



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of International Relations

**THE IMPACT OF THE KURDISH ISSUE AND THE PKK
TERRORISM ON TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY
BETWEEN 1988-1999**

Alparslan Tarkan

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2012

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KABUL VE ONAY

Alparslan Tarkan tarafından hazırlanan “The Impact of the Kurdish Issue and the PKK Terrorism on Turkish Foreign Policy Between 1988-1999” başlıklı bu çalışma, 21.06.2012 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



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Alparslan TARKAN

ÖZET

TARKAN, Alparslan. 1988-1999 Yılları Arasında Kürt Sorunu ve PKK Terörünün Türk Dış Politikasına Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2012.

Bu tezin amacı, Kürt Sorununun, özellikle PKK Terörünün, İran-Irak Savaşı'nın sona ermesiyle başlayan 1988 yılı ile PKK'nın lideri Abdullah Öcalan'ın yakalanarak Türkiye'yi getirildiği 1999 yılları arasında, Türk Dış Politikası üzerine etkisini analiz etmektir. Çalışmanın diğer ana amaçları, söz konusu dönemde Dünya siyasetinde meydana gelen, İran-Irak Savaşı ile Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermeleri, Birinci Körfez Savaşı ve bu savaşlar sonunda meydana gelen Kürt mülteci sorunu kapsamında, bölge devletleri olan Irak ve Suriye ile büyük devletler olan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avrupa Ekonomik Topluluğu/Avrupa Birliği'nin Türkiye ile olan ilişkilerinde, Kürt sorunu ve PKK terörünün etkisi ve yeri olacaktır.

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, kurulduğu yıl olan 1923'ten bu yana, çok sayıda iç ve dış politika mevzuu ile ilgilenmek durumunda kalmıştır. Orta Doğu gibi, sorunlarla dolu bir bölgede, Türkiye Kürt Sorunu ve PKK terörünü çözmek için birçok politikalar geliştirmektedir. Çalışmada, Türkiye'nin özellikle PKK terörünü çözmek için harcadığı çabalar ile bunların Türkiye'nin dış politikasına etkisi, odak noktaları olacaktır. Türkiye'nin bu mücadelesinde, İran-Irak Savaşı, Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi, Birinci Körfez Savaşı ve sonrasındaki gelişmeler, önemli etkiler bırakmıştır. Söz konusu dönemde, genel olarak Türkiye'nin söz konusu sorunlara, güvenlik perspektifinden, dolayısıyla realist bir perspektiften çözüm bulmaya çalıştığı anlaşılmaktadır.

Çalışma, beş ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde, çalışmanın kapsamı, metodolojisi, teorik çerçevesi açıklanacak ve Türk dış politikasının genel özellikleri ele alınacaktır. İkinci bölümde, Kürtlerin kısaca tarih sahnesine çıkışları; dil, din, ırk ve yaşadıkları coğrafi bölge hakkında bilgiler verilecek; Türkiye'deki Kürtler ile ilk olarak PKK'nın ortaya çıkması ve bu dönemde Türk dış politikasındaki etkisi ifade edilecektir. Üçüncü bölümde, İran-Irak Savaşı bağlamında Kürt Sorunu ve PKK terörü konularının, Türk dış politikasına etkileri irdelenecek olup, dördüncü bölümde de Birinci Körfez Savaşı'nın sonuçları kapsamında, Kürt sorunu ve PKK terörünün Türk dış politikasına etkileri üzerinde durulacak ve sonuç bölümü olan beşinci bölümde de tüm bu olayların, 1988-1999 döneminde Türk dış politikasına etkileri üzerinde bir değerlendirme ve analiz yapılacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Türk dış politikası, PKK, Kürt sorunu, Irak, Suriye, A.B.D.

ABSTRACT

TARKAN, Alparslan, “The Impact of the Kurdish Issue and the PKK Terrorism on Turkish Foreign Policy between 1988-1999”

The aim of the study is to analyze the impact of the Kurdish issue and more specifically of the PKK terrorism over Turkish foreign policy between 1988, the year when the Iran-Iraq War ended, and 1999, the year when the head of PKK was arrested and brought back to Turkey. The other major aims of the thesis are the effects and importance of the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism on Turkey's relations with the regional states such as Iraq and Iran along with Turkey's relations with the major powers such as the United States of America and the European Economic Community/European Union, in the scope of the major structural changes in the World politics such as the end of Iran-Iraq War and First Gulf War and the Kurdish refugee crisis which broke out at the end of these wars.

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, it had to deal with certain domestic and foreign policy issues. In a conflict-ridden region such as the Middle East, Turkey has been developing certain policies to solve the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism. In the study, the focal points are going to be especially the efforts that Turkey had to dedicate in order to solve the PKK terrorism along with their effects on Turkish foreign policy. In Turkey's combat against these issues, Iran-Iraq War, end of Cold War, First Gulf War and the developments that took place left significant effects. During the period in question, it is established that Turkey tried to find solution to the issues from a security perspective, hence from a realist perspective.

The study is composed of five chapters. In the first chapter, the scope of the thesis, its methodology and its conceptual framework are going to be explained and the basic tenets of the Turkish foreign policy are going to be indicated. In the second chapter, information concerning the Kurds' appearance in the history and the information on their religion, language, race and the territory where they inhabit are going to be provided; Kurds in Turkey along with PKK's first emergence and their effects on the Turkish foreign policy are going to be shown. In the third chapter, the effects of the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism on the Turkish foreign policy, in the scope of the Iran-Iraq war is going to be examined; in the fourth chapter the effects of the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism are going to be mentioned in the scope of the results of the First Gulf War and finally in the fifth chapter, an evaluation and analysis are going to be made on the effects of all of these events on the Turkish foreign policy.

Key Words: Turkish foreign policy, PKK terrorism, Kurdish issue, Iran-Iraq War, Iraq, Syria, the U.S.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, many issues have become the center of attention in Turkish Foreign Policy. In the study, the central point is going to be the Kurdish issue after the foundation of the PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan) in 1978¹ or 1979² as a Marxist-Leninist separatist terrorist organization to declare an independent Kurdish state in the south eastern Anatolia, its first terrorist attacks against the Turkish military forces in 1983³ and 1984⁴; especially the turning points and their influence on the Turkish Foreign Policy during the period between 1988-1999, namely the year when the Iran-Iraq War ended and the year when the head of the terrorist organization the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan was arrested, from a realist perspective. This period is chosen, since they comprise major events both for the Middle East and for Turkey's domestic political environment. 1988 signifies the year after which the Iran-Iraq War ended and Saddam Hussein concentrated Iraq's military capabilities on Northern Iraq and the Kurdish community inhabiting in the region. The dramatic incidents such as the use of chemical and biological weapons against the Northern Iraq Kurdish community are worthy of remarking, since they are one of the known instances of the total extermination of a civilian population in the history by this sort of unconventionally lethal weapons. The impact of the events quickly found a place at the center of the international community, in a world in which the Cold War was approaching to the end. The dates are important for Turkey, taken into consideration both its foreign relations and its internal politics of the era; and also for the PKK and the Kurdish problem both inside and outside Turkey where the other Kurdish groups were

1 İsmet İnşet, PKK, *Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı*, TDN Yayınları, (1993), p. 3. See also Svante E. Cornell, "The Land of Many Crossroads The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics", *Orbis* Vol. 45 Issue 1, (Winter2001), p. 39

2 Martin Van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, *State Terror in Turkey* (Feb., 1984), p. 11. See also Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 395; Chris Kutschera, "Mad Dreams of Independence: The Kurds of Turkey and the PKK", *Middle East Report*, No. 189, *The Kurdish Experience* (Jul. - Aug., 1994), p. 13

3 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 396

4 Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 21

inhabiting, namely Iran, Iraq and Syria and also their influence of Turkey's relations with other states.

In a region, where many ethnic and religious groups exist and the number of conflict arising from this diversity is competing for a leading position in the world⁵, the Kurdish community appears to be one of the most controversial issues in the Middle Eastern Politics. There are different and controversial dates when the emergence of the Kurdish community in the history is taken into consideration. According to some sources it emerged in the 12th Century AD ⁶, to some in the 9th century AD ⁷, to some in 7th century BC and to some 614 BC⁸. The Kurdish community did not have any independent political presence neither in the form of an empire in the age of empires, which practically lasted until the end of the First World War in 1918, nor in the form of a nation-state, which started with Westphalia Peace Treaty in 1648 and has been continuing to date. It did not have even the autonomy like the autonomous Nakhcivan of today. The complexity of the Kurdish problem does not only come from the fact that they are a separate ethnic group in Turkey, but also from the fact that they are spread among four states-Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria- which are not so eager to give the cultural rights that the Kurds ask for or the eventual independent state of their own which they name Kurdistan⁹. A community inhabiting on a territory, which is divided first between two in 1923 and later among four states, is constituting the natural outcome: intertwined conflicts and problems, and when especially in a conflict-ridden region as the Middle East, it only gets more complicated. The Kurdish issue is not considered to be a regional affair anymore, given the attention of the major powers of each historical period, namely first France and the UK after the First World War and later the United States and Russia after the Second World War.

5 Mirjam E. Sørli, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Håvard Strand, "Why Is There so Much Conflict in the Middle East?", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Feb., 2005), p. 143

6 Jan Knappert, "The Kurds: The Brief History", *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 1993), p. 67

7 G. R. Driver, "The Dispersion of the Kurds in Ancient Times", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 4 (Oct., 1921), p. 566

8 Nader Entessar, "The Kurds in Post-Revolutionary Iran and Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), p. 911

9 Meena Menon, "Kurds in Turkey: Fighting for Survival", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 13 (Apr. 1, 1995), p. 668. See also Bertram Dickson, "Journeys in Kurdistan", *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Blackwell Publishing (Apr., 1910), p. 357; Hussein Kaya and Faruk Serhat, "La vía kurda hacia la autodeterminación", *Política Exterior*, Vol. 5, No. 20 (Spring, 1991), p. 73.

After stating the main elements of the research and before laying out the conceptual framework and the methodology to be used in the study, it is essential to formulate the research question. The research questions are “Did the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism affect the Turkish foreign policy between 1988-1999?” and if yes "What is the impact of the Kurdish issue, more specifically of the PKK terrorism, on the Turkish Foreign Policy between 1988-1999?". The study is going to focus on Turkey's attitude and policies towards the Kurdish community in Turkey and afterwards the influence of the Kurdish issue on Turkey's foreign relations is going to be discussed and explained.

1.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THE METHODOLOGY

The Kurdish issue in Turkey can be divided into two periods. In the first period, as is expected from a new-born state, the Turkish approach to the Kurdish issue was conceived from a security perspective. The Turkish approach to the issue is divided into two periods: The first period starts from the foundation of the republic in 1923 and lasts until the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the head and founder of the PKK. The second period starts with the beginning of the 1990s and has been continuing until today and it can be called as the democratic solution period.¹⁰ There were certain intervals during the first period, such as Menderes era between 1950-1960¹¹ and the government established by the SHP (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti- Social Democrat Party) and DYP (Doğru Yol Partisi- True Path Party) in 1991¹². Nevertheless, among many variables of both times, especially the one in 1991, right after the Cold War and the Gulf War, it appears that the state's approach did not drastically deviate from the security approach. Parallel with the Turkish state's approach to the issue, the conceptual framework of both the study and the period mentioned above has been from a realist perspective. In the classical realist approach, the human nature is presumed to be pessimistic, namely the mankind is always tended to be self-interested. The international relations are embedded by conflicts and bona fide cooperation among them is nearly always not an option. Thus

10 Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, Seta Yayınları, (2011), p.12

11 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, “Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 65

12 Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, Seta Yayınları, (2011), p.207

the realists consider "war" as the most common tool in the relations among the states; hence the ultimate option to resolve the conflicts or problems among the states becomes war. When war is so much central in inter-state relations, state survival and the national security become the highest regarded values. The realist approach presumes that there cannot be or can be a very limited progress in international politics comparable to that in domestic political life.¹³

According to the leading realists, Thucydides and Hans Joachim Morgenthau, in accordance with human tendency to reach the maximum power, there is a vital need to be and stay strong. Hence the concept of power is situated right in the middle of realism.¹⁴ The doctrine of *raison d'état*- reason of state is influential in state leaders' attitudes and they are always willing to maximize the power of their states in order to provide and ensure the security of the state. The doctrine of *raison d'état* is the fundamental principal of the state's attitude both in domestic politics and in the international realm; it is cited as the State's First Law of Motion.¹⁵ In this regard, the concept of national interest has of utmost significance and morality in the statespersons' decisions regarding policy options in the Foreign Affairs of their states is not sought. Statespersons are responsible for the survival of their states and nations, which is closely related to the security concept of realism.¹⁶ Another reason why the study and Turkey's attitude towards the Kurdish issue is defined as realist is the fact that according to Realism, only states can be subjects of international relations.¹⁷ Hence statism becomes the other important principle of Realism and Turkey's attitude to ignore the Kurdish community through its official view that "those people are mountain Turks who had forgotten their language"¹⁸ constitutes an important side of the Turkish domestic

13 Sorensen, Georg- Jackson, Robert, "Introduction to International Relations", Oxford University Press, (2007), p. 60

14 K.M Fierke, Milja Kurki, Timothy Dunne, Steve Smith, "International Relations Theories", Oxford University Press, (2007), p. 55.

15 Tim Dunne, Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism", "The Globalization of World Politics", Oxford University Press, (2008) p. 92.

16 Ibid. p.93. See also K.M Fierke, Milja Kurki, Timothy Dunne, Steve Smith, "International Relations Theories", Oxford University Press, (2007), p. 59

17 Tim Dunne, Brian C. Schmidt, "Realism", "The Globalization of World Politics", Oxford University Press, (2008) Ibid. p.93. See also Sorensen, Georg- Jackson, Robert, "Introduction to International Relations", Oxford University Press, (2007), p.60.

18 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78. See also Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003) p. 33

and international policy over the Kurdish problem. Due to the fact that the Kurdish community exists in four states, Turkey chose not to accept a stateless ethnic group as a phenomenon in its internal and external relations until the 1990s.

As such, the methodology of this study is in compliance with the basic arguments of the realist theories. Along with the positivist estimations, interpretive assumptions are significant in the study. This is a very significant point in this type of a study, since the main theme of the study is the Kurds, a community which never had any state of their own as cited above. Besides that, the other subjects of the study are the Kurdish community inhabiting in the European states, which is becoming a very significant tool for the European states' internal politics, especially in Germany hosting a considerable amount of Turkish citizens with Kurdish origins thus making the subject a highly political phenomenon; the figures and losses because of the PKK terrorism, whose results vary in different resources; the figures concerning the extradition of the PKK members from the European states, which has very unreliable data both in the academic resources and in the archives of the official state institutions in Turkey. These are presenting remarkable challenges to this research.

Considered from a realist perspective, the attitudes of the states' leaders in question here- Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, the US and the EC/EU states- all carried a realist public morality. For instance, the Anfal operation, whose result is claimed to cause the death of some 100.000 noncombatant Kurds, fits the description of immorality of a state leader's actions.¹⁹ In order to ensure the survival of them or to maximize their influence over the region, it is seen that some political and material sources are used in foreign relations of countries here, some of which are water politics, military power or terrorism.

At the beginning of this study, a comprehensive literature review was made in order to grasp comprehensive knowledge on the Kurdish Community, the Turkish Foreign Policy, terrorism and the way it is carried out by the terrorist organizations, the end of Cold War and Turkey's approach to its own Kurdish population. The High Education Board (Turkish Acronym- Y.Ö.K.) 's online database was searched and it is found that

¹⁹ Michael M. Gunter, "A de facto Kurdish State in Northern Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1993), p. 295

there does not exist a considerable amount of comprehensive studies concerning the dates chosen for the study, i.e. between 1988-1999, except Ismail Selvi's work *Countering state-supported terrorism: The PKK and Turkish Foreign Policy Towards The Middle East*. However, the study here is intended to supply a comprehensive research over the period between 1988-1999 and it is not only focused on Turkey's foreign relations between the Middle Eastern states, but also its relations with the major powers, namely the US and the EEC/EU. In relation to the Kurdish issue, the leading authors are Huseyin Yayman, Andrew Mango, Martin Van Bruinessen, David Bradshaw, Nihat Ali Ozcan, İsmet İmset, Michael M. Gunter, Henri J. Barkey, Graham E. Fuller, Menon Meena, Jan Knappert, G.R. Driver, Nader Entessar and Robert Olson. The studies and researches of the authors are frequently used in order to provide a comprehensive and precise description of the Kurdish Community in the Middle East, namely the history of the Kurds, their cultures, religions, language and their aspirations over the years starting from the appearance of the Kurds in the history. Hence the sources in this study are books, articles, interviews with anonymous sources and the internet.

There are several overlapping variables constituting a considerable challenge for this sort of study whose subject is comprising complicated issues such as the Middle Eastern politics, Kurdish issue, terrorism and the end of the Cold War. The variables are the Turkish Republic's foreign policy; Kurdish community inhabiting in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria; the security concerns, the aftermath of Iran- Iraq and Gulf Wars, the Kurdish refugee problem, domestic factors such as the Turkish policy-makers' decisions, international structural factors such as the end of the Cold War, the Operation Provide Comfort, The Poised Hammer Forces, water issue between Turkey and Syria- Iraq, the capture of Abdullah Öcalan.

1.2. THE DATE LIMITATION FOR THE STUDY

As stated above the dates are chosen meticulously since after the literature review which had been made previously, there appeared a gap concerning Turkey's handling of the Kurdish issue and the impact of the Kurdish issue to the foreign relations of the Turkish

state. This is also partly because of the fact that the Kurdish issue started to constitute and strongly influence the Turkish foreign policy after the Iran-Iraq War and the time's Kurdish refugee problem. On the other hand, the other reason why the period between 1988-1999 is the subject in the study is the fact that between these years, the terrorist campaign of the PKK was at its peak. Without a doubt, the timing becomes more and more noteworthy, when the change in world politics is also taken into account. The Cold War ended in 1989 and the Gulf War erupted in 1991. Moreover, the end of the Cold War alone is a significant development for the Kurdish issue and it produced direct effects to the Kurdish issue through its outcome for the ethnic politics to come to the forefront in states' political options.²⁰ The study is going to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Kurdish Refugee Problem, which was the result of Saddam's action against the Kurds in 1988 and in 1991 after Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War respectively. This constitutes a drastic change in the dynamics of the whole issue, since the Kurdish issue appeared in western public opinion as the victims of Saddam's wrath and his biological and chemical weapons. These events caused massive world attention on this ethnic group, which does not have a state of their own. After the refugee crisis, the international community and the NGOs have directed their attention to the first considerable international crisis of the Post- Cold War era: Gulf War in 1991. The Gulf War is one of the most important turning points, in the sense that it drew the attention of the international community to the Kurdish community living in the Middle East. Especially the crisis after the 1991 Gulf War is the one to pay attention, since it took place right after the Berlin Wall collapsed and the human rights issues climbed right top of the most of the Western states' and of their civil societies' agendas. Hence, the issue came into the agenda of the World and it actually never went away since then. The Kurdish aspirations concerning the cultural and linguistic rights, at least in Turkey, have gained more sympathy among the Western democratic states. This fact was the reason of the relative support of the Western states and the Western originated NGOs to the Kurdish movements in the region, from time to time causing the dislike of the Turkish policy-makers concerning the issue.

