dış Politikası, Türkiye, George Herbert Walker Bush.

Introduction

Turkey has managed to play a central role in world politics thanks to its geostrategic location, its coastline to Europe and the Middle East, the region that possesses petroleum-rich lands. On the other hand, Turkey has geographical insecurity due to the fact that it is surrounded by many neighbours with different characteristics, regimes, and ideologies. The relations between them and Turkey will not always be peaceful, especially in the Middle East, as this region may occasionally witness armed clashes. However, Middle East has most of the known oil resources in the world. Turkey, dependent on Middle Eastern oil like most of the Western countries, always has some political and diplomatic concerns in the region. Aside from oil, Middle East has been consistently unstable since the World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman

Empire. This was contrary to Turkish foreign policy, depending on the status quo and stability. In addition to potential security problems in the region, Turkey was uneasy about the suspicion that United States forces could use Turkey as a stepping stone for operations in the Middle East.¹

Apart from the historical perspective, in Turkish Foreign Policy, the threat of use of force and the limited use of force during the crisis have supportive functions for diplomacy. Turkey, due to the fact that it is bordered by many countries and has various problems with many of them, has occasionally resorted to the threat of using force. By taking advantage of the threat that it could use force as a requirement of coercive diplomacy during the crisis, Turkey tried to safeguard its national interests and security. In other words, coercive diplomacy, which means not to be obliged to use force in any event, is something like the consistency of “discourse” and “action” that will ensure the credibility of the “threat to use force”. Then the persuasive effect of the threat of force comes to the forefront. In this respect, coercive diplomacy is a diplomatic strategy, not a military one.² At the beginning of 1991 crisis, coercive diplomacy was executed by USA against Iraq.

The plebiscite held on September 6, 1987 in Turkey lifted the political bans on the former political party leaders of the military intervention which was staged on September 12, 1980. The Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* - ANAP) and its leader Turgut Özal that campaigned for the continuation of the bans were narrowly defeated in this referendum by %0.32. After the banned politicians returned to politics, the popularity of Özal and his party decreased over time.

Circumstances in the succeeding weeks forced ANAP to hold an early election. The former leaders of the pre-coup period were able to run for the 29 November 1987 general election at the head of their parties. The election resulted in the landslide victory of ANAP, gaining 292 seats in the Parliament and winning 36% of the popular vote. Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti* - SHP), with 24% of the popular votes, and True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi* - DYP), with 19% of the popular votes, won 99 and 59 of the 450 parliamentary seats, respectively. It was noteworthy that, on the eve of the election, a new electoral law was enacted to reduce the electoral districts, thus paving the way for additional Members of Parliament (MP) under the

¹ Mustafa Aydın, “Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1999, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 163-170.

² Fuat Aksu, “Kuvvet Kullanma Tehditine Dayalı Dış Politika Krizlerinde Güvenlik Kavramı”, *Türkiye’de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti*, Der. Evren Balta Paker - İsmet Akça, İstanbul, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010, p. 5-7.

name of "quota MPs". Clearly, the absolute majority of the Motherland Party in 1983 general elections contributed significantly to the enactment of this electoral law. Oddly enough, ANAP, which received 36% of the popular votes in 1987 election, gained 65% of the total seats of the Parliament. Afterwards, Özal took office and held power between December 21, 1987 and November 9, 1989. Özal's second term in office was over due to the end of the official duties of the current President Kenan Evren. When Özal became president, a new government was formed under ANAP and Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut took office and held power between November 9, 1989 and June 23, 1991.

Even though Özal left the prime ministership and became Turkey's 8th president, some perceived that Özal remained active behind the scenes and ran governmental bodies. On November 10, 1989, the day that the government program was read, it became painfully obvious that Özal still controlled the government. As Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut received harsh criticism from the opposition, the accusations against him were as follows: "*He is the head clerk, not the Prime Minister, the head clerk of Özal...This program is not Mr. Akbulut's program, it is Özal's program.*"³

Meanwhile a quite extraordinary development occurred on a global scale, and Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. This situation affected the neighbouring country Turkey both deeply and negatively. Özal, having his eyes on Mosul oil, preferred to follow an expansionist policy and thought that Turkey should play an essential role in the new Middle East map to be drawn.

Ignorance of the rule of law by those in power conflicts with democratic process. Under normal circumstances, the rulers should not make arbitrary decisions in the form of ignoring other entities and institutions. In such cases, tension between the opposition and the ruling party mounts. Politics has to act within the limits determined by the law. The top rulers should not turn a deaf ear to the issues that the opposition is sensitive to. This study tries to find an answer to the question of which arguments Motherland Party under Ozal's leadership wanted to be included in the US-based coalition during the Kuwait War in 1991. At the same time, it tries to determine how and why the opposition opposed the resolutions related to Gulf War in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

This study addresses the opposition in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey against Özal, who wanted to be actively involved in the 1991 Gulf War.

³ İrfan Nezirođlu - Tuncer Yılmaz, *Hükümetler-Programları ve Genel Kurul Görüşmeleri (9 Kasım 1989 - 30 Ekim 1995) [Governments-Programs and General Assembly Discussions (9 November 1989 - 30 October 1995)]*, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Yayınları, Vol. 8, Ankara, 2013, p. 6295.

It also aims to contribute to the literature in this sense. The conceptual basis of the study focuses on Özal's approach which considers bureaucracy as an obstacle. The goal of this paper is to shed light on how Özal sought to break off the deep-rooted tradition of Turkish Foreign Policy, which took a prudent approach and maintained good relations with all its neighbours. In addition, the reasons why the opposition and the Turkish public opposed this situation are also mentioned. This study consists of an introduction and three main parts. In the introduction, the strategic position of Turkey, the general features of Turkish Foreign Policy and the elections just before 1991 has been given. In other sections, respectively; the general overview before the war, reactions to the Gulf Crisis in Turkey, and the legacy of the war to Turkey has been covered. In this study, "document analysis" method-one of the qualitative research methods- was used as data collection method. Newspaper reports, articles and books providing valuable insights about the subject were used.

General overview on the Middle East

Regarding Turkey's general geostrategic position and neighbours, Turkish Foreign Policy has to find a solution to the country's security policy with a holistic approach. In terms of Middle East, which is affected by many variables such as the global system and conflicts between countries, Turkey is in a dilemma in this region. It has to play an active role in that oil-rich region, and by doing so, Turkey must not be drawn into the region's numerous whirlpools full of internal problems and specific conflicts.⁴

The 1980–1988 war between Iraq and Iran was the preliminary stage of the 1990-1991 Gulf War that led to the new power structures to exist in the Middle East. The failure of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq War was the reason behind the decision that led him to the Gulf War. Turkey has adopted a position of active neutrality, pursuing equal treatment for both sides. Furthermore, one of the defining characteristics of this war was that the US, for the first time, was exposed to a danger in terms of oil supplies.⁵ Soon after the onset of the Iran- Iraq War, a rumour quickly spread that the U.S. government had incited Saddam to attack Iran. The serious allegation was about preventing the spread of Islamic Revolution. The U.S. government, aiming to punish the Iranian regime particularly in the hostage crisis between the United States and Iran, had acted to prevent Iranian Revolution from expanding the Gulf

⁴ Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teoriği ve Pratiği", *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Vol. I (1919-1980)* [Turkish Foreign Policy 1919-1980], Ed. Baskın Oran, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2018, p. 25-26.

⁵ Fahri Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1914-1995 [20th Century Political History 1914-1995]*, 16th ed., Alkım Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2007, p. 872-876.

monarchies.⁶ During the 1980s, the United States, on the one hand, followed a balance of power policy in the region, on the other hand, in order to control Iranian power, it backed Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War.⁷

Iraq had a great advantage in combat power, as it was more successful than Iran in acquiring relatively sophisticated weapons from foreign sources. Consequently, Iraq came out from the eight-year war with a large and well-equipped military force – presumably one of the largest and best-equipped forces in the developing world. This powerful weaponry boosted Saddam's confidence and marked the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.⁸

Except for the war between Iran and Iraq, the late 1980s witnessed the most drastic changes in the general structure of world politics since the 1940s. The ideological and geopolitical struggle which had defined international relations for 45 years culminated in a sudden and unexpected end, marking the end of the Cold War.⁹ When the Communist governments in Eastern Europe collapsed in 1989, the USA was henceforth the world's only super-power.¹⁰

The core principles of USA foreign policy regarding Middle East in the wake of cold war were as follows: (1) Ensuring control over the oil resources in the region and safe delivery of the oil to the world markets; (2) guaranteeing the existence of Israel; (3) absence of weapons of mass destruction throughout the countries of the region; (4) reducing the influence of radical Islam; and (5) pursuing a policy of containment of Iran and Iraq¹¹. However, the George H. W. Bush Administration, in a realistic manner, was acutely aware of both the capacity of its foreign policy and the opportunities in "*the New World Order*", as President Bush put it. Bush contented himself with driving Saddam's army out of Kuwait and did not launch an attack to conquer Baghdad¹². As for Turkey, it

⁶ Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War*, Harvard University Press, London, 2015, p. 68.

⁷ Michael Lind, *The American Way of Strategy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, p. 138.

⁸ Michael T. Klare, "Arms Transfers to Iran and Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88 and the Origins of the Gulf War", Andrew J. Bacevich, Efraim Inbar (Ed.), *The Gulf War of 1991 Reconsidered*, BESA Studies in Internal Security, London, 2003, p. 4.

⁹ Robert McMahon, *The Cold War*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. 143.

¹⁰ William Storey, *US Government and Politics*, Edinburg University Press, Edinburgh, 2007, p. 108.

¹¹ İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İliřkiler [Relations with the USA and NATO]", Ed. Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası 1980-2001 [Turkish Foreign Policy 1980-2001]*. Vol. II, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2018, p. 254.

¹² Faruk Sönmezođlu, "Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Dış Politikası [Foreign Policy of the United States]", *Dış Politika Karşılařtırılabilir Bir Bakış [Foreign Policy A Comparative Perspective]*, Ed. Faruk Sönmezođlu - Özgün Erel Bayır Der Yayınları, İstanbul, p. 176.

was hugely concerned about the end of the Cold War, considering that the United States would no longer need an alliance with Turkey.¹³

As mentioned above, during the Persian Gulf Crisis, President Bush proclaimed the concept of "*the new world order*".¹⁴ This new world order was based on the principles of liberal democracy, free trade, and the renunciation of military aggression towards further foreign-policy objectives.¹⁵ Whereas "*new world order*" made sense, the former secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger had a powerful and original vision. Writing in *The Washington Post*, Kissinger said that, for Americans, this concept was nothing more than finding great justifications to fight wars. Furthermore, he stressed the fact that there was a need for the justifications for the "*new world order*". "*New world order*", in other words, was a concept whereby Americans would find great justifications for future wars. Kissinger, for his part, seemed open to the statement "*the new world order is unlikely to meet idealistic expectations*".¹⁶

In the aftermath of Iran-Iraq war in 1988, the Iraqi regime claimed that Kuwait had damaged itself by keeping the oil production high and demanded that the debt of this country, which was around 50-80 billion dollars, be written off accordingly.¹⁷ The invasion of Kuwait arose such a hard time that no possible solution has been found for the Iraqi economy, which was in the midst of an economic crisis. The awful conditions of the Iran-Iraq war have put the Iraqi economy in a stalemate. Another immensely complicated case was the changing conditions of the oil market. Moreover, Iraq's oil revenue has declined relative to its pre-war levels.¹⁸

Saddam allegedly took a decision about war sometime in July 1990, yet he approached the United States so as to explore how it would react before sending his army into Kuwait. U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie, while conducting an interview with the Iraqi leader, told Saddam, "*We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.*" The U.S. State Department had already informed Saddam that Washington had "*no specific*

¹³ Cameron Brown, "Turkey in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 110.

¹⁴ Uzel, *ibid*, p. 255.

¹⁵ Storey, *ibid*, pp. 316-317.

¹⁶ Don Oberdorfer, "Bush's Talk of a 'New World Order' Foreign Policy Tool or Mere Slogan?", *The Washington Post*, 26 May 1991.

¹⁷ Uzel, *ibid*, p. 255.