20 Hüseyin Yayman, "Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası", Seta Yayınları, (2011), p.196

1.3. BASIC TENETS OF THE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

In terms of the realist discourse, Turkey cannot be accepted as one of the great powers of the 20th century. It has certain differences and similarities with the Ottoman Empire, its predecessor. The basic tendency of both of them is to keep the balance of power among especially the great powers of their times. Both states avoided direct confrontation with the great powers- in the Ottoman time France, Britain and Germany and following Turkey's foundation and the Second World War The United States and The Soviet Union- and they tried to play one to the other. Opposite to its successor, Turkey's ambition is to continue its homogenous population, to remain and reach the European civilization standard as a nation-state. One of the most notable differences between them appears to be Turkey's tendency to change, rather than staying constant as the Ottoman Empire sought doing. This is because of the systemic changes both in the international system and the changes that the Turkish nation experienced after the significant events that took place inside and outside of the country.²¹

Contrary to its weakness vis-à-vis the great powers, Turkey is located in a very attractive region for the great powers and this drew the attention of them towards Turkey. It is situated on an area which is neighbor to the Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East, Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Turkey is the member of certain European institutions such as the Council of Europe (COE), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). It exists also in other institutions of different affiliations such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). This is the evidence that Turkey is inclined to be part of different organizations in different regions demonstrating country's position somewhere in between, i.e. Europe and the Middle East. The differences of the regions to which Turkey is neighbor are remarkable in terms of religion, culture and lifestyles. These aspects are Turkey's advantage over other medium powers.

21 Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikası", (2008), Volume 1, p.19. See also Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Seventy-Five Years of the Turkish Republic (Oct., 1999), p. 152

On the other hand, about 97 percent of Turkey's land mass lies in Asia, however Turkey's progressive elite consider their country as part of Europe. Around 98 per cent of its population is Muslim, and yet Turkey is a secular country and the application of religion through the years has taken a different path from that of other Islamic countries, rendering Turkey unique among all other Muslim states in terms of its secular parliamentary system. Turkey has Middle Eastern traits in its culture; however it is participating in European Cultural Events in sports and arts. Its economy is the part of the World capitalist and liberal camp and it is pursuing policies to change into a stronger market economy.²²

Until the end of Cold War, partly from the Turkish ruling élite's stance based on Atatürk's saying "Peace at home, peace in the World", partly from the international political environment of the Cold War politics and Turkey's role in the Western camp, Turkey pursued passive and unaggressive policies and attitudes in its foreign policy choices. For instance, the Turkish army, except from the Cyprus issue, had never been actively used in any military conflict in Turkey's relations with its neighbors or with any other state. However, with the end of the Cold War, Turkey's Western-oriented leader, President Turgut Özal, shifted this passive stance of the Turkish foreign policy. Özal pursued policies which aimed at proving Turkey's role and strategic significance even after the Cold War especially during the Gulf War against Iraq. He tried to demonstrate that even if the Cold War ended and the bipolar world was no more existing, with its geostrategic location in the Middle East, Turkey would still play an important role in both West's defense and NATO alliance and also in the policies of the West in the Middle East.²³ This constitutes an important stage both for the Turkish foreign policy and for the Kurdish issue, especially when Turkey's policy of intimidating Syria with its military before Öcalan was forced to leave Syria.

Turkey's aforementioned stance for being accepted as European, rather than a Middle Eastern nation and state, brought the desires for full-membership to the first EC then the

22 Ibid. p. 20-22. See also Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Seventy-Five Years of the Turkish Republic (Oct., 1999), p. 152-153

23 Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (Spring, 1991), p. 35

EU into the central attention of the Turkish foreign policy. Especially Özal's foreign policy choice was to make Turkey a member of the EU in a World where the Western and Eastern blocs were non-existent and in this new foreign policy option of Özal, Kurds and Turkey's attitude towards its own Kurdish community has constituted a central issue in its relations with the EU since then. Since after the Cold War ended, both the ethnic issues and human rights came to the attention and became one of the priorities of the EU member states and also of the US.

The impact of the Kurdish issue is going to be understood more easily when the Turkish foreign policy's aforementioned tendencies and attributes are taken into consideration. Seemingly a domestic policy issue, the policies pursued against its Kurdish community by Turkey were drastically affected by the country's stance for becoming a nation-state, different from its predecessor as stated above. In the early years of the Republic, Turkey chose building the nation-state on the Turkish values, dedicating less attention for the cultural rights of the other ethnic factors such as the Kurds and the Kurdish issue became one of the issues that affected Turkish foreign policy for 15 years starting from the first considerable terrorist attack of the PKK in 1984.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF THE KURDISH COMMUNITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE PKK

In the study the Kurdish community is going to be one of the central variables. This chapter is intended to provide detailed and examined knowledge over the Kurdish community, such as their history, their population, the regions and states where they inhabit, the predicaments that they experienced and their political tendencies and presence in the regions they live.

2.1 KURDS UNTIL THE FOUNDATION OF TURKEY

Although in the official Turkish rhetoric, the language and the existence of a different community were long overlooked, the Kurds have existed from the very beginning of the history in the South Eastern Anatolian region. It is established that the two oldest peoples of what is now eastern Turkey are the Armenians and the Kurds.²⁴ Their languages are also closely related, quite distinct from Persian, or Farsi, the official language of Iran, which was spoken there since the middle of the second millennium B.C. Kurdish is spoken along most of its western border in the Zagros Mountains.²⁵ There exists certain disagreements on what their language, i.e. the Kurdish is composed of. According to Seref Han, who is historian, Kurds are people who speak Kirmanci, Lur, Kelhur, and Gorani, which means that these are dialects of the same language. However, according to the accounts of Ziya Gökalp, sees Kelhur as a branch of Gorani, and argues that all of these as well as Zaza are different languages rather than dialects of the same language.²⁶ The general view is that the Kurds speak three major dialects and these dialects have profound differences in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.²⁷

24 Jan Knappert, "The Kurds: The Brief History", *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (June 1993), p. 67.

25 Ibid. p.67

26 Servet Mutlu, "Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Nov., 1996), p. 519

27 Graham E. Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Spring, 1993), p. 110

These three major dialects are Kermanji, Kurdi and Zaza along with the other dialects Lur, Kelhur, and Gorani.^{28 29} However, the first three are main dialects and these three dialects are so different from each other that a person speaking Kermanji and Kurdi is not in a position to understand Zaza.³⁰ It is even possible to compare the differences between these three dialects to the differences between French and Italian or between German and English. However, they do tend to overlap and shade off into each other.³¹ Even though there is a language handicap among these people, it is deemed to cite that there is a common language spoken among the Kurdish community. Although the area where the Kurdish community inhabits varies in different sources, it is an accepted understanding that in the north, in the province of Tabriz, the Kurds have been pushed west by the invasions of the Turkic-speaking Azeris, or Azerbaijanis, of the 12th and later centuries. The Kurds, in turn, pushed the Armenians farther to the north from their habitat, which once covered all of what is now eastern Turkey.^{32 33}

There are too many different figures when it comes to how many Kurds exist in the region. It appears that there are only estimates and the estimates are varying in relation to the fact that whether the owner of the figure wants to show that there is a huge Kurdish community or there are not many Kurds and the problem is not so significant. The figures are as follows:

In total, according to different resources, they amount to 18 million³⁴, over 20 million

28 Nader Entessar, "The Kurds in Post-Revolutionary Iran and Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), p. 913

29 Servet Mutlu, "Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Nov., 1996), p. 519

30 Nader Entessar, "The Kurds in Post-Revolutionary Iran and Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), p. 913

31 Graham E. Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Spring, 1993), p. 110

32 Jan Knappert, "The Kurds: The Brief History", *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (JUNE 1993), p. 67.

33 "Strabo's description is probably the most exact ; for, while admitting that some people considered the Gordiaean hills the whole chain that ran from the Taurus range in the neighbour hood of Edessa, the modern Uriah, to Nisibis (Nasîbîn) and beyond, thus dividing Sophene and the rest of Armenia from Mesopotamia, he himself states that they are the hills which lie astride the Tigris above Nasîbîn." G. R. Driver, "The Dispersion of the Kurds in Ancient Times", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 4, Cambridge University Press, (Oct., 1921), p. 564

34 Nader Entessar, "The Kurds in Post-Revolutionary Iran and Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), p. 911

³⁵, 20-25 million ³⁶, 24-29 million ³⁷, 25 million ³⁸, 26 million ³⁹, and 33,5 million ⁴⁰. When it comes to the Kurdish population inhabiting in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, the numbers are as various as the total population of the Kurdish Community stated above. According to the reliable sources, there are 8 million Kurds in Turkey, where they are officially referred to as the 'mountain Turks' ⁴¹ and that there is no distinction between Turks and Kurds⁴², 5 million in Iran, and 3 million in Iraq⁴³; 10 to 12 million in Turkey, 5 to 6 million in Iran, about 3,5 million in Iraq and 1 million in Syria⁴⁴; 12 million in Turkey ⁴⁵; 9-10 million in Turkey, 5 million in Iran, 4 million in Iraq and 0,6 million in Syria ⁴⁶; 12 million in Turkey ⁴⁷; 20 million in Turkey, 7 million in Iran, 4 million in

35 Graham E. Fuller, "The Fate of the Kurds", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Spring, 1993), p. 109

36 Robert Olson, "Turkey-Syria relations since the Gulf War: Kurds and water", *Middle East Policy*; (May 1997); 5, 2; Ethnic NewsWatch (ENW), p. 168. See also Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1992), p. 475

37 David McDowall, "Down but Not out? The Kurds in International Politics", *A Modern History of the Kurds*, London: IB Tauris, paperback edn., (1997), p. 3-4, 457

38 Amikam NACHMANI, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coing with Intertwinted Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 11. See also David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78; The Economist, "Survey Turkey," 8 June 1996

39 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 390

40 Meena Menon, "Kurds in Turkey: Fighting for Survival", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 13 (Apr. 1, 1995), p. 668

41 This rhetoric was used by many politicians or statespersons in the Turkish Republic. It is stated in one of the Sppeches of General Aytaç Yalman, a former Chief of the Gendarmerie: "We had been educated in that era, as there is no such thing as Kurds. We see Kurds as a branch of Turks. There are descriptions such as when they were walking in the mountains, they were making sounds like kart kurt and this is the reason why they are called Kurds. In that era, we see the social demands, in the scope of subversive activities. This situation shows us two points:

-The first one is that we had not seen the social side of the problem, hence we had not seen the problem on time.

-The second one is that there had never been an assimilation." Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (Febr. 2011), p. 48. See also Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 6

42 Andrew Mango, "Turks and Kurds: Review Article", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), p. 975

43 Nader Entessar, "The Kurds in Post-Revolutionary Iran and Iraq," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), p. 911

44 Robert W. Olson, *The Kurdish Nationalst Movement in the 1990s: Its impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, The University Press of Kentuckey, (1996), p. 84. See also Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1992), p. 475.

45 Amikam NACHMANI, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coing with Intertwinted Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 33

46 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78

47 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 390

Iraq and 1,5 million in Syria ⁴⁸ ; 20 million in Turkey, 8 million in Iran, 4-5- million in Iraq and 1,5 million in Syria ⁴⁹ ;15 per cent of the population in Turkey ⁵⁰ ;

As indicated in the aforementioned figures, the Kurds live in large numbers in Turkey, Iran and Iraq. On the other hand, the number of Kurds inhabiting in Syria and in the ex-USSR lands are relatively low. The land where the Kurds live is the mountainous terrain, which is separating the European countries from the Asian countries in the Middle East, of especially the Taurus, Hakkari and Zagros. These mountain ranges have also converted into the natural borders of a zone where meet the Turkish, Arab and Soviet cultures meet. This key situation between the East and West has given a very important strategic value to this region where the Kurdish community inhabits all along the history. Through these mountains, The Persian Royal Road had to be constructed, with them Alexander the Great could fight, through them the routes of campaigns, the silk and spice routes passed; the Germans built a strategic railroad in the Kurdish region on the Turkish-Syrian border and the British constructed the Hamilton route; the Kurdish region today serve the passage for oil pipeline which is transporting Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean and supporting the ample network of roads, communications and military bases raised for the NATO on the Turkish territory against the potential Soviet danger. The northern parts of the region forms the third south east of Turkey (220.000 square km) and the North of Syria (19.000 square km), while the region where the Kurdish community inhabits extends to the Northeast of Iran along the Turkish and Iraqi border (125.000 square km). In Iran and Iraq there exist ethnic Kurd groups detached from the central population in the East such as the Khorrasan province, in the first place and like the close parts of the Jordanian border in the second place. There is also an immense Kurdish Diaspora, several millions of the region reside in the industrial poles and in the big cities of the countries mentioned. ⁵¹

48 Meena Menon, "Kurds in Turkey: Fighting for Survival", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 13 (Apr. 1, 1995), p. 668

49 Tim Judah, "En el Kurdistán iraquí", *Política Exterior*, Vol. 16, No. 90 (Nov. - Dec., 2002), p.101

50 William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 68, No. 4(Oct., 1992), pp. 682

51 Hüseyin Kaya and Faruk Serhat, "La Vía Kurda Hacia la Autodeterminación", *Política Exterior*, Vol. 5, No. 20 (Spring, 1991), p. 74-75

With respect to the religion, Kurds are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims. In the Kermanshah (Bakh-taran) region of Iran, most Kurds, like their Persian counterparts, are adherents of the minority Shi'a sect of Islam. One of the interesting points in their religious background is the fact that Sunni-Shi'a schism, which from time to time has erupted into Muslim communal conflicts between religious groups, has never been present among the Kurdish community living in the region. Even if there have been conflicts between Kurdish Sunni and Shi'a leaders, the origin of the conflict has not been over religious and doctrinal disputes, but over political matters affecting the Kurdish nation. Prominent Kurdish religious leaders have traditionally been able to use their prestige and social status to transcend religious sectarianism and act on behalf of the Kurdish nation as a unified whole.⁵²

An ordinary peasant, inhabiting in the land, regardless of their ethnic origin or religion live is semi-feudal bondage. In this respect, like many mountain peoples, the Kurds are independent, tribal, fractious, warlike and hospitable.⁵³ Partly nomadic, partly settled in villages and towns, the Kurds have never been 'unified' under a single leader, tribal loyalties are strong, and traditional concepts of honor find expression in violent conflicts. From time to time, a strong or charismatic tribal leader might wield several tribes into a larger confederation, though it would seldom outlive him.⁵⁴ For much of the last 500 years, the lands occupied by the Kurds were under the sovereignty of two empires: Turkish and Iranian.⁵⁵ The Kurds have been under the rule of others throughout their history including the Sassanian, Safavid, and Ottoman Empires.⁵⁶ Yet, apart from periodic demands for taxes or soldier (which were often ignored), Turkish or Iranian rule scarcely impinged upon the Kurds.⁵⁷ With the evolutionary change of the state system in the nineteenth century, the relative freedom of the Kurds also changed.

52 Nader Entessar, "The Kurds in Post-Revolutionary Iran and Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1984), p. 914-915

53 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78. See also Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 6

54 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78

55 Ibid. p. 78

56 Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Transnationalization of Human Rights Norms and Its Impact on Internally Displaced Kurds", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), pp. 978

57 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the era of empires began to come to an end and out of these moribund empires such as Iranian, Ottoman and Austrian Empires, new nation-states emerged. These empires saw the solution to avoid the break-up, in strengthening the central authority and this solution was the end of the autonomous Kurdish principalities. Emir Badr Khan, who was defeated in 1843, was the last independent Kurdish prince in Turkey. As a result, the Kurds became disadvantaged communities in states run by nationalist Turks, Iranians and (after 1925) the Arabs. In 1880, Sheikh Obeidullah of Nehri led the first modern Kurdish nationalist uprising against the Turks and Persians, inaugurating a continuous series of Kurdish rebellions in Turkey, Iran and, later, Iraq. In 1905, Ottoman Empire, in the Abdulhamid II era, made use of the special militia forces which were established in order to cope with the local rebellions.⁵⁸ This was one of the effective ways to combat the Kurdish uprising of the time.

One of the times when Kurds came closest to independence was after the First World War with the Treaty of Sèvres. The British and the French decided that the Kurds should get autonomy in what is now eastern Turkey, and conduct a plebiscite on full independence after one year.⁵⁹ The 1920 Treaty of Sèvres which formalized this also provided for the largely Kurdish wilayet (province) of Mosul in what is now northeastern Iraq to join Kurdistan, if a majority of its inhabitants agreed. This was the first time when the Kurdish community appeared on an official scale. However, Sèvres Treaty was rejected by the Turkish nationalist leader, Kemal Atatürk, and superseded by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, in which plans for Kurdish autonomy vanished.⁶⁰ The wilayet of Mosul was given into the British-mandated Iraq in 1925 and the oil incomes were dedicated to the newly-founded Arab state and partly to Turkey. The order after the First World War meant that now, Kurds are divided between five states, namely Turkey, Iran, Syria, Iraq and Britain. After the division into five states, Kurds rebelled against the Iraqi government under Sheikh Mahmud of Barzinja, who declared himself muzumdar (king) of Kurdistan. Nevertheless, RAF (Royal Air Force) helped to suppress the revolt by bombing Kurdish villages with mustard gas. During its mandate, Britain

58 Larousse Encyclopedia, vol. 8, (1987), p.994

59 Art. 62-62 of Treaty of Sèvres.

60 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78-79

supported the Kurdish rights in a series of declarations, but did not protect and saved them in the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty which terminated the mandate in 1932.⁶¹

In the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq were in rebellion. In Iran, in 1946, Kurds set up an independent republic in Mahabad under the protection of the Russians then occupying the country. However, the movement was harshly suppressed only weeks after Russian troops withdrew from Iran and its leader, Qazi Mohammed, was hanged. Thereafter, Iran's Kurds caused little trouble to Teheran until the revolution in 1979. In Iraq, Kurds rebelled in 1943-45, 1961-70 and 1974-75 (each time under Mustafa Barzani) and in 1986-88.⁶²

2.2. KURDS IN TURKEY

After a brief explanation on the Kurdish community, i.e. its population, location, religion and history in general, the history of them in Turkey is going to be explained.

2.2.1. Historical Background

It is during the War of Independence and the early years of the new Turkish republic that the foundations of Turkish policy regarding the Kurds were first set out. The rebel forces of Kemal Atatürk strongly needed men and materiel to carry out their struggle for independence against the various Western powers that occupied what was left of the Turkish core of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. Atatürk established contact and links with the Kurdish leaders from the east and southeast and included them in the two congresses held in 1919, namely Sivas and Erzurum Congresses, in order to form a resistance to enemy occupation in the different parts of the country, to create a cohesive opposition to Istanbul and fortify the struggle for independence. In these congresses, the National Pact, stressing the unity of the future state as an Islamic entity, was constantly reiterated and emphasized a message that was crucial for getting Kurdish support for the Kemalists.⁶³ This constitutes a legitimate base for the upcoming

61 Ibid. p.79

62 Ibid. p.79

63 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and

Lausanne Peace Treaty, in which the Kurds are not cited as a minority.

Through these links with the Kurdish leaders in the southeast, the religious unity of both Turks and Kurds, with the hope of founding a state basing itself on religious doctrines, a relatively strong support of the Kurds could be assured during the War of Independence. Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which established the Republic of Turkey only registered non-Muslim groups-Greeks, Armenians, and Jews-as officially recognized minorities.⁶⁴ Hence, Kurds were not one of these three minorities.