¹⁸ Abbas Alnasrawi, "Iraq: economic consequences of the 1991 Gulf War and future outlook", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 346.

defense or security commitments to Kuwait."¹⁹ Additionally, it seemed odd that the US had not given a serious warning despite knowing that Iraq was sending troops to the Kuwait border. All these developments led to the assessments that the USA knowingly tolerated the activities of Iraq. When the negotiations broke down, Iraq invaded Kuwait and declared itself the 19th province on 28 August.²⁰

Not only was Iraq roundly condemned by the international community as a whole but also it was identified as the aggressor.²¹ Meanwhile, the considerable effort to force Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait by peaceful means would set a precedent in the history of the United Nations. The UN Security Council took its severe decisions gradually. From the beginning of August to November 1990, the number of decisions taken by UN in four months was 11.²² Moreover, the European Community placed an embargo on oil purchases from Iraq and Kuwait on August 4, and banned arms sales to Iraq. With its resolution 661 adopted on August 6, 1990, the UN Security Council approved a comprehensive economic embargo on Iraq. Being the first country to abide by this decision, on August 7, 1990, Turkey closed its Kırkuk-Yumurtalık oil pipeline, which was of vital importance to it.²³

The invasion of Kuwait made Iraq seem threatening the oil-consuming countries. Iraq had also violated the post-1945 outright bans on aggressive war, territorial conquest, and annexation. All members of the UN Security Council quite agreed on the US-led war against Iraq.²⁴ In the face of such a crisis situation, a thirty-four country coalition was formed under the presidency of the United States for the purpose of driving Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.²⁵ Following the end of the Cold War, enjoying the considerable advantages of being the world's only super-power, President Bush had previously focused on how the enormous military power of the United States should be wielded: He decided to intervene militarily in Kuwait invaded by its neighbour Iraq.²⁶

¹⁹ John J. Mearsheimer & Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War", *Foreign Policy*, No. 134, 2003, p. 254.

²⁰ Uzgel, *ibid*, p. 255.

²¹ Brown, *ibid*, p. 110.

²² Armaođlu, *ibid*, p. 884.

²³ Rifat Uçarol, *Siyasi Tarib (1789-1994) [Political History (1789-1994)]*, 4 Ed., Filiz Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1995, p. 791.

²⁴ Lind, *ibid*, pp. 138-139.

²⁵ Storey, *ibid*, pp. 316-317.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 108.

During the Gulf War, US President Bush maintained contact with the political leaders of some governments. Bush's network consisted of numerous bilateral contacts with some central figures, who contributed greatly to the gathering of additional information. Among those politicians, Turkish President Özal played a prominent role by means of direct communication with his neighbour Iran, considering that Bush could not speak directly to the Iranian leaders.²⁷

Özal was of paramount importance to Bush. For instance, on 4 August, “*I was especially encouraged when I talked to President Ozal.*” Bush told the Kuwaiti Emir. Between Iraq’s invasion and retreat from Kuwait, these two leaders talked on the telephone 28 times over seven months. The frequency of the talks was much more than Bush had with any other foreign leader. Further, Turkey, as the only North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO] member bordering Iraq, was certain to play a prominent role. Özal's enthusiasm for being active surprised Bush. Özal tried to prove a point and likened Turkey to a bridge linking cultures and continents. “*Eastern thinking is different from the West. I understand both.*” he once told Bush. On August 3, he expressed his desire to actively involve in Gulf War. He put forward the idea of a military response by means of an integrated military structure [NATO]. To gauge their reactions to such an act of involvement, he offered to talk to Iranian and Syrian leaders. Bush, who is well aware that Turkey has the power to act as intermediary between the United States and a Power which it did not have formal diplomatic relations with, on one occasion told Özal “*Only you, with your relationships, could have talked to Rafsanjani [the Iranian president].*” In their August 20 telephone conversation, Özal told Bush “*The Iranians reminded us that Saddam is an animal who will not be silenced until he is suffocated.*” Unlike the telephone calls between Bush and Özal, in a telephone call between Bush and Margaret Thatcher [Prime Minister of the United Kingdom] on August 9, while Bush pronounced himself “*pleased with Ozal*”, Thatcher added that the Turkish president had been both “*marvelous*” and “*superb.*”²⁸

Only when there had a “*presidential system*” in Turkey, could telephone diplomacy be established by the President alone and by his very own –in other words, foreign policy in Turkey, a country with a parliamentary system, was shaped by Özal from Çankaya Mansion. In summary, the fact that Özal’s ruling in Turkey gave Bush a golden opportunity to enjoy more freedom. He was something of a godsend for Bush.

²⁷ Jeffrey Crean, “War on the Line: Telephone Diplomacy in the Making and Maintenance of the Desert Storm Coalition”, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2015, p. 126.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 131-132.

Reactions to the Gulf Crisis in Turkey

Institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Turkish Armed Forces, the National Security Council (MGK), the Prime Ministry, the Presidency and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey have a say in the process of formulating Turkish foreign policy. However, the answer to the question “Who makes the foreign policy of Turkey” goes beyond politics. In this regard, the two institutions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Armed Forces, both having a western identity in common were at the forefront of foreign policy. Turkish Armed Forces in Gulf Crisis 1991 demonstrated that they could affect the foreign policy process by not only resorting to force and using force, but also by preventing the use of power they had.²⁹

In the process of shaping and implementing Turkish foreign policy, there is a general rule and institutionalization in the context of compliance with domestic law. However, in the Gulf Crisis and War (1990-1991), the problem of "authority" and "delegation of authority" in the use of military force showed that there were problems at this juncture. This may be widely regarded as the absence/unavailability of a judicial review. In the Gulf Crisis and War, it was observed that the TGNA, with its own decisions, could cause a "delegation of authority" in favor of the government, in violation of Article 92 of the Constitution.³⁰ Duties and powers such as "supervision", "approval", "allowing", which allow the TGNA to directly or indirectly affect the process, give the TGNA a significant level of effectiveness in foreign policy during the development and execution phase. However, this is not always to the same extent. According to Soysal, the war-related authorization, especially the approval of the treaties, given to the parliament does not make much sense in practice, and does not go beyond having a symbolic value.³¹

Since the end of the cold war, the international milieu has observed a fundamental change. Naturally enough, the present situation also found an echo in Turkish Foreign Policy to a considerable extent. The post-Cold War period made an impact on the relations between Turkey and its Middle Eastern neighbors Iran, Iraq and Syria. While Turkey found both its international

²⁹ Bülent Şener, *Türk Dış Politikasında Güç Kullanma Seçeneği (1923-2010)*, Barış Kitabevi, Ankara, 2013, p. 250-314.

³⁰ Bülent Şener, “Türkiye’de Dış Politika İle İç Hukuk Düzeni Arasındaki İlişki: T. C. 1982 Anayasası Çerçevesinde Genel Bir Değerlendirme”, *The Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2014, pp. 277-280.

³¹ Mümtaz Soysal, *Dış Politika ve Parlamento: Dış Politika Alanındaki Yasama-Yürütme İlişkileri Üzerinde Karşılaştırmalı Bir İnceleme*, Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, Ankara, 1964, s. 258.

influence enhanced and its relationship with the United States strengthened, the Gulf War in 1991 created opportunities to assume major roles in the region.³²

At this juncture, it is necessary to mention the specific feature of Turkish Foreign Policy. Unless its vital interests are threatened, maintaining the status quo is one of the distinguishing features of Turkish Foreign Policy. The Gulf War exhibited the most serious attempt to break with this general line. The attempt to move away from this general orientation was largely due to Özal's insistence on opening a second front in northern Iraq. Another disturbing issue, which is closely related to the general character of Turkish Foreign Policy, was the emergence of some disputes in decision-making mechanisms. Foreign Minister Ali Bozer, Minister of National Defense Safa Giray, and Chief of General Staff Necip Torumtay resigned in the late 1990s in reaction to Özal's attitude. The bureaucracy, which is the enforcer of the policy, was able to prevent the making of secret or overt decisions. Criticism occurred among the opposition, the public and the press for Özal's method of executing foreign policy. Additionally, some assumptions were made that the USA was behind Özal's attitude during the Gulf War.³³

On August 9, US Secretary of State James Baker met with Turkish officials in Ankara. In his meeting with Özal, he put in a request for the use of bases in Turkey during the Gulf War. The meeting took place at a time when President Özal was faced increasing criticism for acting as both Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the opposition reminded the Government of Atatürk's motto "*Unless a nation's life faces peril, war is murder.*"

Turkey had same conceptions of the USA policies concerning the Gulf Crisis from the very first. The frequent telephone calls between USA President Bush and Turkey President Özal were the key indicators of this synergy. In all visits of the USA Foreign Minister Baker to the Middle East Countries, the Minister didn't neglect Turkey and by conducting interviews with Özal, he got his own way. Foreign policy throughout the history of Turkey had never been tried to be determined by a single person, which was a first for Turkey. The resignations of the Foreign Minister and the Chief of General Staff did not deter Özal's desire to single-handedly determine Turkish Foreign Policy.³⁴ Similarly, Özal bypassed Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Grand National Assembly and the government from time to time. With the "*telephone diplomacy*" image, he created an image influencing the policies of President Bush. To his

³² "Introduction", *Ankara Papers*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2003.

³³ Uzel, *ibid*, p. 257.

³⁴ Tefik Çavdar, *Türkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi 1950'den Günümüze [Turkey's Democracy History From 1950 to the Present]*, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 2013, p. 285.

way of thinking, Turkey would pursue an active foreign policy and show that it is a strategic country, thereby advancing the commercial and economic interests from USA. Furthermore, Turkey would be a critical actor in the shaping of the newly structured Middle East. It would also be very easy for Turkey to enter the European Union.³⁵

Özal himself holds a special place in the history of Turkish Foreign Policy. Accordingly, the period in which Özal was very active must be examined in detail. Not until Özal came to power did Turkish Foreign Policy witness such reckless decision-making attempts. His personality was such a major reason for his attitude that he hardly ever consulted other authorities on the critical issues.

Another striking feature of the meeting held at the beginning of August 1990 was that President Özal met with the US Secretary of State alone in Turkey. Moreover, later on, during his visit to Washington in November, he met with Bush alone, even though he was accompanied by the Turkish Foreign Minister. In addition to his suspicious behaviours, he insistently tried to get the parliament to pass a resolution that included sending Turkish troops abroad. All the extraordinary events implied that Özal had some plans regarding Mosul-Kirkuk. He indicated his intention to handle the events in a practical and dynamic manner by putting forward the idea that Mosul and Kirkuk remained within the borders of the National Pact published on February 12, 1920.³⁶

As regards to Kurdish policy, Özal aimed to re-establish foreign relations of Turkey, however isolated it may have been. Moreover, he was determined to increase Turkey's economic and cultural domination.³⁷ Adopting a liberal approach on Kurdish issue, Özal clearly differed from the military regarding the perception of the threat in Gulf War crisis. Turkish military leadership appreciated that acting in concert with the US-led coalition could pose a major threat of retaliation against Turkey. Therefore, a possible attack on Iraq would have had devastating results. Nevertheless, he did not concur with their views, nor did he follow a policy of maintaining trade with Iraq. He put particular stress on maintaining close relations with the West, notably the United States, rather than Iraq.³⁸

³⁵ Uzgel, *ibid*, p. 254.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 256.

³⁷ Marianna Charountaki, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the Kurdistan Regional Government", *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2012, p. 187.

³⁸ Sung Chul Jung, "Democratization and Alliance Commitment: US Democratizing Allies during the Gulf War", *Armed Forces & Society* Vol.39, No.4, pp. 667-668.

Another issue on which Özal had disagreements with the military bureaucracy was related to his incompetent manner in giving instructions for the Gulf War. Longing for the army to be ready for cross-border operation, Özal conveyed this request to the Chief of General Staff Necip Torumtay through the Prime Ministry Undersecretary. In summary, Torumtay refused to obey this unconventional political instruction given by Özal personally, and reacted by resigning his post as the Chief of General Staff.³⁹

Özal was determined to become involved in Gulf War no matter what the cost, yet according to the Constitution, Turkey's sending troops to a foreign country or going to war depended on the Parliament's decision—in other words, only if the Grand National Assembly of Turkey gave permission, could the government declare war on Iraqi regime. Meanwhile, the public opinion and opposition parties were against sending troops. They disapproved of becoming an "*instrument*" of the US policies, even though Saddam's aggressive behaviours did not find favour with them. At the same time, there was a struggle between the ruling party and the opposition. On August 12, President Özal forced the Grand National Assembly into getting "*the permission to wage war*", providing there would be an attack against Turkey. Nonetheless, the NATO base in Incirlik was already being used by US military planes despite this condition.⁴⁰

The fact that Özal studied in USA contributed substantially to these two countries' maintaining friendly relations with each other. He was a politician who always supported liberalism. Hence his foreign policy was met positively in the West. His uniqueness lay in decision-making processes. He found practical solutions and tended to work with individuals rather than institutions. Faced with so-called cumbersome procedures of foreign affairs, he opted for taking risks and playing an active role in foreign policy. However, like the Turkish Armed Forces, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was an institution affiliated with Turkey's traditional foreign policy. Adopting prudent principles from the outset of its existence, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while implementing foreign affairs, has little reflected the complicated patterns of domestic policy. This was quite different from the policy of Özal who was trying to lead foreign policy with his merchant mentality.