On the other hand the post-1923 period, which involved an intense transformation and regime consolidation in Kemalist Turkey, drove Kurdish demands to express issues of Kurdish identity with a louder voice. The Kemalist revolution started its unprecedented reforms that ranged from how people dressed to the change in alphabet and script. Not only were the formal attachments to Islam severed, but even the history was rewritten to suit the new state's temperament and ambitions. In the process, the Kurds, who were previously seen the same with the Turks, confronted a nationalist regime⁶⁵. The opposition of some Kurdish tribes, fears of foreign intervention, absence of an experience of democracy and Ankara's self-confidence deficiency caused the Turkish nationalism to be composed on the basis of an ethnic fundamental instead of a citizenship-based fundamental.⁶⁶ The eastern and southeastern provinces were struggling with rebellions that increasingly took on a nationalist flavor as Kurds resisted. Ankara's reaction was very clear and distinctive in its speed: With the 1925 Shaykh Sa'id revolt, new institutions were quickly set up to deal with the seditious activities. Among the most notorious were the Independence Tribunals, which gave enormous powers to local military and other state officials to judge and execute dissidents or rebels. These tribunals were also used to eliminate some of the potential Kurdish opposition. The revolt was finally suppressed, and Shaykh Sa'id and many others were hanged. The state's reaction to this revolt was repeated in the subsequent

Missed Opportunities", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 62

64 Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Transnationalization of Human Rights Norms and Its Impact on Internally Displaced Kurds", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), p. 978

65 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 63

66 Hüseyin YAYMAN, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (2011), p. 40

and more serious revolts of Agri (Ararat) from 1926-30 and Dersim (Tunceli) of 1937, as well as in numerous other lesser but almost endemic rebellions of more minor character.^{67 68} After the revolts of 1925, the government forbade the use of the Kurdish language in public places, made it easier for land to be confiscated from Kurds, and exiled many Kurds.⁶⁹ In time, references to Kurds as a distinct group in society were officially under strict observation and Kurds were not being mentioned nearly at all.

After Dersim Operation, it is seen that most of the Kurdish rebellion was silenced. Nearly every Kurdish village of some size was closely controlled by the Turkish law-enforcement agency or by the personnel of the Turkish military. The Kurdish language, Kurdish dress, Kurdish folklore, Kurdish names, were forbidden. Some Kurds were exiled to other parts of the country, as a result of the government's policy, in the towns, people were speaking mostly Turkish, and Kurdish nationalist demands lost its effervescence for some time.⁷⁰

During the time when Atatürk lived, the Kurdish nationalist sentiment grew stronger because of the Kemalist policies. The first era of the newly founded republic dissected itself from its predecessor Ottoman Empire and it tried to enforce every measure in order to engage and transform itself to the concept of nation-state, namely while every

67 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 63

68 Starting from the beginning of the 19th century, the Kurds revolted often enough, which is against the general opinion of the Turkish official policy against the Kurds until the 1990s. The revolts and their dates are as follows:

-Babanzade Abdurrahman Pasha incident, 1806; Mir Muhammed (Soran Incident), 1833-37; Bedirhan Incident, 1843; Yezdan Sér Incident, 1855; Shaikh Ubeydullah Incident, 1878-1881; Simko (Ismail Aga) Incident, 1919-1922; Ali Bati Incident, 11.05.1919; Mahmut Berzenci Incident, 21.05.1919; Koçgiri Incident, 16.03.1921; Nasturi Revolt, 12-28.09.1924; Shaikh Sait Revolt, 13.02-31.05.1925; Rackotan and Raman Disciplinary Operation, 9-12.08.1925; Sason Revolts, 1925-1937; 1st Agri Revolt, 16.05-17.06.1926; Koçuşağı Revolt, 07.10-17.11.1926; Mutki Revolt, 26.05-25.08.1927; 2nd Agri Revolt, 13-20.09.1927; Bicar Banishment Operation, 07.10-17.11.1927; Asi Resul Revolt, 22.05-03.06.1929; Tendurek Operation (Shaikh Abdulkadir Revolt), 14-27.09.1929; Savur Banishment Operation, 20.05-09.06.1930; Zilan Revolt, 20.06.1030; Oramar Revolt, 16.07-10.10.1930; 3rd Agri Revolt, 07-14.09.1930; Pülümür Revolt, 08.10-14.11.1930; 2nd Mahmut Berzenci Revolt, September 1930; 2nd Sason Revolt, January 1937; Dersim Revolt, 21.03.1937; Erüh and Şemdinli Raid of PKK, 14.08.1984. The list is created by Resat Hallı in his work named "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Ayaklanmalar(1924-1938). Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (2011), p. 52

69 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 63

70 Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 8

reference to homogeneous Turkish identity and state was being glorified, every reference to any other ethnic identity was being omitted. This appears to be a sort of fortifying the brand-new regime and to legitimize and a typical action after most of the drastic regime changes and revolutions that took place to date.

After the World War II, İsmet İnönü, who was the leader and the president of The Turkish Republic after Atatürk died in 1938, wanted to establish closer connections with the West and its democratic states. One of the aims of this attitude was to be on the side of the West, under pressure from the Soviet Union which gained extensive power after the War and strongly desired certain parts of Anatolia. However, if Turkey wanted to be accepted as a member of the Western society and states, it needed to improve its poor human rights record and definitely change its totalitarian policies inside its country. In the first elections right after the War in 1946, Republican People's Party (RPP, Turkish Name: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi- CHP) was re-elected. It was the sole party which existed in Turkey in the one-party regime era. Hence, it was the owner of every action and application which were in force in Turkey. Nevertheless, in the elections held in 1950, Democrat Party (DP) was elected with its leader Adnan Menderes. This was conceived as the sign of change in many fields in the Turkish political thinking, including the implementation of policy towards the Kurdish community living in Turkey.

When Adnan Menderes came to office between 1950-1960, a certain measure of liberalization and relaxation of previous government's policies on the ethnic Kurds were realized. The previous measures such as village police posts were abolished.⁷¹ Menderes wanted to change the statist government that RPP had applied in the one-party rule and he initiated new economic policies. Along with the change in economic policies, he reduced state's limitations on religion. During the election campaign they also promised to ease some of the "cultural restrictions in the east" and reduce the oppressive practices of the gendarmes in the rural areas. These announcements led the southeastern Anatolians, especially the Kurdish community living in the southeastern

71 Ibid. p.8

region, to vote for the Democrats.⁷²

With the advent of the multi-party rule and Menderes in the office, it is seen that the public inspectorships were rescinded, which were the practitioners of RPP policies in Turkey. The other change was the fact that DP established sections in the eastern region, which meant the inclusion of the Kurdish community into the administration of the country and into the political life of the country within the system which had been established by the new-born republic to the Kurdish community.

In the multi-party rule, the system was to keep the area under control by co-opting Kurdish tribal and religious leaders and landlords. These local authorities allied themselves with political forces in the capital.⁷³ In this respect, there was not so much improvement in the cultural and linguistic rights of the Kurdish community since the previous government policy of pressure on the Kurdish continued in the hands of the local authorities.

Menderes era was the reflection of 1950s in world political thinking. Many countries such as the Latin American countries and the wrecked states of post-war Europe, kept the same faith: More democracy and more freedom of civil rights. However, this new trend of freedom gave way to a more authoritarian wave towards the end of Menderes era. Right after the 1960 military coup that took place in Turkey and as a result Menderes and two other ministers in the cabinet were hanged, the new military government arrested some 485 Kurds in June 1960 and detained them for several months. The 55 most influential were exiled to western Turkey for two years.⁷⁴ Even though this authoritarian tendency revived in state practices, the freedom it once brought was not entirely gone. Hence, after the 1960 coup, a more liberal constitution was in force. This was a relatively comfortable environment for the Kurdish ethnic sentiments, compared to the older regime that was in office during the first years of the

⁷² Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 64

⁷³ Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 8

⁷⁴ Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 391

republic as stated above.

Within the context of a newly founded multi-party system, because of the obligation to satisfy the needs or tendencies of some groups in the society, taking into consideration the priorities of the Kurdish groups, Menderes promised the cultural freedoms and change in the state's practices in the Kurdish regions to the Kurds. Through such promises, Menderes sought Kurdish votes and the importance of these votes were grasped after that time by all of the political parties for the rest of the multi-party era, which never really ended, to date.

Bearing the failure of liberalization and democratization in their minds, following the early years of the 1961 constitution, the growing economic tensions within Turkey eventually gave rise to new left-wing movements in the country, including the Turkish Labor Party (TLP). These left-wing movements were inspiring the Kurdish youth to react and the tendencies of these left groups were very close to the cause of Kurdish community, that always felt oppressed, as the new left groups mentioned. Turkey's political thought in 1970s is marked by the struggles between right and left-wing groups. At its peak, these struggles went on to reach a quasi civil war just at the beginning of 1980, which culminated in the 1980 military coup.

After 1961 constitution, there existed more press freedom and right to establish trade unions. A few journals appeared devoted entirely to the history, folklore and economic problems of the Kurds (still euphemistically called "the east"). However, even at that time of relative freedom, these publications were being banned. Among few publications which were not banned, the classics of Kurdish literature and history as *Mem u Zin* and the *Sharafnama* can be mentioned.⁷⁵

After the 1961 Constitution came into force, there took place few developments in favor of the Kurdish community, however they faded after a short time. For instance, Dr. Yusuf Azizoglu, who has Kurdish origins, became one of the leaders of the New Turkey Party. He was also the minister of health in the new Inonu government. While he was

⁷⁵ Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 8

the minister, he built some hospitals and dispensaries in the east, however later on he was forced to resign due to accusations of "regionalism." The Turkish press also began to spare more time and resources for the Kurds. In *Barış Dünyası* (World of Peace), liberal Turkish journal, some articles were being published, which were written by Musa Anter in 1962. They were about the Kurdish language, literature, and folklore. In September of that year, *Dicle-Firat* (Tigris-Euphrates), a bilingual monthly in Turkish and Kurdish, started to be circulated in Istanbul. It was banned after a few issues, but other journals such as *Dicle Kaynagi* (Origin of the Tigris), *Deng* (Voice), and *Riya Newe* (New Path) substituted its absence. Nevertheless, they were also banned after a time.⁷⁶ In around the same time period, Turkish press started to devote extended coverage of the Kurdish uprising in Iraq that was led by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, a traditionalist and nationalist. This was a very significant event at time, which was urging the Kurds living in Turkey.⁷⁷

Faik Bucak, who is a Kurdish lawyer from Urfa and a member of the parliament, founded the Kurdish Democratic Party of Turkey (KDPT). After the 1960 military coup and the enactment of the 1961 Constitution, the Turkish Left legally emerged in the 1960s and the party to be taken seriously in the Turkish political thought at time is Turkish Workers Party (TWP). The party participated in the 1965 parliamentary elections and it could send 15 members to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Turkish acronym T.B.M.M.- Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi). TWP dedicated a considerable amount of attention to the Kurdish community on its agenda and at its fourth congress in October 1970 declared a resolution that went on saying: "There is a Kurdish people in the East of Turkey.... The fascist authorities representing the ruling classes have subjected the Kurdish people to a policy of intimidation which has often become a bloody repression."⁷⁸ These words were demonstrating how the Kurds on the left were seeing the situation of the Kurds living in Turkey. As indicated in the resolution, the Kurdish elites blamed the government for being fascist, as most of the leftist views which blame their own governments and they are citing the ruling classes,

76 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 391

77 Ibid. p. 392

78 Ibid. p. 392

which is an obvious Marxist term, as the forces intimidating and assimilating the Kurds. This resolution is the first known declaration of the Kurds. Before this declaration, no political party in Turkey dared to proclaim the existence of a Kurdish community living within the Turkish state.⁷⁹

The two influential figures of the time, namely Deniz Gezmiş and Mahir Çayan, were both of Kurdish origins and they were sentenced to death. Both were sharing very clear Marxist views, at the same time urging people living in the South East Anatolia to secede, since they were a significant part of the whole Kurdish community. The death of the two still represents very memorable parts of the Turkish political history and it is still a tradition in the Turkish left to commemorate them on important dates in Turkey.

The first legal Kurdish organization of some sort, the Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East (Turkish acronym DDKO) was founded in 1969. Together with TWP, DDKO drew its attention to the economic problems of eastern Turkey, the oppression of Kurdish villagers by Kurdish aghas and sheikhs, and what was termed "the brutal and violent" behavior of the Turkish army units in eastern Turkey. However, in June 1971, another military intervention, not in the form of military coup, took place in the government and a new military-backed government came to power. The new government banned and dissolved the TWP and sentenced its main leaders to prison. This was another shock to the Turkish left, along with the Kurdish left. The 1971 military intervention took place after the ruling elites and the military felt sure of the fact that among other problems of the public, "Kurdish nationalism has joined left and right political extremism to threaten Turkey's government." The Kurdish nationalism was for the first time an international issue for the ruling elites and military, since it was conceived as a movement whose aim was to found a Kurdish nation-state, and according to them, the Kurdish insurrection was provided with arms from abroad. Most of the Kurdish activists were arrested by the new government after 1971 military intervention, since they were defined as terrorists. DDKO was banned after such a fundamental change in the government.⁸⁰

79 Ibid. p. 392

80 Ibid. p. 392-393

By 1973, the parliamentary democracy was in function again and with it, the Kurdish community resumed its political activities. However, this time it was more influenced by the political movements in the world. It focused more on the class conflict, how the Kurdish community was being exploited by the ruling Turkish class. Its voice was sharper than before the coup with its desire to establish a Kurdish nation-state. Nevertheless, the Kurdish intellectuals were too much divided into different rival groups.

During the 1960s and 70s, an unprecedented migration from the East to the Western parts of the country took place. This was partly due to the policy of the government and partly due to the economic situation of the country at the time. The huge Kurdish origin migrants could not be urbanized and harmonized with the Turkish residents in the western cities of the country, such as Istanbul, Izmir or Adana. Highly populated districts, which are mostly composed of Kurds, began to take shape and this helped them to conserve their traditions in those western cities. This made them be more aware than their previous generations, of the great gap in economic development and lifestyles between western and eastern Turkey. The western part of the country was highly developed and rich compared to the east.⁸¹

A new generation started to inhabit in the west and they started receiving education in schools and universities. This new development, made them feel and become a party to the discussions on Marxist terms such as imperialism, underdevelopment, class struggle and the national problem. The reason why most of the Kurdish organizations were first founded in Ankara and Istanbul is because of this new generation's presence in the universities in these two big cities. These new intellectuals started to spread the political ideas that the west had been discussing for more than a decade. Due to the relatively free political climate of the years 1974-78, persistence of relatively weak governments was also a continuing factor. The politicization of the state apparatus was widely common in the short duration of every government and every coalition government needed support of the possible votes. This was an advantage of the Kurdish community, since no strong policy against the Kurdish intellectuals could be made. However, this

⁸¹ Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 9

advantageous situation of the Kurdish political existence lasted until the martial law in 1979.⁸²

During the 1977 elections, being tired of the promises of the Turkish politicians, some Kurdish origin citizens participated in the elections as independent candidates. Both Kurdish and Turkish accepted the Leninist doctrine of a nation's right to self-determination. However, the Turkish left was not accepting the Kurds as a nation. The socialist revolution was to take place under the leadership of the Turkish proletariat. Kurds considered themselves as a nation apart and asked for the right of self-determination, even if this did not really mean a separate state. The Kurds considered that they had been a colony of the Turkish ruling classes. They started looking for inspiration from the liberation movements which were taking place in 1970s elsewhere in the world, such as South Africa and Vietnam. Some Kurds were making connection between the national and the class struggles, and this constituted a left-right ideologies' struggle: taking into consideration the alliance of the local Kurdish landlords with the central Turkish government, left Kurdish organizations were calling them "collaborators," and they paid attention to break their power for changing the "anti-feudal and anti-colonial struggle." to their favor.⁸³

2.2.2. THE NEW VARIABLE IN KURDISH ISSUE: THE PKK

In 1970s, the beginning of the most problematic issue concerning the Kurdish issue came into being: The PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan- Workers' Party of Kurdistan). PKK, which was a very new variable in the Kurdish issue, caused a drastic change. It was gradually set up during meetings of Abdullah Öcalan and 17 Kurdish university students in Ankara during 1974. Its name was Ankara Democratic Patriotic Association of Higher Education in its inception. It is a mixture of Marxism-Leninism and extreme nationalism. The ultimate goal is establishing an independent Kurdistan consisting of the Kurdish areas in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. The organization's structure and the origins, comprising a rural peasant-based Maoist revolution, were similar to Abimael

82 Ibid. p. 9

83 Ibid. p.10

Gúzman's Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru.⁸⁴

Right after it was founded by Öcalan, it started its activities in order to eliminate the other rival groups and it could establish regional chapters in eastern and southeastern Anatolia. In 1979, the group named itself as PKK and moved to the east where it proclaimed an armed struggle against the Turkish government and the "feudal" Kurdish elements that supported it. In some of the districts PKK claimed as "liberated areas," a few of the Kurdish villagers probably did look upon PKK as their liberators.⁸⁵

The events that took place in Kahramanmaraş in 1978, and its aftermath directed the board to Syria, where they had better opportunities to rule the policies of the group comprising violence. The 1980 coup gave birth to some changes in PKK activities. The tribunals under the influence of the coup, arrested 2,000 alleged PKK members by 1981, 447 persons were put on mass trial and accused of forming "armed gangs" to "annex" southeastern Turkey. The formal indictment against the 447 members claimed that PKK represented an extensive Kurdish organization determined to use any means to establish an independent Kurdistan.⁸⁶

Even if people were getting arrested for being member of PKK, their activities did not wane. The leader of the organization escaped first to Syria and then an office was allocated to him in Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, where he was strengthening the capabilities of the group through the trainings being given by the Palestinian Guerillas.⁸⁷ This is also the result of the extensive international support from Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Cyprus, Greece and Russia.⁸⁸

84 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 394-395. See also Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends, Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 21. and Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3(1992), p. 478.

85 Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey", *MERIP Reports*, No. 121, State Terror in Turkey (Feb., 1984), p. 11

86 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), pp. 389-406

87 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2. (2005), p. 130

88 Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends, Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 129

The Cold War politics and their extension to Middle East had a great impact on Öcalan's departure to Syria. The Soviet Union was the political and military supplier of the Syrian Baath regime of president Hafez al-Asad. In order to pay back the support of the Soviet Union to his regime, Hafez al-Asad was providing facilities to Palestinian militant groups, who were active against Israel, the unprecedented and absolute ally of the US in the Middle East. In its neighbor Iraq, Hafez al-Asad supported the Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani (who was active in the Sulaymaniyah region, home to Soranispeaking Kurds) against Masoud Barzani, whose activities were spread in the north (where Kurmanji Kurdish is spoken). Mulla Mustafa Barzani, who was the leader of the clan, had been assisted directly by the Shah of Iran and indirectly by the CIA when he revolted against Saddam Hussein. However, in 1975 Saddam made an agreement with the Shah of Iran, Mustafa Barzani died in the USA in 1979 and his territory was devastated by Iraqi forces.⁸⁹

In 1979, the Shah was overthrown by the Khomeini revolution and a very drastic regime change took place in Iran. In 1980, with the assault of the Iraqi forces to the Iranian territory, the Iran-Iraq War started. The war that lasted for 8 years, gave the Barzanis the chance to reappear in the region's politics. They were again backed by the new Iranian regime. The Khomeini-backed Barzanis drew the attention and a considerable amount of the Iraqi forces during the war, in return to the Iranian support. This caused the US to be in lines more with Baghdad. Opposite to Talabani, who was changing his side time to time during the war, Masud Barzani was more along with the Syria, whose government had close ties with the Iranian government.⁹⁰

In 1983, Masud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) concluded a co-operation agreement with Öcalan's PKK. Similar to the Turkish Marxist revolutionaries, there were three proxies available to the Soviet Union to be used in their dealings with the PKK – Bulgaria, Syria and the Palestinians. At the time, Jalal Talabani, Masud Barzani and later Talabani again, acting on behalf of Syria and Iran, provided additional channels of support. Afterwards Greek intelligence and Greek Cypriot authorities

89 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.35

90 Ibid. p.35

emerged as other supportive actors to the Soviets. The aims of the last two were not in the scope of the Cold War, since their aims were national, namely the continuation of their disputes with Turkey.⁹¹

On the other hand, many of the Turkish workers in Western Europe, especially in Germany, were of Kurdish origin. The decision of the European Economic Community to stop recruiting foreign workers in 1973, economic migrants switched their strategy to be accepted into the EEC countries by claiming to be political refugees. Thus, this dimension added the Kurdish identity another variable: economic necessity; and afterwards the asylum-seekers claimed themselves to be Kurdish for economic reasons in important EEC countries such as Germany, where 400.000 Turkish citizens with Kurdish roots inhabited. This existence of a Kurdish community in Western Europe created a very active and free backyard to PKK. Western Europe was becoming a refuge and a school for PKK militants, a source of funds, and a field of a wide-ranging propaganda campaign provoking violence in Turkey and searching Western support for it. Western liberals began to feel sympathy for PKK, since in Western Europe, the activities of PKK were assumed as an expression of Kurdish national aspirations.⁹²

Hence, the activities of PKK became widespread in Syria, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the Western Europe. Along with its growing existence in Turkey's foreign relations with other states, PKK was beginning to be a part of the agendas of the Great Powers, namely the US and the Soviet Union, because of the Cold War politics.