The Turkish Parliament convened on August 12, 1990 to discuss the resolution calling for declaration of war, the use of armed force, to send the Turkish Armed Forces to foreign countries or deployment of foreign armed forces to Turkey, so as to respond immediately in case of an attack on Turkey.

³⁹ Uzgel, *ibid*, p. 256.

⁴⁰ Armaoğlu, *ibid*, p. 889.

Needless to say, it was hardly surprising that the meeting was highly controversial.

On behalf of Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), Erdal İnönü gave a speech in the Parliament.

"Why does Özal seek authorization to send armed forces abroad, even though Iraq has not attacked Turkey? So the Armed Forces will be used somewhere. Why does the government get an unused authorization? So it will be used somewhere. How will it be used?" he asked. "In order for Westerners to control Kuwait oil more easily, we will join the international force and bomb Iraq somehow, and then we will share the gains of this together... Here you are on the way to take a decision that could completely endanger the future of the country just because you are the majority. Do not do this; I am absolutely against this, our party group is absolutely against it,"

he added firmly. İnönü stated that Özal lived in a fantasy world with dreams of sharing the gains.⁴¹

On behalf of True Path Party (DYP), Süleyman Demirel gave a speech in Parliament and expressed his concern about the fight for oil: "*Was Turkey ordered to fight a war?. Will those who plan the war leave Mosul and Kirkuk to Turkey while they try to save Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation?*" he asked.

"The true significance of Turkey depends heavily on how many outstanding and useful contributions made to interests of others. We are against sending Turkish troops... If an explanation is demanded from President Bush, he would first refer to the national interests of the US, and then to democracy and human rights. It's unreasonable to expect him to protect the human rights of Kuwaiti people. 66 percent of the world's oil is in the region. Recent events are all about the fight for oil."

he said.⁴²

Kemal Anadol, on his own behalf, expressed his reservations before voting the resolution. He reminded the Members of Parliament what was behind the arms sales to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988. He emphasized that Iraq used the revenue it generated from oil by buying weapons from some countries, and thus possessed a formidable arsenal of guns in order for the defeat of Khomeini. Highlighting the arms sales of Belgium, the Soviet Union, France, England, and the US to Iraq, he said it was obvious that Iraq would use these weapons somehow. "*There was nothing to worry about when selling*

⁴¹ *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi [Journal of the Record of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey]*, 12.8.1990 - Volume: 46/1.

⁴² *Ibid.*

weapons to Iraq. But, conversely, when Iraq tried to use the weapons, it was pilloried by the world press for its political action” he said.⁴³

Ultimately, the closed meeting did not have a very satisfactory outcome. However, the Parliament approved the resolution. 373 members participated in the voting. 216 members voted in favour, 151 opposed. 6 votes were considered invalid.⁴⁴ Thus, the ruling party succeeded in receiving permission from the Turkish Grand National Assembly to declare war on the condition that an attack is launched on Turkey. However, despite the condition stated, the NATO base in Incirlik was already being used by US aircraft.

The outcome of all this could be interpreted in several different ways. The government was, above all, legally responsible to the Parliament for the maintenance of national security and the preparation of the Armed Forces for homeland defense. And secondly, in order to respond immediately in case of an attack on Turkey, the Parliament passed the resolution calling for the declaration of war, Turkish troops to be deployed to the Gulf region, and foreign armed forces to be stationed in Turkey. The second closed session related to the Gulf Crisis, in the aftermath of the meeting on August 12, was held on September 5. Between these two dates, widespread criticism was leveled against President Özal and the government. Some of the official or public statements and criticisms were as follows:

President Turgut Özal stated that if Saudi Arabia or another Gulf country sought military support from Turkey, they might send troops on the condition that Parliament approved the resolution. At the same time, he added that the press and the public, without exception, supported the stance adopted by the government in the Gulf Crisis.⁴⁵

Concentrating on the political developments within a historical context, journalist Uğur Mumcu specified that the mission given to Turkey, when former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was in power, in the process of joining NATO had somewhat been updated by President Özal. In addition, he clarified how the theory of ‘Pentagonism’ had been conducted. According to Mumcu, Turkey's accession to NATO widely stemmed from this mission of ‘guarding the oil fields’. Whereas the US Senate did not approve of Turkish admission to NATO even after the outbreak of Korean War, the US Ministry of Defence endorsed Turkey's application for two reasons: First, the mission of the

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi [Journal of the Record of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey]*, 12.8.1990 - Volume: 46.

⁴⁵ *Cumhuriyet*, 24.08.1990, p. 15.

guarding the oil fields. Second, new regulations for setting up bases on Turkish soil to conduct operations against Soviet Union. The Cold War was over and there was no longer any Soviet threat worldwide.

“War theory, which finds an ideological cover and a strategic justification for the economic interests of the US, is called ‘Pentagonism’. Pentagonism has sharply divided the Middle East into ‘American-Islamic Regimes’ and ‘non-American regimes’. In the Middle East region, the outdated Arabian tribal sheikhdoms are the brand new closest allies of the US. Turkey, in company with these American-Islamic sheikhdoms, is wanted to be wielded against the despotic regimes in the Middle East. The assurances given by the Menderes government [Adnan Menderes- Turkish Prime Minister between 1950 and 1960] to the Americans and the British in the 1950s currently have gained currency due to the Özal administration”

he said.⁴⁶

On September 1, 1990, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey started its new legislative term. The two opposition parties acted responsibly by not attending the President's inaugural address. Demirel said that Özal was attempting to fulfill his promise to the United States.⁴⁷ The controversial issue, discussed in the Turkish Grand National Assembly on August 12, was brought forward again during the opening process of the Parliament. Prime Minister Akbulut announced that the recommendation that Özal made in his opening speech to the Assembly would be implemented.⁴⁸

Bülent Ecevit, the leader of Democratic Left Party (DSP), said, concerning the Gulf Crisis; ⁴⁹

"if the authority to go to war is in the hands of a single person, whether this is Prime Minister or someone else, the rulers of the states that drag Turkey into war may achieve the desired results by stirring up his emotions and applauding him for that decision."

Süleyman Demirel, the leader of True Path Party (DYP), on the other hand, said "The powers of the Turkish Grand National Assembly cannot be delegated to any other organ. Özal constantly violates the Constitution. The government is the best means of achieving his goals. It seems that Özal is the originator of putting the specific proposal back on the agenda". By demanding the delegation of authority over the Article 92 of the Constitution to the government, he stated that Özal didn't realize the 'soul' of Constitution." He accused Özal of

⁴⁶ Uğur Mumcu, "Pentagonizm [Pentagonism]", *Cumhuriyet*, 24.08.1990, p. 1, 19.

⁴⁷ Cüneyt Arcayürek, "Körfez Krizi [Gulf Crisis]", *Cumhuriyet*, 02.09.1990, p. 9.

⁴⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 02.09.1990, p. 1, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

hypocrisy, both in denying the people and speaking of advanced democratic countries. He added "*Those who provide examples of the different advanced democratic countries must make severe judgments of themselves first.*"⁵⁰

A series of events that led to the second meeting in the Parliament since August have already been mentioned above. Once more the members of Parliament met on September 5 regarding the Gulf Crisis amid the people's growing discontent with Özal and the government. In the closed session, Süleyman Demirel reminded the members of Parliament that at the meeting held on August 12, the government had already got authorization from the Parliament in the event of an attack. He said, pointing the finger of blame at both Özal and the government,

"If Turkey comes under attack from Iraqi forces, it will not be in an awkward position due to preceding authorization. In this case, it would be unrealistic to assert that vital interests of Turkey are in danger. What will you do if you get this second authorization? Are you going to deploy troops to Saudi Arabia or send war ships to the Gulf region? What will you do with this resolution? Will you allow a second front in northern Iraq? If the meaning behind the statement of senior administration officials that, "the political map of the Gulf region will change and Turkey will gain a slice of the pie", is to annex Mosul and Kirkuk, they are playing with fire. The ones who, first declared Iraq to be imperialist for invading Kuwait and shortly thereafter tried to liberate Kuwait, render this annexation impossible. If we attempt to achieve economic benefit by leading them to death, we would be committing a grave sin. You will enjoy a period of economic growth, but on the other hand, you will have people's blood on your hands, which is utterly impossible."⁵¹

Erdal İnönü, on the other hand, said:

"Let's not deceive ourselves. Özal's ultimate goal in today's debate, like the preceding resolution, is pertinent to fighting a war. The Assembly, after long discussions, last refused to grant the government permission to go to war unconditionally on August 12. The Parliament is faced with the dreadful task of authorizing the government to cause Turkey to go to war. In this closed session, finally it is said "the choices we make today will determine our tomorrow". The big issue we have been discussing is closely related to one's burning political ambition and his fierce desire to dominate the country's destiny, at the expense of dragging Turkey into dangerous adventures...Ultimate responsibility for an involvement in Gulf War rests with the members of Parliament themselves, who are going to vote shortly

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi [Journal of the Record of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey]*, 5.9.1990 - Volume: 47/1.

after delivering speeches. Özal and the Government try to formulate policies with an adventurous and aggressive manner that closely resemble the imperialist states in former times, instead of the previous traditional, peaceful and determined foreign policy. The United States, including the other allies in NATO, puts its own interests first. Despite being far from the Middle East, they give this region their undivided attention, largely because of the oil reserves of the Gulf. A truly effective control over the oil reserves is a common concern for them. Moreover, protecting Israel from potential danger adds more weight to the Gulf crisis. Not confining itself to economic pressure decisions taken by the UN Security Council, the United States tries to find a way to make Iraq withdraw from Kuwait faster. Given that the United States induces one or more powerful armies to wage war on Iraq with its own troops, this means that the US envisages coming up with a quick solution. Turkey is expected to show its willingness to join the war at the insistence of the US. Bearing in mind the vague promises of the US, it is no use deceiving ourselves as decision makers. If we become fascinated by the hollow promises, intense political pressure of the West that forces us to be in a rush, we will become their mercenaries. It might be claimed, for instance, that neighbouring Iraq, which has chemical weapons and is likely to have nuclear weapons in the immediate future, is getting stronger and constantly arming, hence it may spell trouble for Turkey. Then, those who say let's seize the opportunity and finalize it by going to a limited war should be asked how our neighbour had such weapons. It is the ones who sold weapons to Iraq that ask for the help of Turkish soldiers to get rid of these weapons today. If those states stop selling weapons to Iraq, and if every single state obeys the Security Council resolutions, Iraq will not be able to resist the whole world, and the problem will be resolved by itself. Please keep in mind that, as the Members of Parliament and decision makers, you will face the difficult task of making the decision to go to war once throughout your life. You are in the same situation yourselves and will make a major decision of your life.⁵²

As the heated debate reached its final phase, the Parliament was unable to reach a consensus. Ultimately, 382 members participated in the voting. Despite differences of opinion, the Parliament approved the resolution, with 246 votes in favour, 136 against.⁵³ Thus, the ruling party obtained permission to accept foreign troops to Turkey and to send Turkish troops to foreign countries.

In short, the difference between August 12, 1990 and September 5, 1990 meetings of TGNA can be summarized as follows: Whereas August 12 resolution enabled ruling party to declare war, use force and send Turkish

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Armed Forces to foreign countries, September 5 resolution enabled ruling party to accept foreign troops to Turkey.

TGNA sharply divided into groups of two during the resolutions about the Gulf War. Even though the leading opposition parties rejected the related proposals and Mother Land Party faced strong opposition from the others, a bitter disagreement did not result in rejection the resolutions. Members of Mother Land Party expressed their opinions in line with Özal's request during the votings. They were unable to resist the imposition of resolutions. They did not take into account the concepts and values such as common good, state tradition, law and hierarchy. Similarly, Özal mistakenly thought that foreign policy problems could be resolved solely by increasing trade. Such a newfangled foreign policy approach was a method that Turkey had not adopted before. It has been understood that implementing the right foreign policy is a far better than formulating an "active" foreign policy.