2.3. THE KURDISH ISSUE, THE PKK TERRORISM AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

After the introduction of the Kurdish phenomenon in the region, with its history and the experiences they gathered since their emergence in the history resulting in the

91 Nihat Ali Özcan, *PKK (Kurdistan İşçi Partisi) Tarihi, İdeolojisi, Yöntemi [PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party): History, Ideology, Methodology]*, ASAM, (1999), p.26.

92 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.35. See also Amikam NACHMANI, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 35

foundation of the terrorist PKK, how the issue had an impact on Turkey's relations with Iraq and Syria and the relations between the latter states are going to be introduced.

2.3.1. Relations Between Turkey-Iraq-Syria

The Kurdish issue and more specifically the PKK terrorism effected its relations with its neighbors, namely Iran, Iraq and Syria, once bringing Turkey and Syria to the brink of war ⁹³. A relatively important point to be stressed the fact that how states have made different sort of linkages. For instance, Syria supported the PKK terrorism for acquisition of water of Tigris and Euphrates. As a state, homeland to 0,6 million⁹⁴ to 1,5 ⁹⁵ million Kurdish originated citizens, Syria always had the advantage of holding the upper hand against Turkey, homeland to 9-10 million ⁹⁶ to 20 million ⁹⁷ Kurdish originated citizens. Syria exploited this advantage over Turkey for bargaining the waters of Euphrates and Tigris rivers. A similar policy was also followed by Iraq to negotiate the increase of water of the same rivers. It has also manipulated the Kurdish issue against Turkey in different occasions.

The military side of the Kurdish issue constitutes the other notable factor. Turkey dedicated a considerable amount of its military power in the region, i.e. the southeastern Anatolian region and time to time used these troops for the operations in the northern Iraq. In 1987, a state of emergency was proclaimed in Turkey's southeastern provinces (Diyarbakir, Elazig, Siirt, Tunceli, Van, Batman, Sirnak), the cities in which the Kurdish population was residing. Turkey has four army corps and two of them are stationed in these provinces; and this meant over 250.000 soldiers were employed in dealing with the PKK terrorism. ⁹⁸ Between the years 1984-1999, around 2,5 million soldiers served

93 Ibid. p.44

94 David Bradshaw, "After the Gulf War: The Kurds", *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78

95 Meena Menon, "Kurds in Turkey: Fighting for Survival", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 13 (Apr. 1, 1995), p. 668

96 David Bradshaw, After the Gulf War: The Kurds,, *The World Today*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (May, 1991), p. 78

97 Meena Menon, "Kurds in Turkey: Fighting for Survival", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 13 (Apr. 1, 1995), p. 668

98 Amikam NACHMANI, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*,

against the PKK terrorism. A total of 5,606 soldiers, police and Village Guards were killed, 11,269 were injured, 5,316 civilians died, and an additional 5,903 were injured. During the same period 23,638 PKK members died.⁹⁹ The Turkish army carried out its most serious offensive in the scope of combating with PKK terrorism between March-April 1995 with 35.000 soldiers in northern Iraq.¹⁰⁰ This constitutes the largest military campaign after the Republic was founded in 1923 in the modern Turkish history, rendering the combat with the PKK terrorism to the top of the agenda in terms of the military capabilities. This is an important sign demonstrating how noteworthy the Kurdish terrorism and problem were for the Turkish rulers of the time and for the Turkish foreign policy. Turkey has always tried to use the diplomatic tools rather than its army in its relations with the other states in its problems with them, but in this case it was forced to find a military solution with a harsh response to the PKK terrorism.

Turkey's relations with Iraq were deeply affected after the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism started becoming more and more vehement in 1980s and after the Gulf War. While Turkey established close relations with Iraq through "Turkey-Iraq Security Protocol" on 15 October 1984¹⁰¹, especially the Gulf War systematically modified the vision of Iraq against Turkey. For Turkey, Iraq was a very profitable trade partner during the Iran-Iraq War; for Iraq, Turkey was an unaggressive neighbor, whose possibility to attack the northern Iraqi territory was relatively low. However, the post-Gulf War era was an important cornerstone event between both states especially when the Operation Provide Comfort was carried out and the Poised Hammer forces which were stationed in Turkey are taken into consideration.¹⁰² Since then, it had implications for the Iraqi side

Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 47

99 Ibid. p. 48

100 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2, (2005), p. 559

101 Ibid. p. 134

102 "At the end of April, around 17,000 coalition troops in and around northern Iraq began 'Operation Bring Comfort' by establishing a security zone to which the refugees could return.

In July, 'Bring Comfort' was succeeded by 'Operation Poised Hammer', in which coalition troops were withdrawn from Iraqi territory, but succeeded by a coalition duty force of 2,000 men from five different countries, including 800 Turkish troops, which was stationed at the border town of Silopi. In addition, extra coalition air forces were installed at Incirlik." William Hale, Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 68, No. 4(Oct., 1992), p. 688. "On 31 December 1991, operation 'Provide Comfort' still had about 50 aeroplanes stationed in south-eastern Turkey, backed up by a US carrier in the eastern Mediterranean. In December 1991, the Turkish government agreed to a 6-month extension for the allied force. The Turks said, however, that this would be the last extension." Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of

to conceive these events as an application of a new policy from the Turkish side.

2.3.2. Turkey-US Relations

The Cold War politics were from one side easier than its immediate aftermath, since there were two superpowers, i.e. The United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. When other states had to make a switch in accordance with their foreign policy priorities, they were establishing closer ties with the other superpower. However, after the Cold War ended, there was one superpower which remained in the international relations: The USA. This meant that states had to deal with more complicated relations with regard to their immediate policy changes after the Cold War and this was actually one of the most important reasons why the ethnic issues climbed to the top of the policy choices of states. The US was already established in the Middle East long before the Cold War had ended and it was directly involved in the Middle Eastern politics, including the Kurdish issue. As the sole superpower after the Cold War, among other regional actors, the United States had always been involved in Middle Eastern politics, because of Israel's existence in the region. Kurdish issue added another variable to the US-Turkey relations after the Iran-Iraq War 1980-1988. Especially the Operation Provide Comfort, which was the settled military presence of the United States in the Northern Iraq after the Gulf War in 1991, was a huge central point of discussion in Turkey's domestic politics. Especially before and during the Gulf War, President Özal's personal efforts to become a party to the conflict alongside with the US, contributed to the development of the US-Turkish relations.

2.3.3. Turkey- EEC/EU Relations

Relations between Turkey and European Economic Community, later European Union has a long and deep history starting from Turkey's official application to the EEC of the time on 31 July 1959. Both parties had different views and aims from the relations. Turkey's competition with Greece for the membership and Turkey's desire to be accepted as "European" and certainly the economic reasons were of vital importance for

the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1992), p.491

Turkey. For the EEC, Turkey was a good candidate to be a market for its products. However, even after the Ankara Agreement signed on 12 September 1963, relations were far from convincing. The attitudes of the Turkish labors immigrated to the Western European Countries, especially to Germany, were constituting a poor record of "Europeanness" besides Turkey's unsuccessful economic development over the years.¹⁰³

In the following years, while Turkey heightened its desire to become a member state of the later European Union, especially after the end of the Cold War, the EU has dedicated its focus on Turkey's pursuit of the political and economic reforms and improving its human rights record and better treatment of its Kurdish community.¹⁰⁴ These two criteria constituted the reasons of brief intervals for Turkey's aspiration to be full member of the EU. With respect to Turkish public opinion's tendency and reflex to resist any direct foreign involvement to its domestic issues, Turkey's brief reluctance can be conceived more easily. Especially in the 1990s the Kurdish community of Turkey was a direct confrontation between Turkey and the EU. Turkey resisted giving the cultural rights to the Kurds and the EU insisted on it. The negativity of the relations concerning the Kurdish issue lays in part in the fact that a considerable amount of the Turkish workers who emigrated to Western Europe were of Kurdish origin. After 1973 when the European Community stopped recruiting foreign workers, economic migrants sought to gain entry by claiming that they were political refugees. The assumption of a Kurdish identity was thus in many cases an economic necessity rather than a cultural choice by asylum-seekers. But whatever their true number, the existence of a Kurdish community in Western Europe gave the PKK the opportunity to use the West as a rear base and this was a substantial reason of deterioration of the relations in 1990s.¹⁰⁵

103 Mehmet Ali Birand, "Turkey and the European Community", *The World Today*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Feb., 1978), p. 52

104 Birol A. Yeşilada, "Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Winter, 2002), p. 95

105 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.35

CHAPTER 3

KURDISH ISSUE AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

As explained in the first chapter, Kurds live in large numbers in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and comparing to these three, smaller numbers in Syria. At the time of Iran-Iraq War between 1980-1988, Saddam was ruling Iraq and he had his ambitious aims to become the leader of the Arab world, after Egypt lost most of its prestige in Camp David in 1978. First he fortified his power in his own country, both in Baath Party and against the minorities through strict security and repressive measures.

3.1.TURKEY-IRAQ-IRAN-SYRIA RELATIONS DURING THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR AND THE EFFECT OF THE KURDISH ISSUE OVER THE RELATIONS

Iran-Iraq War, which lasted for eight years, has vital outcomes firstly for the northern Iraqi Kurds. This means that the Iraqi Kurds, under the leadership of first Mustafa Barzani, later Masoud Barzani in the scope of KDP (Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi) and under the leadership of Jalal Talabani in the scope of KYB (Kürdistan Yurtseverler Birliği) had to change their policies and this certainly has consequences with respect to the Kurdish community in Turkey and the PKK.¹⁰⁶

3.1.1. Turkey-Syria and Turkey-Iraq Relations

On 22 September 1980, Iraq repealed Algeria Agreement unilaterally and started invading the Iranian soil. During the war Turkey, which was being governed by the military after the 12 September 1980 coup, stayed impartial and kept its relations with both countries. The same policy went on also after Turgut Özal came into the office.¹⁰⁷ The war switched the power balance in favor of the Iraqi Kurds, namely KDP and KYP

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.35

¹⁰⁷ Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2, (2005), p. 130

gained the governance of some territories in Northern Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds were not alone and without support in their activities. Trying to take the advantage of an Iraq in war against Iran and dedicating most of its energy and resources to the war, Syria was not reluctant to emerge as the new leader of the Arab world and it provided logistic and material assistance to the active Kurdish organizations in Iraq.¹⁰⁸

The lack of authority in Northern Iraq provided a safe heaven for the PKK militants, too. They were able to conduct raids from their sanctuary in Northern Iraq into Turkey's southeastern region, notably to Hakkari. They had the possibility to incite Kurdish nationalism; they were able to steal money, food, and other supplies and attacked Turkish trucks. In May 1983, PKK militants ambushed a Turkish army unit. The result was three dead soldiers and one wounded officer.¹⁰⁹

At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, Syria saw the Kurdish issue as a very advantageous tool against Turkey in order to reach its national aims, namely its territorial claims for Hatay and for the major share of the waters of the Euphrates river, which originates in Turkey. Öcalan was in Damascus, while his militants were based in a camp in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa valley in Lebanon. The camp, which became known as the Academy afterwards, was used for the ideological and military training of the PKK militants. The Syrians were allowing very attentive raids of the militants into Turkey from their territory. After the military coup in Turkey on 12 September 1980, as the frontier between Turkey and Syria with Turkey and Iraq, were closely guarded, Öcalan's men were using the Iranian frontier.¹¹⁰

While Syria was cooperating with the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq and the PKK in Turkey, Turkey initiated talks with Baghdad. Ankara played the water card against the Syria's Kurdish card and as a result an agreement was signed between Turkey and Iraq for cooperation in oil, irrigation and transportation sectors. The economic relations got

108 Ibid. p.131

109 Michael M. Gunter , "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 396

110 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.38

closer and deeper between both countries especially at the beginning of the war.¹¹¹ Turkey's relations with Syria got worse with the Syrian aspiration to be the leader of the Arab world. It was the time after the 12 September 1980 coup, Kurds and Armenians running away from the Turkish authorities were finding refuge in Syria. An agreement concerning the “Mutual Judicial Assistance on Extradition and Criminal Matters” was signed between 15-19 June 1981 during the official visit of the Syrian Justice Minister's visit to Ankara. However, the agreement was not consisting satisfactory clauses on political asylum seekers and different viewpoints were beginning to take shape in both sides, when Ankara asked for the extradition of the “terrorists”, who were being searched after the coup. Syrian side declared that it was recognizing these persons as political asylum seekers and rejected their extradition to Turkey.¹¹²

After 1982, Israel's occupation of Lebanon affected drastically the course of PKK's activities. During Israel's occupation, 12 PKK militants were killed and around the same number were captured. The stand of the militants against the Israeli forces gained the sympathy of both Palestinian organizations and Damascus. This sympathy helped them to receive training in military and ideological issues and after this event PKK became way more reliable by Syria in Middle East.¹¹³ In addition to that, in order to have the Syrian support continued, Öcalan visited Bulgaria which, as usual, was a mediated covert Soviet policy.¹¹⁴

In February 1983, Turkey and Iraq signed an agreement called “Border Security and Cooperation Treaty”. This was the legal basis of Turkish army's military operations after that time and the operations started against the PKK bases in Northern Iraq. However, it was not the PKK, which was suffering from those operations, but it was Barzani's KDP. This led Barzani to cooperate with the PKK, after losing its control in the Northern Iraq and both organizations started acting in the same manner.¹¹⁵

111 Baskın ORAN, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, (2005), p. 131

112 Ibid. p.131

113 Ibid. p.132

114 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.37

115 Baskın ORAN, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, (2005), p. 131

3.1.2. Terrorist Activities of the PKK during and After the Iran-Iraq War

From the beginning of its foundation in 1979 and from its first terrorist attack in 1984, PKK was overwhelmingly active in the South Eastern Anatolian region. Its aim was to undermine the state authority in the region, by its military and political activities. With the inexperienced military and governmental system, state could not respond to this new terrorist threat with professionalism and it was unable to protect people collaborating with the PKK. Bakers, delivering bread to the army units were being killed; oil stations providing fuel to the authorities were being set alight and their owners were getting killed all by the PKK. The inhabitants of the region were asked to pay tribute to the PKK. People of the region were not able to serve in government-sponsored paramilitary organizations like the Village Guards, or other state posts for fear of being marked “as revolutionary targets.” by the PKK.¹¹⁶

The participation of the local inhabitants to the political life of the country was under the strict pressure of the PKK. It was forbidden for the people to join any Turkish political party. The legal matters were being held by “people’s courts.” PKK was also obstructing the people to have news by banning in the Kurdish areas the distribution or sale of newspapers published in Istanbul or Ankara and local people were not allowed to watch television. Government officers in civilian posts were being killed, for instance in 1993 alone; more than 100 teachers were murdered for teaching Turkish to Kurdish children, which is a very common application and anticipation from a terrorist organization. Altogether some 500 schools were burnt and 3,060 closed down because of the terrorist threat. This is something to be taken into account, when the educational backwardness of the region is considered throughout history. Family planning, which was a state-sponsored project, was opposed by the PKK. Since it was perceived as a project against the Kurdish community and its main aim was to reduce the Kurdish population in the region.¹¹⁷

The financing of its activities was the other complex part of the PKK. They were

¹¹⁶ Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coing with Intertwinted Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 35

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p.35

financed by millions of dollars in donations or tribute from Kurds working in Europe. A payment under the name "revolutionary tax" was being collected from the Kurdish-owned businesses, in Turkey or elsewhere. Drug trade was the other source of millions of dollars: the organization was controlling 30–40 percent of the heroin traffic from Afghanistan, Iran and Lebanon, which passes through Turkey on its way to Europe.¹¹⁸ At the time, around 5,000 trained PKK militants were active on the Turkish territory. They were supported by 150,000 militiamen and 2 million Turkish Kurdish sympathizers. Until the early 1990s, the PKK avoided pitched battles with the Turkish army. Instead, they undertook daring raids on police vehicles and bases, officers' clubs and other military installations or they were attacking ruthlessly to the civilian population in the region. Between 1987 and 1991, 33 villages were attacked, and 36 people killed, including 16 children and eight women, who were totally innocent. However, with the end of the Gulf War, Turkish army and the PKK switched their strategies. The PKK, after establishing in northern Iraq and gaining bases in the region, began to fight like a conventional army. The Turkish army, which was inexperienced in guerrilla and terrorist tactics, had improved its capabilities to combat against the PKK terrorism. While the PKK was showing signs of turning into some sort of a regular and conventional army, from being a conventional separatist terrorist organization and the war from an asymmetric one to a slightly symmetric one, it was highly possible that the Turkish army could be more successful, resulting from it being a highly modernized conventional army now fighting another one, which only recently was a separatist terrorist group.^{119 120}

On 10 May 1983, in Hakkari-Uludere, PKK militants killed three Turkish soldiers and this led the Turkish army to launch a massive retaliatory attack on 26 May 1983 with 7000 soldiers. The affair ended with one dead on each side and the Kurdish camps were destroyed. According to guerrilla sources, however, several hundred Kurds were killed and some 2,000 seized and taken back to Turkey for trial.¹²¹ On 15 August 1984, PKK

118 Ibid. p. 35

119 Ibid. p. 36

120 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, (2005), p.38.