The vehement opposition remained constant, irrespective of the approval given by the Parliament. One of the constructive criticisms in this regard directed at the Parliament resolution came from Orhan Aldıkaçtı, who was Professor of Constitutional Law at Istanbul University Faculty of Law and was also the President of the Constitutional Committee during the preparation of the 1982 Constitution. He said;

“the authorization that the government got from the Parliament to send troops to the Gulf region is absolutely unconstitutional. Such authorization violates the constitution. This decision can not be left to the discretion of the government. The National Assembly, in accordance with the Constitution, may issue a permit for deploying troops anyplace else. What is against the Constitution is that the Assembly delegates authority to the government.”⁵⁴

Another harsh criticism came from Erdal İnönü. He said that it was immoral to make politics with the

"blood of the military. Özal has a fierce desire for going to war, but unfortunately I observe that Özal is trying to nudge the Akbulut Government towards the same desire. Özal has dreams of gaining a share of the pie in the Middle East. For such a pipe dream, no one can be permitted to drag the country towards a war. They can not come through such burden of responsibility”

he said. Stating that Özal and the government are prepared to grant consent to foreign troops to be deployed in Turkey, İnönü asked "*Can not we protect our citizens and their safety on our own against Iraq?*" At its press conference, SHP drew attention to the government's request for authorization to carry out a "*fast and*

⁵⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 06.09.1990, p. 19.

dynamic" policy. As stated by SHP, the government, with the resolution on August 12, had the authority to send troops abroad or to call foreign troops to the country. If so, it was clear that the dynamic and fast policy was intended to be made by using the Turkish Armed Forces. An active and dynamic policy could not be formulated by sending the Armed Forces abroad. It was an adventure policy to send the Armed Forces abroad. Özal and the Government were trying to gain interest in politics with the blood of the soldiers.⁵⁵

The Secretary General of Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), Hikmet Çetin, on the other hand, said "*Turkey is on the verge of facing a battle for the interest of the others*", indicating that the policy of President Özal towards Gulf crisis was adventurous. He pointed out that as Turkey entered 1991, President Özal's policies were faced with great difficulties. By breaking the law and coming into conflict with the Constitution, Özal was putting effort into attaining one-man rule, he said, adding that he had undermined all democratic and political institutions, loosened the rules, and broke with tradition.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, there were writers in the press who reacted to the Özal administration. In one of them, Hasan Cemal, Cumhuriyet Newspaper political columnist, likened the Özal administration to a merchant mentality, conducting direct war negotiations with the President Bush administration. To his way of thinking, this bargain, together with the risk of war, was unrealistic and would end up quite disappointing. At the same time, Turkey would be driven into an unpredictable state of confusion and turmoil in the immediate post-war period, thereby narrowing the room for manoeuvre in his foreign policy. This approach ignored the fact that the US was a superpower in this bargain. Likewise, the possible gains of bargain were also overstated. In his article, Cemal stated that Özal deceived himself into thinking that those who supported him today would show the same generosity thereafter. While Turkey's strategic position in the eyes of the West gradually decreased straight after the Cold War, it could not maintain its position by letting itself be used as a springboard in the region. The public opinion and the overwhelming majority of the people in this region were against the war. Opposition parties, which received 80 percent of the vote, were also against the war, for they found a great deal of common ground under such conditions. Cemal held strong opinions on this issue, pointing out that those who ignore this truth would have a great responsibility.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Cumhuriyet*, 30.12.1990, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Hasan Cemal, Ne yazık ki savaş [Unfortunately war]", *Cumhuriyet*, 17.01.1991, p. 1, 17.

It is possible to evaluate the whole progress mentioned above as follows: ANAP should have formulated its own policies and not fallen under the influence of President Özal, who should be impartial according to the Constitution and must ensure the harmonious functioning of the organs of the State. However Özal could not cut himself off from his former party, which displayed a non-democratic management style. Another situation incompatible with the democratic process was that ANAP and Özal, who rose to power through democratic means, turned a deaf ear to the demands of the opposition parties and the majority outside the Parliament. They both were against the merchant-styled policies of Özal. On the one hand, ANAP, which preferred to be in power again in the next election, chose not to be away from its natural leader Özal; on the other hand, Özal, too, charted his own path and fulfilled his personal desires through ANAP. From a different viewpoint, in the future, ANAP and Özal relied on the Gulf War to cling to power. By manoeuvring to gain a bigger share of the pie in the Gulf War, they expected to get more votes in the next general election. Prime Minister Akbulut and the deputies of ANAP, presumably, did not react strongly to Özal's domineering activities, as they would like to remain in their present positions in the next 1991 elections. It is debatable whether Özal and ANAP preferred personal and party interests over Turkey's national interests. Moreover, foreign policy, which must be a topic discussed separately and formulated in the context of a non-partisan framework, was brought to the agenda within the scope of domestic policy issues, which depend on the interests of political parties.

In conclusion, Ozal thought that the US would follow Turkish-sided policies only when Turkey had close contact with him. Ozal indirectly weakened Turkish foreign policy, for he almost made Turkey dependent on economic issues. He also bypassed the Turkish foreign ministry. On the other hand, the US considered Ozal a suitable partner for its interests in the Middle East. Instead of political participation, Ozal pushed for depoliticization of political activities. He turned a deaf ear to the objections of opposition in Gulf Crisis period.

The Legacy of the War to Turkey

The first Gulf War contributed substantially to the US' gaining absolute confidence in its further policies. American policy-makers did not want Iraq to seem completely beaten down in 1991, as they had to balance Ayatollah Khomeini's fundamentalist Iran in the Gulf with Iraq.⁵⁸ On the other hand, when it comes to Iraq, the US intelligence report was quite interesting in the aftermath of the Gulf War. According to the Directorate of Intelligence report

⁵⁸ Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, Routledge, New York, 2007, pp. 228-229.

dated March 6, 1991 Saddam was in a position to keep himself and his regime in power in all circumstances. He would do whatever necessary to stay in power without missing a beat. As stated by the report, both as long as UN sanctions remain and Saddam is unable to sell oil, his domestic position will be increasingly at huge risk.⁵⁹

Turkey, on the other hand, suffered economic and political losses in the Gulf War. Whereas Özal had great expectations from both the United States and the Gulf countries, the revenues from the pipeline were stopped, and the border trade with Iraq was cut off. In addition, unemployment increased in the Southeast of Turkey and Iraq could not pay its debts to Turkey. All these developments led to utter ruin for Turkey. The economic problems in the Southeast Anatolia region of Turkey further aggravated the situation related to Kurdish problem. On the one hand, rising unemployment served the interests of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). On the other hand, due to the power gap in Northern Iraq, the PKK settled here and increased its antagonistic attitudes towards Turkey. Additionally, Turkey's involvement in the Gulf War fell short of its expectations with regard to joining the EU and yielded negative results.⁶⁰ The PKK has been a controversial issue since the Özal era in the process of foreign policy formulation and implementation. Similarly, strategy towards the Iraqi Kurds remained highly influential.⁶¹

In terms of politics, economic and security, Turkey was the country most deeply and adversely affected by the Iraqi refugee crisis.⁶² Iraqi Kurds, fled from Saddam and took refuge in Turkey, worsened the problem and induced the Kurds living in Turkey to raise their state of consciousness.⁶³ Saddam Hussein took action to force the Northern Iraq Kurds to take refuge in Turkey in the wake of the Gulf War. A solution was sought for these people to return to their homes. In a declaration dated April 10, 1991, President Bush announced that he placed an outright ban on any military actions in the lands north of Iraq's 36th parallel. The issue of how to protect the peshmerga came to the fore with the USA's decision to withdraw its troops from the region in June 1991. An allied strike force, named "*Combined Task Force*" or "*Poised Hammer*" and assembled and led by the United States, was formed in Turkey.