121 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p.396

launched another attack against the Turkish state in Siirt-Eruh.¹²² The PKK's terrorist acts began with this 15 August attack, in which thirty Turkish soldiers and citizens were killed.¹²³ The Turkish side's lack of attention is to be seen on these events, namely the Kurdish organizations' activities both inside and outside Turkey. Beginning from the first years of the Republic, the Turkish state's approach is from the Security perspective.¹²⁴ This is the result of the fact that violence from the PKK terrorism was always left to the Turkish military and this made only the military side of the Kurdish problem be seen. State always reacted after it perceived threats to its own existence. "Turkey-Iraq Security Protocol" signed on 15 October 1984. The aim of the protocol was to render the Kurdish military movement in Northern Iraq ineffective, due to the inability of an Iraq in war with Iran.¹²⁵

Turkey's efforts to hold the upper hand through security measures against the Kurds, made PKK find another way: politicization. The village guard system that Turkey established in 1985 in Kurdish- Turkish villages and Turkey's military forces' attitude against the civilian Kurdish community¹²⁶ was pushing people living in the southern part of the country to join PKK forces or it made them feel sympathy for or help the organization.¹²⁷ In other words, in 1985, the Ottoman Hamidiye Regiment, which was the effective way to abate the Kurdish nationalist aspirations, was re-established in a slightly different form in the Southeast Anatolia.¹²⁸

Turkey's second operation, comprising 20 phantoms, in the region was on 15 August 1986 as retaliation for PKK militants' acts killing 12 privates of the gendarme on 12 August 1986. However, in the offensive instead of PKK militants, it was KDP's peshmergas got caught and 150 of them were killed in the Turkish offensive.¹²⁹ This

122 Ibid. p.396

123 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coing with Intertwinted Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 36

124 Hüseyin YAYMAN, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (2011), p. 12

125 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol.2 (2005), p. 134

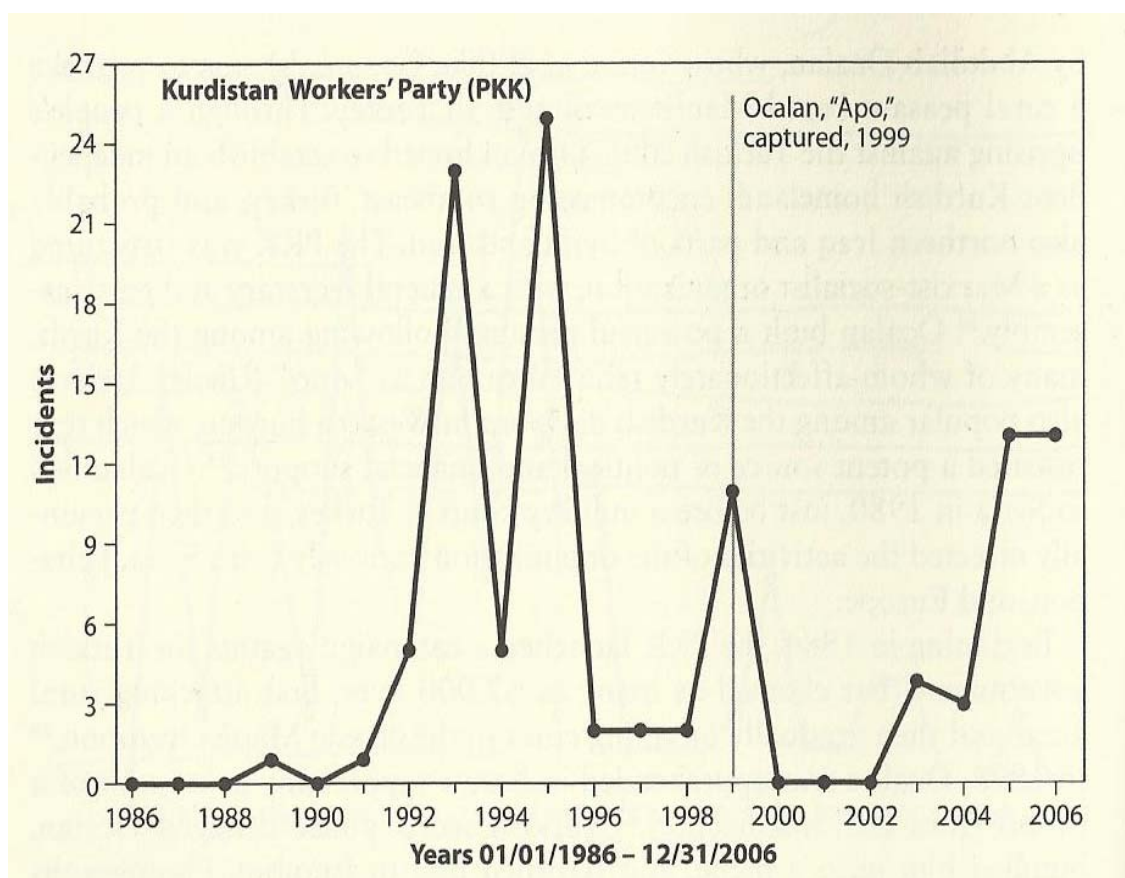
126 Hüseyin YAYMAN, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (2011), p. 222

127 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 135

128 İsmet G. İmset, "The PKK: Terrorists or Freedom Fighters", *The Internatonal Journal of Kurdish Studies*, Vol. 10, (1996), p. 79.

129 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 135. See also Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), p. 396

attack was harshly protested by Iran and Libya, which also caused the relations to deteriorate between KYP-KDP and PKK, since it was them which were affected the worst from the retaliation.¹³⁰ After the Turkish offensive, PKK was left alone in its activities, since KYP and KDP were opting not to cooperate with PKK, not to draw the attention of the Turkish army. When we reach 1987, PKK increased its violence in the region and on 22 February 1987, it made another assault in a village of Hakkari, killing 14 civilians. After the event, Turkish army started a counter- attack with 30 warplanes in Northern Iraq.¹³¹



The chart provides a better view of the intensification of the terrorist campaign of the PKK during the time period chosen in the study, namely between 1988-1999¹³². As seen in the chart, the terrorist campaign of the PKK reaches to its peak in 1995, steadily rising from 1992.

¹³⁰ Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 136

¹³¹ Ibid. p.136

¹³² Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 22

3.1.3. Turkey's Efforts to Stop the Regional Support for the PKK after the Iran-Iraq War

In 1987, Turkish government's attention and focus were on Syria, which was the state giving support to PKK the most, among other states in the region. In June 1987, Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who was preparing for the upcoming elections, made an official visit to Damascus in order to set up a deal for the PKK militants, who were active in Syria. Turkey's concerns were over security matters related to PKK activities in Syria, while Syria was trying to extract advantages over the water of Euphrates.¹³³ The water of Euphrates and Tigris had always been the source of conflict between these three countries, namely Turkey, Syria and Iraq. While Turkey was preparing to cut off some amount of the flowing water through these rivers, Iraq and Syria always had opposed such projects of Turkey.¹³⁴

After Özal's official visit to Damascus, two protocols were signed, one concerning the security measures against terrorist group members and the other one concerning economic cooperation. Both sides were bearing the responsibility of not allowing any terrorist activities in against each other's state, and Turkey agreed on flow of 500 cubic meters of water per second. The visit was important in the sense that Syria sent every base or capability of PKK out of its territory, to Bekaa Valley.¹³⁵

Form the changing environment in the Middle East, Öcalan was also shifting the stance of PKK and its relations with the states it is cooperating, which was on the other hand shifting Turkey's relations with the same states. When Barzani denounced his co-operation agreement with the PKK in the summer of 1986, his role as facilitator of PKK terrorism was taken up by his rival, Jalal Talabani, who had always been close to Syria. After Özal's visit to Damascus, Hafez al-Asad, who had been warned by the Turkish government and also satisfied by the agreement on the usage of the waters of Euphrates and Tigris, sought a counterweight in Greece. This was a sign that led to an informal

133 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim yayınları Vol. 2 (2005), p. 137

134 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter, 1997), p. 75

135 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 137

understanding between Athens, Damascus and Teheran.¹³⁶

While these changes were taking place, Iran increased its support for the PKK. Instead of being largely a corridor for terrorists traveling to northern Iraq, it began allowing direct assaults from its territory to the Turkish territory. It even allowed Abdullah Öcalan's brother Osman to establish a liaison office in Iran in 1989. In the following year, he was negotiating the establishment of twenty operational bases to strike at targets in Turkish provinces close to the border of Iran.¹³⁷

3.2. RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ITS NEIGHBORS AFTER THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR WITH RESPECT TO THE KURDISH ISSUE

In the Kurdish issue, one of the most remarkable and noteworthy moments is the end of the Iran-Iraq War and the refugee flow of Kurdish population from Northern Iraq to the Turkish border. The importance of the event is that the Kurdish problem came into the eyes of the international community so close, for the first time in the history.

3.2.1. The Anfal Operation

In 1988, first time in the history, chemical weapons were used against a civilian population, namely against the Kurdish population in Halabja during the occupation of Sulaymaniyah by the Iraqi forces. When the war was ended on 17 July 1987, Iraqi forces were sent to Northern Iraq against the separatist Kurds, who were in an endless resistance against the Iraqi state. The Anfal operation¹³⁸ was the name of the whole event on the Iraqi side. Differing numbers are cited when it comes to the number of deaths of noncombatant Kurds, which is from 100,000 to 250.000 noncombatant Kurds. The slaughter started in February 1988 and ended in September of that same year.

¹³⁶ Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.38

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 38

¹³⁸ The term 'Anfal' comes from the Koran where it is the title of the eighth sura (chapter) and means 'spoils of battle'. Muslims believe that God gave this revelation to the Prophet Muhammad so that the laws governing booty in battle would be well defined. By naming the operation 'Anfal', the Iraqis were providing a religious justification for the Kurds' slaughter. Michael M. Gunter, "A de facto Kurdish State in Northern Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1993), p. 296, Taylor & Francis, Ltd. p. 296.

According to the handwritten lists, there is a great deal of 'eliminated villages' and their inhabitants are referred as the 'lost ones of the Anfal'. These lost persons are dead or buried in mass graves dug in south-western Iraq. These events led the Iraqi Kurds to conceive the Baghdad government's loss of right to rule them. Large amounts of people (250.000) from the Kurdish population were displaced to the other sides of the country. The aim of the Iraqi state was to build up an unpopulated area in the border. Iraqi forces again used chemical weapons against the Kurdish population during these displacements. Bearing in mind the events in Halabja, Kurdish population started fleeing towards Turkey and Iran, however the Iranian border was closed and as a matter of fact many Kurds flooded into the Turkish border.¹³⁹

3.2.2. Kurdish Refugee Crisis in 1988 and Its Impact over the Relations between Turkey and Its Neighbors

The arrival of the Iraqi Kurdish community, running away from Saddam's wrath, caused remarkable public pressure on Turkey. The nation was not supporting the idea of welcoming the Kurds into the country, due to the combat against PKK and to the economic burden that the Turkish nation had to bear. The idea of the PKK militants' possible infiltration was also another fear of Ankara. At this moment, Talabani's visit to the United States was conceived as a sign of the project to found a US-led but an independent Kurdish state in the region in order to prevent the Soviet influence in the Middle East. The instability of the region due to the refugee flow was the other fear of Ankara, since that might have caused the project come true. The refugee problem could be solved after Turkey's decision to give temporary residence permit to the refugees, not giving them the asylum-seeker status.¹⁴⁰

Upon Turkey's decision regarding the refugees, the Iraqi forces asked for permission to enter Turkish territory further to the 1984 "Turkey-Iraq Security Protocol". Turkey, while carrying out 3 separate on the basis of the protocol in question, did not give the permission to the Iraqi forces. Turkey claimed that the Kurds who entered Turkey were all disarmed and they are definitely not going to be allowed to be in any activities

139 Ibid. p. 296. Also see Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2(2005) p. 139.

140 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2(2005) p. 138

against the Iraqi state. On this refusal, Iraq canceled the protocol while Turkey declared that there was no sign of chemical weapons on these Iraqi Kurds.¹⁴¹

The effects of the Post Iran-Iraq War and the refugee crisis were the deterioration of relations between Iraq and Turkey and Saddam's policy against the Turcoman community in Northern Iraq went harsher. Right after the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam was expelling the Kurdish community inhabiting in the Northern Iraq.¹⁴² The Kurdish villages were wiped out to make it easier for the Iraqi forces to control the area between the Kurds of Turkey and Iran with those of Iraq. The estimates are that around 500,000 Kurds were sent towards southern and central Iraq. In their new environment, they were meticulously distributed among Arab villages, constituting groups of up to five families.¹⁴³ After Turkey's attitude in the refugee crisis and the cancellation of the protocol he ordered the execution of 25 Turcomans and he ordered also the expedition of some of the Turcoman towns. The towns were demolished by Saddam's forces and the PKK gained the opportunity to settle in the camps which were being abandoned by both communities.¹⁴⁴

In 1989, the policy changes were taking place both in the Turkish state's side and in the side of PKK. Turkey decided to take military measures against the organization, which is not ceasing fire and also going on the armed conflict. Both the head of the Turkish military General Necip Torumtay and the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal made declarations confirming the policy change. PKK did not respond to the declarations of the head of the state with submission and it went on its terrorist campaign against the officers of the state, namely against the civilian officers such as teachers and doctors.¹⁴⁵

141 Ibid. p.138. See also Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.40.

142 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.40.

143 Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3(1992), p. 477-478

144 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005) p. 139. See also Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.40.

145 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005) p. 139.

3.3. THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON THE KURDISH ISSUE

Starting from right after the Second World War, Turkey's strategic location between the West and the USSR, along with its close location to the Middle East, always remained at the center of interest of the US. Greece's fall into the communist bloc, which was an internal threat rather than being an external one similar to Turkey's case, would produce the domino effect that the American policy-makers were always afraid under the influence of the Munich Conventions in 1938. In order to protect these states, which are situated as a border between the capitalist Western and communist Eastern blocs, from the Soviet threat, which is directed to the American capitalist interests, huge economic aid was dedicated with the Truman Doctrine.¹⁴⁶

Since Turkey gained its independence, it actually supported the existence of the Western states in the Middle East. Turkey's opposition to the partition of Palestine, to Britain's evacuation of the Suez Canal Zone, to the end of British mandate in Cyprus, Turkey's support for the French rule in Algeria and the American marine's landing on Beirut in 1958, were all Turkey's inclination to preserve the Western power in the Middle East for a counter-balance against the USSR. Taken into consideration the fact that the USSR was gaining influence in the Middle East through the July 1958 coup in Iraq led by Abdul Karim Kassim, Soviet penetration of Syria and Egypt by means of the Czech–Egyptian arms deal and Soviet financing of the Aswan Dam; the instability of pro-Western regimes in Jordan and Lebanon; the loss of British and French influence in the Middle East and North Africa; Turkey's attitude appears as the logical outcome of the Cold War politics. From the beginning of the Cold War, the American foreign policy was aware that Turkey's geopolitical importance was too high. Turkey was a natural buffer between the Soviet Union and the Middle East, the considerable part of the reason why no Soviet military could be dispatched to the Middle East was the existence of Turkey in this buffer zone. The non-existence of such a buffer zone was the result of a Soviet military intervention to Hungary in 1956; to Czechoslovakia in 1968; to Afghanistan in 1989. Turkey had a relatively stable political environment comparing to

¹⁴⁶ Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coing with Intertwinted Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 6.

newly become Soviet satellite Afghanistan, to the Andreas Papandreou's Greece and to the new enemy of the West once one of the most important defensive fronts of it, Iran. Turkey did not switch its position of being the safe front of the West after all. After Gorbachev came to office in the Soviet Union, in the mid-1980s, Turkey started losing its above mentioned geo-political importance. This decrease of importance showed its influence on a few subjects between Turkey- US relations: the Turkish–Greek standoff over Cyprus; the Turkish army's frequent intervention in domestic politics; Turkey's questionable human rights and freedom of expression records; its maltreatment of the Kurdish community; and longstanding allegations about Turkey's role – including government officials – in drug smuggling into Europe and the United States (The multibillion Turkish 'drug economy'). With the End of the Cold War, the financial aid that the US was providing with the region's American-Friendly states came to an end along with the Americans' call to dismantle its major military bases in Turkey, leaving only one US/NATO base in Incirlik, which meant an important loss of political leverage over the US from the Turkish side. On the other hand, the end of Cold War meant policy changes also between Turkey-EC relations. Turkey was striving for membership of the EU, however the often coups d'etat were destabilizing Turkey's democracy, which means a great burden to civic freedom and individual rights in Turkey. When Turkey met the EU membership terms by reducing subsidies and customs duties, restrictions on agriculture and emigration to EU countries, etc., Europe went on to rely on the Greek veto to keep Turkey out.¹⁴⁷

After the End of the Cold War, Turkey's combat with PKK terrorism continued in its regular form, namely the conception of the problem from a security perspective. In the mixed decision-making bodies, such as the National Security Council (NSC), the military was still holding dominant power when it comes to the Kurdish issue.¹⁴⁸ However, with the arrival of the last decade of the 20th century, the world and the Middle East changed extensively. As stated in the previous part, the Soviet Union collapsed, which was signifying the end of the Cold War and with the end of the Cold War, its politics also had to end. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Syria was losing its main protector and arms supplier. However, the use of terrorism was still staying as a

147 Ibid. p. 6-8

148 Ibid. p. 34

tool to be used against Turkey, in order to achieve its political aims stated above. The New World Order, previously promised by President George Bush senior, did not come true. In this moment, Turkey was alone and it had a very disadvantageous position against Iran, Iraq and Syria. On the other hand, the military's attitude against the civilians was a very significant source of criticism by the international community.¹⁴⁹

The change of the political environment in after the Cold War, provided the PKK with a stronger presence in northern Iraq and it had way better chances to gain arms. The tactics of PKK changed from hit-and-run to 'war of movement', which means that the organization was to start a wider offensive for the highly anticipated Kurdish state. The PKK held its fourth convention, during the Gulf War in 1990. It developed its political warfare vision. The PKK searched for support in cities instead of rural areas.¹⁵⁰ Its plan was to use the internally displaced Kurdish community, whose living conditions and economic lives were way lower than the Turkish population.¹⁵¹ Really effective activities were in application by the PKK in districts where the internally displaced Kurds inhabited, some of which were to force the closure of shops as a sign of protest against the authorities, celebration and organizing clashes between the government authorities and the Kurdish community on the day of the spring equinox (March 21).¹⁵²

153

149 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.40.

150 Ibid. p. 40

151 Internally displaced Kurds migrated to big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmit, and Izmir in Western Anatolia and Adana and Mersin in the Mediterranean region, but there was also a village-to-city migration within the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian regions. Many internally displaced Kurds did not know about the well-being of their lands, homes, and belongings during their long periods of displacement due to the decrease in security conditions in the region. In the case of those whose villages were evacuated, access to the village was prohibited. Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Transnationalization of Human Rights Norms and Its Impact on Internally Displaced Kurds", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), p. 980

152 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.40.

153 The spring equinox (March 21), traditionally celebrated as the beginning of the solar new year over a wide area of Eurasia (and particularly in Iran), was appropriated as a 'Kurdish national holiday'. Ibid. P.40.

CHAPTER 4

GULF WAR AND ITS EFFECT ON THE KURDISH ISSUE AND THE PKK TERRORISM

After the Cold War, World was to witness the first international crisis and it is no coincidence that the crisis took place in the Middle East, namely one of the most conflict-ridden places on the Earth.¹⁵⁴ Certainly, the Gulf War had very drastic impact on the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the PKK terrorism. Controversial topics such as the unconditional support of Turkey to the coalition forces, which is constituting a sharp deviation from the classical Turkish foreign policy and which was strictly condemned as adventurism by the opposition and the military,¹⁵⁵ and the establishment of the Poised Hammer Forces after the Operation Provide Comfort were introduced both to Turkish foreign policy and to the domestic politics of the country and remained on the top of the controversial issues for years.

4.1. THE GULF WAR

After the Iran-Iraq War ended on August 8, 1988, the balances in the Middle East changed in favor of Iran and the revolution that took place cited as the Islamic revolution of 1979¹⁵⁶ or the Revolution of 1979¹⁵⁷. However, Iraq exposed great economic and financial deficits because of its extensive military spending during the war. Saddam concentrated on solving his country's economic problems, looked ways to get out of this economic crisis. The first measure to be taken for Saddam was a deal

154 Mirjam E. Sørli, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Håvard Strand, "Why Is There so Much Conflict in the Middle East?", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Feb., 2005), p. 143

155 William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 68, No. 4(Oct., 1992), p. 85

156 Jack A. Goldstone, "Révolutions dans l'histoire et histoire de la révolution", *Revue française de sociologie*, Vol. 30, No. 3/4, Sociologie de la Révolution (Jul. - Dec., 1989), p. 426

157 Robin Wright, "Revolución latente en Teherán", *Política Exterior*, Vol. 10, No. 53 (Sep. - Oct., 1996), p. 75. See also Seyed Reza Mousavi, "La religion et le système politique en Iran: étude comparative des révolutions de 1906 et 1979 Canadian Journal of Political Science", *Revue canadienne de science politique*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Jun., 1999), p. 347

with the Arab states to erase his country's debts to them.¹⁵⁸

One of the reasons of the war with Iran, namely Iraq's attempt to impose a capitulationist peace on Iran was a dead end. Iran on one hand refused to renegotiate the Shatt al-Arab frontier, and on the other hand it did not release Iraqi prisoners of war. After the new Iranian government had consolidated in late 1989 after Khomeini's death, it was clear that Iraq had been blocked on its eastern frontier.¹⁵⁹ In fact, Saddam had been expressing his disapproval concerning the existence of Kuwait and the status quo in the Gulf. He and people in his public were claiming that Kuwait had been stolen from Iraq to suit the needs of Britain and the other imperial powers. Kuwait was an obstacle for Iraq's access to the Gulf, and it was controlling a considerable amount of oil that Saddam and his irredentist surrounding was deeming the oil Kuwait was controlling should be theirs. The Iran-Iraq War had caused a great economic burden on the Iraqi treasury, and Saddam was hoping that it could have been lightened by raising oil prices. However, the oil prices did not rise after the Iran-Iraq War as Saddam had anticipated and he blamed Kuwait for the low oil prices. Besides these accusations, he held Kuwait responsible for misappropriating oil from the Rumaila field, which was situated under the border between Iraq and Kuwait.^{160 161}

The other reason why Saddam attacked Kuwait can be said to be the end of Cold War and the fall of communist and authoritarian regimes of the Eastern Europe. The falling of these regimes was also a source of debate and the Arab world was also considering the possibility for regime changes towards democracy. After the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam did not feel the need for the support of the West or the US. His belief was to confront the West instead of aligning with them.¹⁶²

158 Peter Malanczuk. – Michael Barton Akehurst, *Akehurst's Modern Introduction to International Law*, Routledge Publication, (1997), p. 402

159 Fred Halliday, "The Gulf War and Its Aftermath: First Reflections", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 67, No. 2(Apr., 1991), pp. 226

160 H. W. Brands, "George Bush and the Gulf War of 1991", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Going to War (Mar., 2004), p. 117

161 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005) p. 255

162 Fred Halliday, "The Gulf War and Its Aftermath: First Reflections", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 67, No. 2(Apr., 1991), pp. 226

The refusal of his demands made Saddam consider other solutions, the center of which was the military option against these states and he started looking for the opportunities. He contacted with the American ambassador and after feeling the guarantee that the United States is not going to react in case of an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and declared Kuwait as its 19th province on 8 August 1990. After the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the United Nations Security Council did not stay motionless and it passed some resolutions. Starting with the resolution 660, the Security Council needed to pass ten resolutions condemning the invasion and occupation, demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, requiring Iraq to allow the safe and immediate departure from Iraq and Kuwait of nationals from third countries, condemning Iraq's violations of international norms regarding diplomatic immunity, and requiring Iraq to protect diplomatic and consular personnel and property including the call for an arms embargo on Iraq to supervise its implementation.¹⁶³

On 29 November the Security Council moved beyond the provisions embodied in article 41 of the Charter for the enforcement of its decisions and yet stopped the authorization of the collective security operations as outlined in article 42. Instead, resolution 678 authorized member-states 'to use all necessary means' to expel Iraq from Kuwait if Iraq does not implements resolution 660 and all other subsequent relevant resolutions by 15 January 1991. While the resolution did not specify the use of force, it was interpreted to include a resort to force.¹⁶⁴

As a result of Iraq's noncompliance of the resolutions, On 16 January 1991, the U.S.-led campaign started with airstrikes. On 24 February, 1991, the land strikes launched and on 28 February 1991, the coalition forces could remove the Iraqi forces from Kuwait and some parts of Southern Iraq. At the end of the Gulf War, the UN resolution number 687 came into force on 3 April 1991. According to the resolution 687, Iraq was required to remove all it weapons of mass destruction missiles and facilities under the supervision

163 Peter Malanczuk. – Michael Barton Akehurst, Akehurst's Modern Introduction to International Law, Routledge Publication, (1997), p. 402 . See also Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon "The United Nations after the Gulf War", *International Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2, After the Gulf War (Spring, 1994), p. 255

164 Ibid p. 255

of UN. With the same resolution, the border disputes with Iraq and Kuwait were going to be observed and the trade embargo, which was banning the export of oil from Iraq.¹⁶⁵

4.2. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN TURKEY AFTER THE GULF WAR

Beginning from the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, the influence of the civil politicians started to be more preponderant in the Turkish domestic politics, namely the normalization process on the political level got over in time. At the beginning of the 1990s, with the normalization process, the Kurdish issue was being conceived as a political issue, except from its security dimension. In the Özal era, along with the economy of the country which was opened to the world market, with the flow of liberal ideas, the public opinion started discussing the issue through the Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). This was the reflection of the efforts to function the Turkish democracy in the public level and these efforts inevitably influenced the government of the country. For the first time in the history of the republic, new alternative opinions challenged the official view of the state.¹⁶⁶

The policy change was not simply the result of the normalization process in the Turkish politics after a coup, but the end of the Cold War in 1989 was another reason of the switch in the policies. Since after the Cold War, the identity policies and the circulation of the democracy ideas came to the forefront in the states' both national and international policies. This even led to the renaming of the problem from being "Eastern question" to "Kurdish problem". In this new phase of the world history and the Turkish politics, especially the social democrat parties and most of the other fractions strived to find solutions to the problem.¹⁶⁷

The 1991 general elections were a remarkable display of the change of the preferences of the Turkish public, comparing to the previous two elections, in which the Motherland Party (ANAP) was the victor. The new DYP- SHP (Doğruiyol Partisi- Sosyaldemokrat

165 Peter Malanczuk. – Michael Barton Akehurst, Akehurst's Modern Introduction to International Law, Routledge Publication, (1997), p.402

166 Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (Feb. 2011), p. 195.

167 Ibid. p. 196

Halkçı Parti) coalition and its promises during the election campaigns constituted a new era and the hopes for the solution of the Kurdish problem was voiced more openly.¹⁶⁸ Suleyman Demirel, who became prime minister after the 1991 elections, and his coalition partner, the deputy prime minister Erdal Inonu, leader of SHP, went to the southeast regions, whose population was of Kurdish origin to reassure local people. Demirel declared that he recognized ‘the Kurdish reality’, which is a very effective sign of the policy change since 1970s.¹⁶⁹ Since the parties both during the campaigns and after its establishment, was giving broad expectations to stop the armed conflict in the Kurdish issue and to bring the problem onto a political plane, which means the parliament. A broad and comprehensive program was prepared concerning the cultural rights of the Kurds living in Turkey.^{170 171}

On the other hand, these hopes were all put aside after the crisis of oath of enlistment in the parliament after the 1991 elections. During the oath in the parliament on 06.11.1991, the deputies of the HEP (Halkın Emek Partisi) Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle, who are of Kurdish origin, read the text of oath in Kurdish and after that event, the deputies of HEP started resigning from SHP, with whom HEP had made an electoral alliance before the elections.^{172 173} The deputies, who resigned from SHP formed another party DEP (Demokrasi Partisi). However the deputies were later put on trial and found guilty of forming collusion with the PKK. Four of the accused were given long sentences of imprisonment. The most familiar one among them was a woman MP, Leyla Zana, wife of a Kurdish nationalist who had been mayor of Diyarbakır. The event was conceived in Europe differently.

The imprisonment of Zana was seen as the denial of free speech in Turkey, which later caused deep setbacks in Turkey's EU (European Union) integration and membership

168 Ibid. p. 196

169 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.41

170 Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA Yayınları, (Feb. 2011), p. 203

171 It was foreseen that the education, radio and television broadcasting in Kurdish, establishment of a Kurdish Institute, abolition of language censures be put into practice. Ibid. p. 203

172 Ibid. p.204

173 Ibid. p.211

process.^{174 175} The rest of the DEP members of parliament who escaped to Europe did indeed co-operate with the PKK, particularly in the fraudulent Kurdish Parliament in Exile, which the PKK dominated. Upon the resignations of the deputies, PKK went on its military campaign, not allowing any chances to the parliamentary solutions to the Kurdish problem and the operation of the PKK against the Turkish territory put an end to this short interval of appeasement and search for a democratic solution to the Kurdish question in general and to the terrorism problem specifically concerning the PKK.¹⁷⁶

4.3. KURDISH ISSUE AND THE PKK TERRORISM AFTER THE GULF WAR

When taken into consideration the change in the political environment in Turkey both in the public level and as a reflection of it, on the state level along with the end of Cold War, Gulf War constitutes a notably important phase. First of all, as stated above, Turkey was different at the beginning of 1990s. The country was switching into a European style democracy and even if the offensive of the PKK was in augmentation, country was willing to give cultural rights to the Kurdish community in Turkey. Secondly, World was different, since the Cold War was ended and the international community's attention was now more drawn on the regional conflicts that would arise from the lack of authority, which was highly possible. And finally, the Middle East was different from the 1980s. As the Iran-Iraq War was ended, the 1979 Revolution in Iran was established with its institutions and regime, Iraq was much weaker than before the Iran-Iraq War.

The influence of the Gulf War was felt strongly on the Kurdish question. The defeated Iraq was the country which was affected the most by the Gulf War. It lost an estimated 200,000 or more military and civilian lives along with the bulk of its air force and army. This loss of military power had very drastic effects on the Northern Iraq, the region where the Iraqi Kurdish community still inhabited after the masses sent to the other parts of the country. Saddam had to deal with the Shi'ite rebellion in southern and

174 Ibid. p.204

175 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.41

176 Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*, SETA yayınları, (Feb. 2011), p. 204

central half of the country, including the sacred cities of Karbala and Najaf.¹⁷⁷

Even though the Iraqi government lost most of its air force, considerable amount of its ground forces, along with the material sources, Saddam was still in power and he was still in a position to reverse the advances that Kurdish nationalist forces had made during the war. The 36th parallel, the line where the coalition forces had drawn in order to secure a safe zone for the Kurds, became the border between the Iraqi forces and the coalition forces, by the end of 1991. This is unique in the history in the sense that there was created a safe zone and a de facto Kurdish state. A very important remark to be pointed out is that it was a force stationed on Turkish soil and Turkey was cooperating with this force.¹⁷⁸

Turkey, as a regional power but a non-Arab country was the other country which was strongly affected by the war. At the beginning of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, Turkey only issued a condemnation and stayed in line with its traditional neutral position. However, as long as Saddam refused evacuating Kuwait, Turkey's stance was immediately reversed. The Security Council Resolution 661 was applied by Turkey when it announced that the crucial Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline would be closed, and all other commercial links with Iraq and occupied Kuwait would be suspended. After the end of Cold War, President Özal was very determined to prove Turkey's importance both in the region and Turkey's role that it could play in the crisis, and he was prepared to give full support to the coalition powers.¹⁷⁹

While Özal's expectations were high, the end of the Gulf War was far from satisfying these expectations for both Turkey and Özal. A number of very important problems surfaced and among these, the Kurdish tragedy was easily the most important for Turkey. During the war, the Kurdish rebellion made Saddam use a considerable amount of his forces, and with the end of the war, he initiated brutally suppressing the Kurdish rebellion. This meant an unprecedented humanitarian tragedy of the masses from the

177 Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1992), p. 485

178 Ibid. 485.

179 William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 68, No. 4(Oct., 1992), pp. 687

northern Iraq. During the first two weeks of April, it was reported that around 250.000¹⁸⁰ to 500.000 Kurdish refugees were massed along the frontier with Turkey.¹⁸¹ There was also the possibility for the emergence of a Gaza Strip experience. Since the refugees would enter Turkey only for an interim duration, but would stay and establish in the region, which is not an option to be missed.¹⁸²

Ankara was not fast enough to improve the dramatic situation of the Kurdish refugees since it was afraid that the responsibility of the refugee flow would be left to Turkey. Turkey was spending \$1.5 million a day for these people without receiving sufficient help from the West. Turkey's public opinion was not supporting the idea of letting these refugees live on the Turkish territory because of its economic and social burden. On the other hand, Turkish statesmen, and particularly the military, were aware that The PKK militants were crossing the border easily in the state of chaos.¹⁸³ The PKK intensified its actions and settled itself in northern Iraq, around the towns of Kerkuk, Sulaymaniya, Dukan, Arbil and Zakho.¹⁸⁴ The refugees had to be sent back to Iraq, but without some sort of protection, it would not be possible to do so. On 7 April, Özal decided to suggest that the UN should bear the responsibility of protecting the refugees and for providing a safe haven to them. On the other hand, The division of Iraq was serving the political aims of the Iranian government and the spread of the Iranian regime was the next step after a divided Iraq. This was totally against the interests of the American Foreign Policy in the region.¹⁸⁵ First Britain and later the US supported the idea and at the end of April, with the participation of around 17,000 coalition troops in and around northern Iraq and further to the UN Security Council Resolution 688 of April 1991¹⁸⁶, the 'Operation Provide Comfort' began, whose responsibility was to establish a security

180 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 345

181 William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Oct., 1992), p. 687

182 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları Vol. 2 (2005) p. 260.

183 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95" *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), p. 345

184 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coing with Intertwinted Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 34

185 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vo. 2 2005 p. 260.

186 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 349

zone for the refugees, which it succeeded later on.¹⁸⁷

Iran appeared as the country which was threatened the least by the upsurge of Kurdish nationalism as a result of the Gulf War. The Kurdish community was divided among four countries and this fact influenced their fate and the experience they had in each of these states. Hence, the history of the Kurdish community in Iran differs from the one in Turkey and this fact is the reason why Iran was not affected from the new situation concerning the Kurds in Middle East as much as Turkey or Iraq did. In the past, no European power was involved in the Kurdish community in Iran, like in Iraq. Turkey was pursuing nationalist policies after the establishment of the Republic; however Iran was not as secular and nationalist as Turkey until 1960. The lifestyles are different in Turkey and Iran in the general public and this is causing the development of different attitudes in both countries. Also, in Iran, the attention on the Kurds or the Kurdish question of the mass media is much lower than in Turkey, which is keeping the subject at a low media profile.¹⁸⁸

4.4. OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT AND THE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

The Operation Provide Comfort was in any way a very controversial issue for the Turkish domestic and foreign policies. The refugee flow was somehow ended, but the multinational force in order to provide security to the Iraqi Kurds might produce very complex and undesirable consequences for Turkey. When the Poised Hammer force was deployed after the crisis broke out, Turkish Foreign Ministry and the Chief of the General Staff's Office, who are the follower of the traditional Turkish view concerning the Turkish Foreign Policy which can be defined as staying out of the armed conflicts in abroad, symbolized by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's phrase "Peace at home peace in the World", became concerned about the possibility of the Western states' - particularly the United States – deployment of this force to intervene in any other crisis in the Middle

187 William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 68, No. 4(Oct., 1992), p. 688

188 Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question in the Aftermath of the Gulf War: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1992), pp. 486

East. This meant the force deployed might attract the wrath of other nations in the Middle East in case it was to be used in other crisis, which constitutes a very drastic shift in the Turkish Foreign Policy up to date.¹⁸⁹

The possibility of military establishment of the Western powers, particularly the US, on the region not only worried Turkey but also the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was suspicious of the Poised Hammer force, which is constituted by the coalition forces, on the Turkish soil. Soviets' suspicion was especially on the American ambition to remove the Saddam Regime from power and this is in two points different from the initial aims of the operation: Firstly, the force was created in order to provide security to the Kurdish population, who were affected by Saddam's wrath after the Gulf War. Now the security, which was promised to the Kurdish population, was established but after the American forces entered the region, The Poised Hammer Forces were still remaining for totally unknown purposes. Secondly, there were strong suspicions in the Soviet side regarding the fact that the force in question seemed to remain in the area for overthrowing Saddam. However, the coalition forces were technically seeking to ensure 'Iraqi compliance with the UN Resolutions', acting in line with the authority granted by UN Resolution 688, and 'doing the same with regard to Yugoslavia.' They allegedly 'hoped' that 'some day the Iraqis will reach an agreement with the Kurds on autonomy... as stipulated by the (Iraqi) constitution'. The point which is concerning Turkey is the possibility of an independent Kurdish State in Northern Iraq and this was the possible worst scenario for the Turkish side, since the fears that this might incite and show the way towards secession also to the Kurdish community living in Turkey. The Western statesmen at the highest levels were assuring the Turkish politicians that they were categorically opposed to an independent Kurdish State in northern Iraq.¹⁹⁰

4.5. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE GULF WAR

Turkish foreign policy faced certain and challenging developments after the war had ended. The economic losses of the country were only one side of the aftermath of the

189 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No.4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 348

190 Ibid. p.349

war. The Kurdish issue once again climbed to the top of the international community's agenda, which would not drop to the bottom in Turkish foreign policy taken into consideration its relations with especially the great powers such as the US and the EU.

4.5.1. Turkey- US Relations after the Gulf War in the Scope of the Kurdish Issue and The PKK Terrorism

As stated above, the brief interval of the violence took place when the 1991 elections were held. However, after PKK's relentless and continuing violence escalated, the government and military turned back to its realist approach and its combat against the PKK violence. Starting especially from the foundation of the PKK, Kurdish nationalism became the most important and challenging threat to Turkey's national security both on the individual level and on its territorial integrity - national unity.¹⁹¹ This also caused the extensive Turkish fear of territorial division of the country, which is also called "Sevres Syndrome" for the Turkish political life.¹⁹²

With the end of Cold War, Turkey's security concern had deviated from the Soviet threat, which had started losing its importance after the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, to the PKK terrorism. The US also agreed on the threat of PKK was a major destabilizing factor in the region, and threatened Turkish national security. The covert American support for Turkey's combat against PKK terrorism was actually being felt, while The US stayed silent in Turkish operations in northern Iraq. At the beginning of the Post-Cold War era, the Turkish statesmen were seeing the whole issue as a terrorism problem caused by the PKK. The solutions posed by the US, comprised political efforts, too. This was misconceived in Turkey both by the military and civilian politicians, namely the suggestions of the US concerning the solution of the problem were considered to be offering autonomy or federalism. On the Turkish side, the stress on the Kurdish identity living in the republic was creating implications on ethnic groups in Turkey, where a wide variety of other ethnic groups existed. Hence, the debates or

191 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives on Turkish-US Relations concerning Persian Gulf Security in the Post-Cold War Era: 1989-1995", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer, 1996), p. 349

192 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası, İletişim Yayınları*, Vol. 2, (2005)

solutions regarding Turkey's Kurdish community would produce debates regarding other ethnic groups, too, which meant a disaster in terms of territorial integrity.¹⁹³