⁵⁹ *The Central Intelligence Agency Records Search Tool (CREST)*, "Iraq: Implications of Insurrection and Prospects for Saddam's Survival", 16.03.1991.

⁶⁰ Uzel, *ibid*, p. 258.

⁶¹ Charountaki, *ibid*, p. 189.

⁶² Ünal Acar, "Şartlı Mülteciler ve Ulusal Güvenlik [Conditional Refugee and National Security]", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Vol. 23, No.3, 2019, p. 1216.

⁶³ Uzel, *ibid*, p. 258.

Not long after "*Poised Hammer*" was deployed in the region, a "*Kurdish Autonomy*" movement emerged in Northern Iraq. Finally, together with the support of the United States to this autonomy, the territorial integrity of Turkey was threatened due to Saddam's inability to intervene to the north of the 36th parallel.⁶⁴ Strangely enough, the news that Poised Hammer, which was deployed with the aim of ensuring the return of Iraqi Kurds who took refuge in Iran and Turkey to the North of Iraq, supported the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), an anti-Turkey terrorist organization, was covered in the media.⁶⁵

The following points, by the way, can be highlighted when the Kurdish problem is evaluated specifically for Özal: He did not sympathize with the radical attitudes towards the Kurdish people, as he was simultaneously condemning the activities of the PKK. Despite the fact that the military bureaucracy strongly resisted the peaceful and federative plans for the resolution of the Kurdish question, Özal did not hesitate to support such attitudes.⁶⁶

Furthermore, as well as staying away from maintaining status quo, Özal also abandoned the guiding principle, "*Peace at Home, Peace in the World*". Being detached from reality, he lived in a fantasy world with dreams of capturing Mosul-Kirkuk and having a say in the post-Gulf War Middle East political map. The business world and economic factors came to prominence during the whole term of Özal in foreign policy decision-making process. The fact that Özal, whose term in office in Parliament and became the President, felt no concern about being re-elected, made it possible to opt for unrestrained behaviours in foreign policy. The 1991 Gulf War represented a watershed in Turkish Foreign Policy in that respect.

Except for that mentioned, his unconventional political views, his tendency to react in a heated and impetuous way should be assessed as Özal's personal characteristics, not as a legacy to Turkish political life. He generally acted on his own initiative and played an active role in both domestic and external affairs. Frequently, he excluded the bureaucracy, thus being a formidable opponent to established order somehow. All these distinguishing features of his were also influential in shaping government policy during the Gulf War. Having the most cordial relations with the US politicians placed Özal in a unique position in Turkish Political History.

⁶⁴ Armaoğlu, *ibid*, pp. 890-891.

⁶⁵ Acar, *ibid*, p. 1216.

⁶⁶ Haldun Çancı - Şevket Serkan Şen, "Turkish dilemma after Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991): an analysis of 'negative consequences'", *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2010, p. 283.

Conclusion

From the perspective of Turkey, the Gulf War should be considered together with the notions of "*globalization process*", "*transition to a unipolar world order*", and President Özal's policy of "opening up to the outside world". To put it more clearly, the Cold War had already 'officially' ended when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev met with the US President George Bush on December 3, 1989. It should also be noted that the Gulf War was a war that occurred in the last year of the Soviet Union, which was tackling its own internal problems. Consequently, had the Cold War and the bipolar view of the world prevailed, neither Bush nor Özal might have followed such a policy towards Gulf region.

Under the Özal administration and rule of the Motherland Party (ANAP), it may be contended that Turkish Foreign Policy, which had always maintained the status quo till then, denoted a major rupture attempt from the independent and accustomed foreign policy approach of the Kemalists. The bureaucracy encountered such considerable difficulties in the decision-making mechanism that Özal's arbitrary decisions disabled the Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the government.

Turgut Özal, despite being President and the fact that his former political party was in power, could not convince the opposition parties, public opinion and military elites to go to war with the United States against Iraq, although he longed to be involved in. The opposition parties, the public opinion, and military elites, acting in unison, contributed together to keep them partly out of war.

Turkey was against Iraq but on the USA's side in the Gulf War. Özal broke with the state tradition by excluding bureaucracy, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All of these stemmed from Özal's personal views and thoughts. Although he did not hold the post of prime minister, any minister of the ruling party or Member of Parliament, he acted as if he was a prime minister. He did not adopt a neutral position during his presidency in the Gulf War. Turkey's economic loss by participating in the embargo, the establishment of a new "*Kurdish autonomy*" in Northern Iraq, the government's inability to challenge the problems of mass migration, and the strengthening of the PKK can be interpreted as the failure of Turkish Foreign Policy, or rather be evaluated as the failure of Özal's policy. The net result of all these changes was that at a time when the opposition parties brought angry reaction, in reality, they produced a prudent approach and farsighted ideas.

Özal's failure to abide by the rule of law and his use of the state apparatus in line with his personal wishes and interests were indications of an authoritarian behaviour. This also manifested itself during the Gulf War. Özal and ANAP, under his leadership, perceived being in power as being free from the control of

opposition. Behaviours contrary to state tradition, external interventions in institutions, exceeding the authority were legacies to Turkish political life from them. The post-1991 Gulf War Turkey was neither able to realize the acquisition of Mosul-Kirkuk, which was planned at the beginning, nor could it get a slice of the cake. Hence, Turkey projected an image as if it served US interests. The constructive criticisms from the opposition proved to be justified.

For good or ill, the 1991 Gulf War, marked the onset of the U.S' becoming both a permanent and determinant power in the Middle East. Özal's inappropriate behaviour such as violating the constitution and not complying with the customs on occasion, provided a bad example for those who ruled the country in the following period. Turkey's participation in this war only in an indirect way, is thanks to those who oppose an adventurous undertaking. The U.S. benefited greatly from the cooperation with Turkey, especially with the contributions from Özal. The post-Gulf War period also witnessed the emergence of the refugee problem for Turkey..

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