4.5.2. The Operation Northern Watch and the Poised Hammer Forces

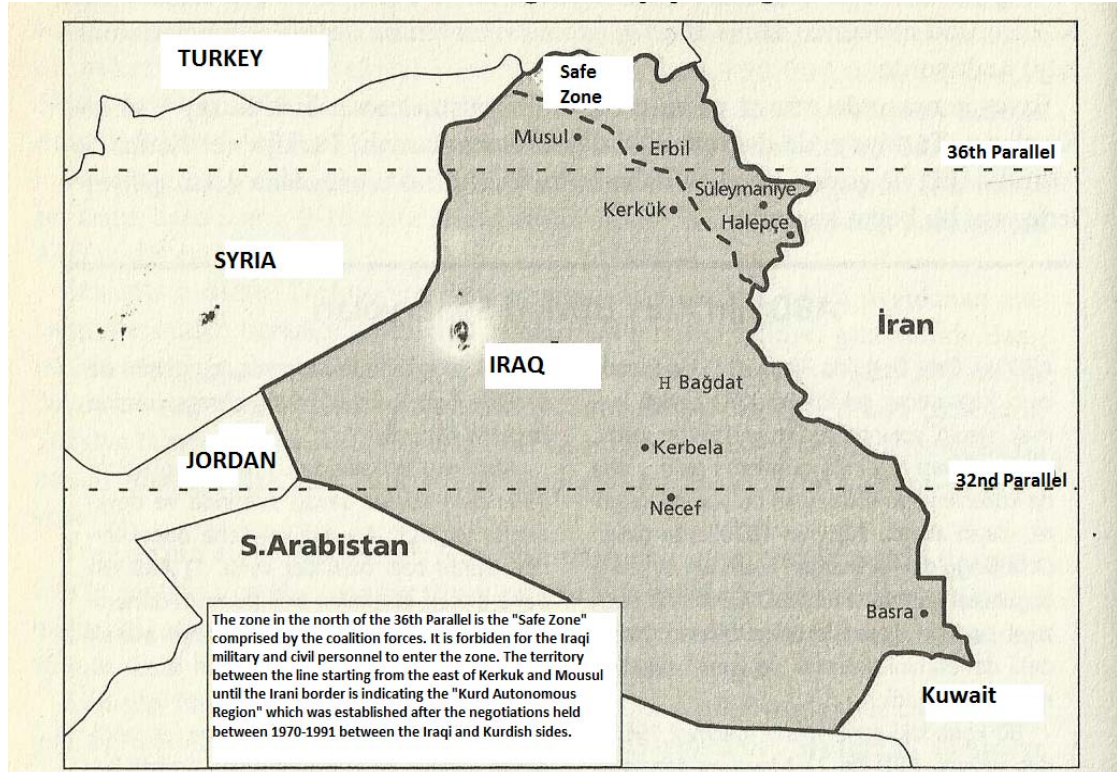
When the Operation Provide Comfort was finished and Turkey's concerns over the Kurdish refugee crisis had ended, only one side of the concerns of Turkey was over. The Kurdish refugee crisis was a very important crossroad, since the timing was very remarkable. It was right after the Cold War ended and the World attention was deviated from the Cold War politics to ethnic issues, which remained secondary from the political agendas of especially European countries. In compliance with the realist policies of the US for the removal of Saddam from power, the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq had to stay in place and the European public opinion was effervescently supporting the idea of a Poised Hammer force in the region.¹⁹⁴ Operation Northern Watch was the result of the UN Security Council resolutions accepted after the Gulf War and its aim was to provide on one tenth of the Iraqi territory (about 19,000 square miles or 49,000 square kilometers) a "Safe Haven," or "Safe Zone," for the Kurds of northern Iraq. The forces set up in the region were more than forty-five American and British airplanes and some 1400 soldiers took part in these activities (known up to 1997 as "Operation Provide Comfort" and "Poised Hammer"), whose headquarters are located at the air base in Incirlik in southern Turkey, with ground and support elements in Silopi and Batman. There were created one of the no-flight zones in Iraq: above the thirty-sixth parallel which covers most of the Kurdish "Safe Haven" imposed in April 1991, the other no-flight zone being the southern no-flight zone imposed in August 1992 to protect Shi'ite Muslims in Iraq. Turkey's role in these forces was to take part in the monitoring of the forces.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, the force stationed in Turkey remained as a controversy in the Turkish domestic and foreign relations. In domestic politics, the

193 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives on Turkish-US Relations concerning Persian Gulf Security in the Post-Cold War Era: 1989-1995", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Summer, 1996), p. 350

194 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2, (2005), p. 261

195 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 25-26

opposition parties were condemning and criticizing the force. They were claiming that Turkey was providing the foundation of a Kurdish State in the Northern Iraq from its own soil. Even though the opposition parties were all fervently against this force on the Turkish soil, they all had to admit the continuation of the force when they came into power.¹⁹⁶



The map shows the location of the Safe Zone dedicated to the Northern Iraqi Kurds¹⁹⁷

The impact of the Poised Hammer forces in Turkey was deeply felt and strongly debated in the Turkish political life during the 1990s. The supporters of the idea of the Poised Hammer Forces were claiming that the forces in question, which were deployed in the region for the safety and security of the Kurds, Turkey was able to assert that it did not have any problems with the Kurdish community and via the forces in question, Turkey was able to prevent the build-up of the PKK in the northern Iraq, since while Turkey was allowing the Poised Hammer forces on its soil, the US was remaining silent to the Turkish operations in northern Iraq against the PKK. In addition, Turkey was

¹⁹⁶ Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2, (2005), p. 261

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 260.

keeping its close ties with the northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders, Talabani and Barzani.¹⁹⁸

Views against the Poised Hammer forces in Turkey were arguing that the existence of these forces were serving the benefits of the PKK, since the existence of the forces were creating a power vacuum, and this was contributing the activities of the PKK to be circulated in the area much easier. Especially after Baghdad lost authority in northern Iraq, when the "Safe Zone" was allotted to the Kurds, The PKK militants gained advantage to establish in northern Iraq, more specifically around the towns of Kerkuk, Sulaymaniya, Dukan, Arbil and Zakho. PKK was in a position to conduct a campaign of terror against Turkey more easily and in a conflict that reached to a point where it is cited as a civil war, the damage was enormous, with up to sixty casualties daily on both sides. On the other hand, the suspicions and fears were on the establishment of a Kurdish state and the appropriate circumstances it was creating, as the Saddam's forces were not able to penetrate in the region and there was practically no deterrence for a Kurdish state. The rumors concerning the aid arriving to the PKK camps through the helicopters of the forces and as a result of this the increase in the PKK activities in the region were creating suspicions and nuisance in the Turkish public.¹⁹⁹ This is a very important issue to be pointed out, since at the beginning the Turkish Armed Forces calculated the possibility of such an aid, first unintentionally. There were reports citing the existence of the fact that allied coalition forces in Turkey have held contacts with the Kurds of northern Iraq without notifying Turkish authorities, that the helicopters which take off from Incirlik to conduct reconnaissance flights in northern Iraq have done so without the knowledge of the Turkish authorities, that transport aircraft belonging to the allied forces have dropped aid supplies where PKK militants were known to be active, those arms have been transported from Incirlik to Armenia under the guise of 'medicines and medical equipment' and so on. However, there have also been reports of an increasing unrest on the part of Turkish civilian and military authorities and of the latter conveying their uneasiness to NATO.²⁰⁰

198 Ibid. p. 263.

199 Ibid. p. 263. See also Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 26, 34

200 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 351

The establishment of the Poised Hammer in the region augmented the activities of the Kurds in northern Iraq for a Kurdish state. The initial signs were the elections held in northern Iraq and the establishment of a Kurdish Parliament. However, with the personal efforts of President Özal, Turkey was able to involve more on the events taking place in northern Iraq. Some of the most remarkable signs were the visit of Masud Barzani and Jalal Talabani to Ankara. Turkey was establishing close ties with the leaders of the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq via this sort of official visits and the representation offices in Ankara, opened by the northern Iraqi Kurds.²⁰¹

While Turkey got involved in the northern Iraqi issues through the above mentioned ties, a federate Kurdish state was declared in Erbil in October 1992 by the northern Iraqi Kurds. Turkey did not recognize the existence of such a state and in the same month, started an extensive operation against PKK camps in northern Iraq. Ankara was trying to tie the northern Iraqi Kurds to the government in Baghdad with its declarations. Turkey also made a meeting with the representatives of both Syria and Iran in Ankara in order to urge them to support the unity of Iraq. Taken into consideration the developments concerning the establishment of a new Kurdish Federated state in northern Iraq, which was under the authorization of the Poised Hammer, with all of its elements, namely its opposition, military and the ruling party, Turkey started to use a louder voice against the Poised Hammer.²⁰²

As explained above, the Poised Hammer force was discussed and opposed by some forces in Turkey. Turkey was convinced that Saddam was not in a position to attack the Kurds in the northern Iraq, however the force was still stationed. The following reasons for the restoration of full-scale relations with Iraq had apparently motivated the Turkish side to be willing for an agreement. The establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, which appeared as one of the options after the force was stationed, could be rendered easier. Since the force would be used for provoking domestic unrest that might

201 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005) p. 263.

202 Ibid. p. 264. See also Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), p. 351; Michael M. Gunter, "A de facto Kurdish State in Northern Iraq", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1993), p. 309.

result from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, which is desired by the United States. Turkish statesmen and the military have feared that the resulting disintegration of Iraq could spill over into other regional countries including Turkey. The establishment of a Kurdish state in Iraq, apart from the consequences concerning Turkey's own Kurdish population's possible similar reactions, was also unacceptable to the Turks, when taken into consideration the future of the estimated 2.5 million Turcoman living in northern Iraq. This Turcoman minority of Northern Iraq is worth citing because of the division of Iraq was apparently taking place. Turcoman are the third ethnic group among Iraq's population of 18 million, together with the Arabs and Kurds. They have very close and strong ethnic ties with Turkey. For Baghdad, Turcomans were also a very considerable threat to its territorial integrity taken into consideration their powerful mother state: Turkey. The location of them is very noteworthy since cities where they live are the cities over which Turkey had historical claims originating from the Lausanne Treaty and the decision the League of Nations' decision in 1925. On the other hand, they were the oil-rich territories, which are very strategic in terms of Iraq's only export good. The Iraqi method of dealing with groups of a different ethnic background – relinquishing identity, culture and rights, destruction of villages, and removal of the population to the interior, i.e. forced relocation, forced assimilation and forced Arabization – was also applied here, to the detriment of Turkish–Iraqi relations. The situation has become even more complex with the practical autonomy that the Kurds enjoy in northern Iraq. Occasionally, this results in attempts at Kurdification of Turcomans living there. In this respect, the Turcomans' call for a Turkish assistance for autonomy in case a comprehensive domestic unrest took place constitutes another variable in the regions ethnic based conflicts.²⁰³

If the overthrow of Saddam Hussein was followed by a bloody power struggle, which is a generally often argument for the Middle Eastern power struggles in the past, the unarmed Turcomans facing the Kurds in northern Iraq might suffer from the same fate that has befallen the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina facing the armed Serbs. Turkey would then be forced to intervene, as in Cyprus, to save their kin, and this meant a politically and financially costly foreign adventure for Turkey. Both being damaged in

203 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 11

the Gulf War by the operations of the allied forces, Iraq would not be conceived as a serious military threat to Turkey's security in the region. On the other hand, Baghdad was surprisingly but effectively ready to abide by the UN resolutions regarding its military capability, in view of the serious problems caused by the UN economic embargo. In this respect, as a result of Baghdad's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 715 of 1991, any hostile behavior or threat to the region's security would seem distant. Fourth, a politically and territorially united Iraq would offer a balance in the region against Iran's growing influence and power in the region. Since the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran's focus was spreading its 1979 revolution into the region first for political power and then for regional hegemony.²⁰⁴

From the economic dimension, Turkey made a considerable deficit from trade with Iraq, because of the United Nations economic sanctions.²⁰⁵ Turkish financial losses from the war include lost trade with Iraq and Kuwait, lost tourism revenues, lost fees from transit trade, suspension on repayment of Iraqi debts, lost fees for transit of Iraqi oil through the Turkish pipeline, suspended construction contracts, lost remittances from Turkish workers in Iraq and Kuwait, and increased oil prices. To compensate for these losses and to reward Turkey's quick response to the crisis, President Bush, along with the EC, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, has sought to put together a multibillion-dollar assistance package to the so-called frontline states.²⁰⁶ In this sort of a very vulnerable region, namely the south eastern Anatolian region where the economic activities had never been sound, these amounts of economic losses were creating very appropriate areas for terrorist activities and gaining recruitment from the local people. The relaxation of embargo, for these economic and social reasons, was crucial for Turkey, especially at a time when the Turkish military was focusing its strength against the PKK. Turkey had already started to move on the PKK militarily and as a result of both

204 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), p. 352-353

205 Calculations regarding Turkey's loss from the economic sanctions differ year after year. US \$750,000 per month directly and indirectly from the non- functioning of the oil pipeline. *Milliyet*, 15 Aug. 1993, p. 14. After four years of economic sanctions, the loss became \$20 billion in total. *Milliyet*, 17 Jan. 1995, p.7. Finally in *Milliyet's* publication on 14.03.2000, it is cited that according to the digits which were received from the Turkish Secretariat of Treasury, Turkey's deficit was around \$100 billion in 10 years stemming from the UN economic embargos. Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası, İletişim Yayınları*, 2005, p 258.

206 Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (Spring, 1991), p. 37

the meeting of Talabani with Öcalan in march 1993 in Damascus and these military struggles of the Turkish army, in March 1993, PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire also asking for some political demands.²⁰⁷

On December 1996, the Poised Hammer forces were reduced only to air forces without ground forces and the force was renamed as "Operation Northern Watch".²⁰⁸ This meant a relief in Turkish domestic politics, since the forces were taken under the Turkish state's supervision with its new legislation and system. Turkish military was already gaining sharp supremacy over South Eastern Anatolia and these amendments had a positive effect of the already declining PKK in the region, which had started from 1994, one year after the time when the PKK violence was on its utmost point.²⁰⁹

4.5.3. Turkey- EEC/EU Relations in the Scope of the Kurdish Issue

Turkey's relations with the former EEC and later EU have a complex history starting from the 1950s. When the relations between the two are considered and examined, it is seen that the human rights issues and the rule of law had remained as one of the issues on the top of the agenda, among the economic and demographic issues. Turkey's relations with the EEC were profoundly affected by two developments in the 1980s: The 1980 military coup and the acceptance of Greece into the EEC. The second development meant the psychological supremacy of Greece over Turkey, whose relations were thoroughly damaged after the Cyprus issue in 1974. This supremacy was not only psychological as expected, since Greece was gaining advantage over the Turkish exports due to the customs exemption for the Greek products sold to the EC countries. Greece was also using the EEC platform as another advantage over Turkey by dragging the problems between the two countries on the EC level.²¹⁰ However, the problems with Greece on the EEC level can be cited as secondary since they were not

207 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.41

208 On the other hand, the new force was comprised of 1324 personnels, with the participation of 41 American, 7 British, 4 Turkish helicopters. Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 266

209 Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends, Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 129

210 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 86-89. See also Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (Spring, 1991), p. 41

on a structural level but on bilateral level. Given the cooperation of both countries in other fields except the Cyprus issue, it appears that both countries can cooperate even if Turkey is not a member of the EEC or later EU.

As for the effects of the 12 September 1980 coup over the relations between Turkey and the EEC, the result is different. Even if the relations between the two were in order right after the coup, the EEC started to take a harsher stand against the military in office in Turkey and also against its undemocratic applications even after years passed over the coup. However, under these circumstances, on 14 April 1987 president Özal applied for the full membership and this signified the official willingness of Turkey to be a part of the EEC and the application was rejected on 18 December 1989, further to the economic and political reasons such as Turkey's economic change in the 1980s and the prohibitions in the political life along with the poor human rights record of Turkey in 1980s.²¹¹ After this development, Turkey and EEC relations were not officially suspended but practically to a certain extent deactivated. These static relations were also the result of the end of the Cold War, since the EEC dedicated its attention more on the ex-Soviet satellite states of Eastern Europe. Turkey also changed its Foreign Policy priorities more in line with the US after the end of Cold War further to the policies of president Özal.

The human rights abuses in Turkey during the 1980s as a result of the military regime had been in the watch list of the EEC. However after the PKK terrorist attacks started in the Southeastern part of the Anatolia, the focus of attention of the EEC states turned more on the applications of the Turkish state against the PKK militants.²¹² For instance, in May 1990 the European Parliament (although with only 71 of 518 members present) voted for a resolution condemning terrorism in Turkey and called on the Turkish government to recognize the political, cultural and social rights of the Kurds.²¹³ This focus of the EEC countries was not neglected by the Turkish state and they were

211 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 (2005), p. 100

212 Barry Rubin-Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey in World Politics, And Emerging Multiregional Power*-William Hale- Gamze Avcı- "Turkey and European Union: The Long Road to Membership", Boğaziçi University Press, (2002), p. 56.

213 Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (Spring, 1991), p. 44

conceived as the elements trying to divide Turkey.²¹⁴ The release of the six PMs Kurdish origins which were previously cited above were linked for the ratification of the Customs Union with Turkey by the now EU management mechanism. This manner from the EU side is open to the interpretations on the Turkish side, especially in the nationalist Turkish opinion that EU is trying to link irrelevant issues only in order to impose the Kurdish nationalist aspirations.

The other attitude of the EU to be cited is its focus on the Article 8 of the Anti- Terror Law of Turkey.²¹⁵ The law generally and the article 8 specifically, was under the attention of the European Parliament and the Parliament in question asked for the removal of the article. Even the article in question was not removed, some limited amendments were made and also the Supreme Court released two of the ex MPs, who were sentenced to serve long imprisonments. As a result of the amendments and some other changes in Turkish politics, Turkey was accepted to the Customs Union, which was cited to be the first step into the Union for Turkey. The process of acceptance into the Customs Union demonstrated that human rights issue constituted an important reason of Turkey's non-acceptance into the EU as a full member; however Turkey was also too important for the Europeans to be excluded.²¹⁶

As stated above, Kurdish issue constitutes an important turning point in the relations

214 Barry Rubin-Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey in World Politics, And Emerging Multiregional Power*-William Hale- Gamze Avcı- "Turkey and European Union: The Long Road to Membership", Boğaziçi University Press, (2002), p. 56.

215 http://www.justice.gov.tr/basiclaws/Law_on_Figh.pdf

Part 1. Propaganda against the indivisible unity of the State:

Article 8. (1) Written and oral propaganda and assemblies, meetings and demonstrations aimed at damaging the indivisible unity of the Turkish Republic with its territory and nation are forbidden, regardless of the methods, intentions and ideas behind such activities. Those conducting such activities shall be punished with a sentence of between 2 and 5 years' imprisonment and with a fine of between 50 million and 100 million Turkish liras.

(2) If the offence of propaganda as mentioned in the foregoing paragraph is committed by a periodical as defined in Article 3 of the Press Law No. 5680, its publishers shall be punished additionally by the following amounts of fine: for periodicals issued at less than monthly intervals the fine shall be 90 per cent of the average real sales of the previous month; for printed works that are not periodicals or periodicals that have just entered the market the fine shall be 90 per cent of the monthly sales of the best selling daily periodical. In any case the fine shall not be less than 100 million Turkish liras. Editors in charge of such periodicals shall be punished with half the sentences awarded to publishers and a sentence of between six months and two years' imprisonment.

216 Barry Rubin-Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey in World Politics, And Emerging Multiregional Power*-William Hale- Gamze Avcı- "Turkey and European Union: The Long Road to Membership", Boğaziçi University Press, (2002), p. 57-58

between Turkey and the EU. The driving forces inside the EU have always felt sympathy for the Kurdish issue and this switched into an sometimes overt sometimes covert support for the PKK. The PKK was seen by the EU as a liberation force rather than a terrorist organization. Especially the Western European press never quit citing the PKK militants as rebellion forces, separatists, freedom-fighters rather than terrorists.²¹⁷ While Turkish army's operations were constantly criticized both by the EU institutions and the public opinion through the NGOs, Turkish state institutions and the public opinion was thoroughly influenced negatively by the attitude of Europe. In 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, Turkish army was strictly criticized for its inability to distinguish the terrorists (always cited as rebels or guerillas) from the civilian, often Kurdish local population. However, Europe and especially the public opinion of the EU member states' people were not distinguishing the PKK terrorists from the freedom fighters. This is seen also in the extradition process of the criminals, who were being searched on international level with a view to extradition to Turkey, whose extraditions were rejected by the EU member states judicial authorities. These criminals were searched by the Turkish judicial authorities for the PKK related crimes and their extraditions were unanimously rejected by the EU member states.²¹⁸ The extradition of criminals was always a controversial issue in international law. It is a judicial process; however it is also the result of the evaluation of a political mechanism.

217 Le Monde Daily Newspaper, 03 February 2012- La Turquie bombarde des bases de la rébellion kurde en Irak-http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2012/02/03/la-turquie-bombarde-des-bases-de-la-rebellion-kurde-en-irak_1638749_3218.html. See also Le Figaro Daily Newspaper, 30 March 2012- Les Kurdes du PKK comptent sur le soutien de Damas-<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2012/03/30/01003-20120330ARTFIG00673-les-kurdes-du-pkk-comptent-sur-le-soutient-de-damas.php>;

Le Figaro Daily Newspaper, 04 May 2012- PKK: 3 Soldats turcs tués lors d'un raid-<http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2012/05/04/97001-20120504FILWWW00439-pkk-3-soldats-turcs-tues-lors-d-un-raid.php>;

ABC Daily Newspaper, 11 May 2012- Once años de cárcel para Cihan Kırmızıgül, el «estudiante del pañuelokurdo»-<http://www.abc.es/20120512/internacional/abci-once-anos-carcel-para-201205112331.html>;

ABC Daily Newspaper, 02 March 2012- Los kurdos del PKK se alían con Assad-<http://www.abc.es/20120302/internacional/abcp-kurdos-alian-assad-20120302.html>;

El Mundo Daily Newspaper, 15 February 2012- Masiva protesta kurda en Turquía por el aniversario del arresto del fundador del PKK

-<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/02/15/internacional/1329325249.html>;

El País Daily Newspaper, 20 October 2011- El Ejército turco invade el norte de Irak tras el brutal ataque de la guerrilla kurda.

-http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2011/10/20/actualidad/1319113173_649190.html

218 Sabah Daily News Paper, 20 May 2011- Avrupa 237 İade Talebini Reddetti.

<http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2011/05/20/avrupa-237-iade-talebini-reddetti>

With the covert state and open NGO/public opinion support of Western Europe, PKK was able to establish in Europe a refuge and a school for its militants in order to train them for their ideology, which is actually changing time to time according to the era. It is a commonly shared source of funds, and a base for a wide-ranging propaganda campaign inciting violence in Turkey and seeking Western support for it. The activities of the PKK appeared to have worked, since the Western European countries were pursuing supportive policies for the PKK. Western NGOs seemed to have been persuaded that there is a minority in Turkey as slavery.²¹⁹

4.5.4. Turkey-Iraq Relations after the Gulf War in the Scope of the Kurdish Issue and The PKK Terrorism

As stated in the previous chapters, Turkey and Iraq had been in good terms during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) owing to the mutual existence needs of both countries in a state of war. Turkey was Iraq's best trade partner, taken into consideration especially the high percentage of the oil trade in Iraq's income; Turkey's good neighborhood was gaining more importance. 96 percent of Iraq's export was from oil exports. During the Ira—Iraq War, the Gulf route was closed to oil tankers and this led Iraq to carry out the oil exports, which meant 80 million tons annually, through the 986 km-long pipeline to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Yumurtalık and this made the Yumurtalık route the only functioning oil exporting route for Iraq. Gulf terminal of Mina al-Bakr was the other route in peace times.²²⁰

The fact that Iraq was carrying out most of its oil export through a Turkish port was not desirable by Iraq, which was struggling for the hegemony in Middle East. In this respect, in the summer of 1993 Baghdad was eager to use the Mina al-Bakr route in any future arrangement for its possible re-export of oil. This was thought in the Iraqi side as an important step, since it was going to prevent Turkey to be in same situation as it was

219 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.41

220 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 9

in the Gulf War in August 1991. At that time, Turkey shut down the Yumurtalik outlet in accordance with United Nations (UN) resolutions, following the Iraqi invasion into Kuwait.²²¹

A significant variable between Iraq-Turkey relations is the water issue, i.e. the usage of Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This is actually an important variable also in the context of Turkey-Iraq-Syria relations, i.e. it is an overlapping issue and better to be referred as a matter between Turkey-Iraq-Syria. The two rivers originate in Turkey and they flow to Syria and Iraq. Both rivers are a very important stimulus for Turkey's future development plans (Euphrates' flow is 32 billion cubic meters annually; Tigris' flow 31 billion). GAP (Güney Doğu Anadolu Projesi- Southeastern Anatolia Development Project) was constituting a major problem between Iraq and Turkey. Iraq's opposition to the project actually had started before the Gulf War, namely in 1988, which is signifying the end of Iran-Iraq War. According to Turkey's future plans, by 2020 the project is going to be fully completed and this means that the water flowing with the mentioned rivers to Iraq is going to be reduced by 80 percent. The water issue between two states is not only a water issue itself. The reason why Turkey is very keen on completing the project also constitutes a very important variable in the Kurdish issue, since the project is intended to provide employment in the agriculture sector in the South Eastern region of the country. This means Turkey is playing on a very card to diminish the support of the local population to the PKK. It is well-known that it is way easier for a terrorist organization to gain support and recruits from an economically backward Kurdish populated region.²²²

The Southeastern Anatolia Development Project (GAP), including the Atatürk Dam, the world's fourth largest, generates electricity and irrigates 2.5 million acres of land. Completion of the project is assumed to diminish the amount of water carried south by the Euphrates into Syria and Iraq by 75 percent, to increase the pollution of the Euphrates' remaining water since the project is going to open up new fields for

221 Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkey's Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4, October 1996, p. 362.

222 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 9-10

cultivation, and as a result the project is going to damage the Syrian and Iraqi farmers. Tripartite Turkish–Iraqi–Syrian conventions during 1990 proved fruitless. The Turkish side was insisting that the rivers were Turkish and it had the right to use however it deemed necessary for its country's needs, while Iraq and Syria was pressing for a political treaty and they were sharing arrangements for the water of the Euphrates. This was because both countries were insisting that they were international waterways. Water issue was always at the top of the agenda when it came to the relation between these three states. As stated in the previous chapters, Iraq had pursued a policy of intimidating the Kurdish rebellion, which erupted during the Iran-Iraq War, through exterminating a great deal of the Kurdish population in the Northern Iraq, of which the most notable example is the Halabjah Incident in 1988. Ankara was carrying out a state policy of conserving the territorial integrity of Iraq, which was being threatened by the Post-Gulf War allied policy of Safe Zone/Heaven. The effects of the Kurdish refugee crisis after the Gulf War, the Operation Provide Comfort and the Poised Hammer forces are explained enough in the previous chapters, which were issues at the top of the agenda of the relations between Turkey and Iraq.²²³

4.5.5. Turkey-Syria Relations after the Gulf War and the Arrest of Öcalan

In the previous chapters, when the relations between Turkey and Syria, it was stated that Syria's historical demands concerning the Southern Turkish province Hatay and the water of Euphrates and Tigris were in the center of interest of Syria. In 1990s, the Kurdish issue became the issue of not only Turkey, but of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Since these states were in one way or another had involved in the Kurdish community living especially in Northern Iraq and the refugee tragedy drew the attention of great powers, too. The UN forces were in Turkey for the security of Kurdish population, in order to save them from Saddam's cleansing policies. In this context, it was known that in 1991 Syria was sheltering Öcalan and allowing the training camps in Lebanon. The Syrian regime was keeping the PKK card in its hands in order to use it when it needed against Turkey. The Kurdish groups were all in controversy and each country was trying to provoke and gain one of the groups. Among the KDP and KYB, the PKK was

223 Ibid. p. 10-11.

drawing the attention and support of Iran, Iraq and Syria, in terms of military material and shelter.

Turkey's strategy regarding the PKK terrorism and its plan to combat against the PKK had first started with the military operations in northern Iraq. However, Saddam was providing support to the PKK in order to keep the northern Iraq under its rule.²²⁴ While Turkey was combating the PKK terrorism in Iraq, it also started an initiative to develop its relations with Syria, which is the country giving support to the PKK the most. On 14 April 1992, Turkish Minister of Interior İsmet Sezgin made an official visit to Damascus and for the Turkish side; the subject on the top of the agenda was the support that Syria was providing for the PKK. In the meeting, Sezgin showed the proofs to his Syrian colleagues, demonstrating the support being provided by the Syrian government to the PKK. After the discussions, a protocol regarding the extradition of criminals who were involved in forbidden organizations' activities and the cooperation on criminal matters related to forbidden organization activities. In its relations with Syria, Turkey was aware that the support to the PKK and the water issues were strongly related and in this respect Turkey started to link the water issue with the Syrian support to the PKK in official meetings especially after 1992, the year after which the PKK terrorism was at its peak. On the other hand, the Syrian officials were sure that the water issue was not a tool in this case, since according to the international law, no sovereignty over the natural sources can be under discussion and every view against this would be the violation of the international law. In 1993, after the death of president Özal, a new policy to combat against the PKK terrorism was adopted: armed struggle against the PKK. Turkey increased its military activity against the PKK and looked ways to cooperate with the Syrian government, still linking the Syrian support with the waters of Euphrates and Tigris. The results were seen in these efforts and Syria declared PKK as a terrorist organization. However, the Syrian government was still not eager to take effective measures against the PKK terrorists using the Syrian territory. This made Ankara establish closer links and cooperation with Israel, which Turkey had already started before. Ankara was trying to gain Israel, before the peace negotiations give a positive result, since in 1995 the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel were improving.

224 Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası*, İletişim Yayınları, Vol. 2 2005, p. 555

On the other hand, Ankara did not change its stance in the water issue and Syria went on its activities by setting in its line 8 Arab states in order to gain the advantage on the water issue and the relations with Syria went on in this narrow circle, namely Turkey asking from Syria to stop its support for the PKK and Syria asking from Turkey to stop the construction of the dams in the scope of GAP over the Euphrates and Tigris.²²⁵ The influence of the water issue over the Kurdish issue, more specifically over the PKK terrorism was apparent in Turkish politicians' speeches. Deniz Baykal, the Turkish former Foreign Minister, was asking: "What does Syria need more water for anyway?" and it went on to say : "in order to wash its hands of terrorism." At the time, President Suleyman Demirel was cynically mentioning the solution to the matter "the water is ours on this side of the border and theirs on the other side."²²⁶

In September 1998, in the inauguration of the new legislation year of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, it appears that Turkey's policy-makers in charge with the solution of the PKK problem, namely the military and the civilian politicians, including President Demirel and the Head of the Turkish General Staff gave their decision for the final solution. At a meeting of the National Security Council, it was decided that Turkish state's priority had to be and was going to be to force Syria to expel the PKK with all its facilities and board. On September 16, the commander of the Turkish land forces, General Atilla Ateş, speaking near the border with Syria, declared bluntly:

Neighbors such as Syria misinterpret our good will. By supporting a bandit like Öcalan, they have brought the curse of terror to Turkey. If Turkey's efforts to maintain good relations do not receive a proper response, Turkey will have the right to take such measures as it will see fit.²²⁷

President Demirel also gave the appropriate but harsh warning to Syria for a serious retaliation, in case it went on supporting the PKK terrorism. After the warning, the rising military activities of the Turkish army near the border between Turkey and Syria were the signs of Demirel's and thus Turkey's determination in order to prevent Syria from supporting PKK terrorism. When the Egyptian president Husni Mobarek came to

225 Ibid. p. 556-559

226 Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millenium Coping with Intertwined Conflicts*, Manchester University Press, (2003), p. 11

227 Andrew Mango, *Turkey and the War on Terror For Forty Years We Fought Alone*, Routledge Publication, 2005, p.41.

Ankara for an official visit on October 3, 1998, on the top of the agenda was the crisis between Turkey and Syria, after which Turkey used diplomacy in order to avoid already risen tensions. The results of the official visit was seen afterwards when Syria closed and banned the PKK camps south of the Turkish border and the biggest sign of the understanding of the Syrian government was the fact that Syria expelled Öcalan from the Syrian territory. After Öcalan left Syria, his route was actually a clear picture of the international connections and support, which had been provided to him and consequently to the PKK. Firstly, he was taken by a Syrian aircraft to Cyprus, and then he went to Greece. After he was told by the Greek authorities to leave within three hours, he went to Moscow, as an invitee of the ultra-nationalist and also anti-Turkish politician Vladimir Zhirinovski. An attempt was made by the Russian parliament to give political asylum, not applied by the Russian government though. Öcalan was taken to Italy by a member of the hard-line Italian Communist Party (Communist Refoundation/RC). He arrived to Rome on November 12, bearing a false passport, and was arrested. Turkey requested his extradition. Italy refused the extradition and it tried to persuade the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to ask for his extradition to Germany under an arrest warrant issued earlier by a German court. The time was a mix of demonstrations both by the PKK in the Western Europe and in Turkey organized by different NGOs and public opinion under the form of unofficial boycotts against the Italian goods and services. Germany did not accept the offer of Italy and did not asked for any extradition from Italy concerning the arrest warrant of the German court. In this time of demonstrations and high tension public opinion in Turkey, the Italian court released Öcalan and he started to live in a villa on the outskirts of Rome. Since he was not an asylum seeker and Germany did not decide to prosecute him, he was an illegal immigrant. At this moment, the Greek government took up the responsibility and took Öcalan out of Italy with the hope of finding a hosting country out of Europe and Africa appeared as the safe heaven. On January 31, 1999, Öcalan once again flew to Greece. He was then taken to Kenya-Nairobi, where he was kept on Greek diplomatic premises. While he used his mobile phone frequently to call his friends he was traced and on February 15 Öcalan left his Greek safe house and was driven to Nairobi airport. He was carrying a Cyprus passport, issued in a false name, and he thought that he was going to Holland, where he had applied for political asylum. Instead, on arrival at the airport, a

commando team which had been flown in from Turkey took him into a Turkish private aircraft and when he arrived to Turkey, he was arrested, being sentenced to death after his trial by the Turkish judicial authority.²²⁸

The arrest of Öcalan had certain implications to the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism. During his trials, he advised his followers to refrain from violence and stop fighting in the mountains. The capture of Öcalan also deviated the focus of his followers from fighting in the mountains to protecting his life. The name of the PKK was changed first into KADEK and later to KONGRA-GEL, diminishing the violence as appears in the chart above resulting in a five-year cease-fire. This meant an interim end to the PKK terrorism, which would rise again with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by the coalition forces.²²⁹

²²⁸ Ibid. p. 44-45. See also Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 21

²²⁹ Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton University Press, (2009), p. 21

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Before the composition of this study, the subject was thought to be a riveting topic, namely the Kurdish issue and its impact on the Turkish foreign policy during a certain period. In the study, a brief explanation on the emergence of the Kurdish community in the history, then the foundation and first terrorist acts of the PKK are set out. The year 1988 marked a significant crossroad for PKK terrorism and the Kurdish issue, since it was the first time when the public opinion of the major powers such as the US and EEC of the time, were attracted by the Kurds in Iraq, later by the Kurds in the whole region. Beginning from the first Kurdish refugee crisis in 1988, i.e. Saddam's use of chemical and biological weapons on the Iraqi Kurds, the period between 1988-1999 comprised major World events impacting the Kurds in Turkey, the terrorist acts of the PKK. These developments, having impact over Turkey's Kurdish community and over the PKK, inevitably effected Turkey's relations with Iraq, Syria, partly Iran, the US and the EEC/EU. The year 1999, namely the capture of Öcalan, was the end of an era in terms of Turkey's approach to the Kurdish issue and to the PKK terrorism. Conception of the Kurdish issue from a security perspective, leading to the realist handling of the issue by Turkey came to an end, opening a new era of democratic solution approach.

The events and developments which occurred between 1988-1999 demonstrated and confirmed the complexity of the Kurdish issue in the region where the Kurdish community inhabits. During the mentioned period, Kurds in Turkey and Iraq conducted very active and relentless efforts, culminating in terrorism. The period comprised very significant and more convenient turning points for the Kurds to gain the cultural and linguistic rights, which might have resulted in a Kurdish state notably in the northern Iraq. Nevertheless, an independent Kurdish state was neither founded, nor declared even during this most convenient time in the history. The de facto Kurdish federated state formation in the Northern Iraq has not proved fully accepted by the states neither in the region nor in the World.

It was stated at the beginning of the study that Turkey's approach to the Kurdish issue

can be divided into two periods: the security perspective and the democratic solution approach. The study comprised the first period which lasted until the arrest of Öcalan in 1999. During this period, Turkey approached the Kurdish issue and the PKK's terrorist threat from a realist perspective. Turkey viewed the PKK terrorism as a threat to its security, namely to its *raison d'etat*. Whenever the PKK escalated the violence, Turkish government took military measures in order to balance the threat to its own survival. This is the most significant reason why the policy-making against the PKK's terrorist threat was left to the military. This led Turkey to re-establish its relations with the Iraq and Syria from the security perspective. Turkey sought cooperation on security issues with these regional powers through various security protocols or extradition treaties. The other considerable aspect of Turkey's realist approach is the fact that Turkey never directly addressed to the PKK, which is not a state, but a terrorist organization. It even established a certain level of contact with the northern Iraqi Kurdish *de facto* regime, namely with Barzani and Talabani, but it always rejected addressing directly to the PKK.

Turkish foreign policy, being itself a complicated but attractive topic in terms of its unique aspects, was dramatically and drastically affected by the PKK terrorism and the Kurdish issue. Turkey, as a state comprising complex relations with the West and the Middle East because of different factors. It is dominantly a Middle Eastern country in geographic terms, possessing a wide piece of land neighbor to certain Middle Eastern states such as Iran, Iraq and Syria. 98 percent of its population is Muslim, making the state unique in terms of the ideology of the government, since Turkey is the only secularly governed Muslim state in the world. On the other hand, Turkey is always striving to be seen as a part of Europe, despite its small piece of land in Europe and its relatively different culture.

Answer to the question “Did the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism effect the Turkish foreign policy between 1988-1999?” is yes. There are various answers to the question "What is the impact of the Kurdish issue, more specifically of the PKK terrorism, on the Turkish Foreign Policy between 1988-1999?". The impact of the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism over Turkish foreign policy differs with respect to the major events of

the respective time. During the Iran-Iraq War, Turkey's efforts were to establish important security protocols and conventions concerning the mutual judicial assistance with Iraq and Syria. The PKK terrorism was a considerable tool for Syria, the country which aspired to be the leader of the Arab after Egypt lost most of its prestige after the Camp David in 1979, to bargain for the waters of Euphrates and Tigris. Syria's historical claims over Alexandretta province was another aspect of the relations between Turkey and Syria, since it was eager to exploit the PKK threat for the mentioned now Turkish city.

After the Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988, the Kurdish issue drew attention of the world media with Saddam's treatment of the Kurds in northern Iraq. The Anfal Operation resulted in thousands of Kurdish refugees, which led to the Kurdish refugee crisis. Together with the end of the Cold War, after which the identity politics came to the forefront in states' both domestic policies and foreign relations, The Gulf War irreversibly switched the course of the Kurdish issue's impact over Turkish foreign policy. After the Gulf War, Saddam pursued harsh policies against the Kurdish community in northern Iraq and this again led the northern Iraqi Kurds to run away from Saddam's atrocities. The result was the Kurdish refugee crisis of 1991, and the event brought the Kurds into the center of the world media. The Operation Provide Comfort and the Poised Hammer Forces stationed in Turkey remained as one of the most controversial subjects in Turkey. The Poised Hammer Forces became the source of a high degree of tension in Turkey's relations with the US. As a result of the Poised Hammer Forces, Turkey time to time pursued policies in line with the central government in Iraq and time to time Turkey established close relations with the northern Iraqi Kurds, in order to avoid the creation of a Kurdish state in the northern Iraq, fearing from the fact that it might incite its own Kurds for the formation of a Kurdish state in Turkey.

Beginning from the military coup of 1980, the human rights issues had become an important source of tension between Turkey and the EEC/EU. European public opinion have always felt sympathy for the PKK. They viewed the PKK militants as the freedom-fighters and this was reflected in the rhetoric of some countries' press, never mentioning

the PKK militants as terrorists or militants, but always some sort of guerilla forces. European countries had always criticized Turkey for its treatment of the Kurdish community in Turkey and the Anti- Terror Law of Turkey. Combining with Turkey's efforts to become a member of the EEC/EU, the Kurdish issue and the PKK terrorism remained a source of disagreement between Turkey and the EEC/EU, effecting the relations negatively.

Finally the course of Öcalan's removal from Syria that continued until his arrest in Kenya revealed the international support that the PKK benefited. The route started in Syria, went on to Cyprus, Greece, Russia and Italy and ended in the diplomatic premises of Greece in Kenya-Nairobi. When the Turkish public saw the head of the PKK, namely Öcalan, caught with his hands tied and eyes blindfolded on the plane on the way back to Turkey, people had nearly unanimously one opinion in their minds: the PKK terrorism was over. Although it was not totally over, even for a short time the terrorism problem of Turkey was solved, the Kurdish independence discourse cited by the PKK abated. Öcalan's arrest marked the end of Turkey's security approach to the PKK and the Kurdish issue and opened a new era in the combat with the PKK terrorism and the handling of Turkey's own Kurdish community.

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