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POST-COLD WAR RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND SYRIA

Master Thesis

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma Suriye ve Türkiye'nin 1991 ve 2009 yılları arasındaki ilişkilerini incelemektedir ve Suriye ve Türkiye ilişkilerinin Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde nasıl bir düşüş ve nasıl bir yükseliş yaşadığını ortaya koymaktadır. 2000 sonrası dönemde Suriye ve Türkiye arasında yakınlaşma söz konusudur. Ancak 2009 yılında iki dost ülke görünümünde olan Türkiye ve Suriye Hatay, su ve terör konularında sürekli bir gerilim içinde olmuştur. Özellikle terör sorunu nedeniyle iki ülke 1990'lı yılların başlarından itibaren yoğun bir gerilim içine girmiş ve bu gerilim 1998 yılında savaşın eşiğine dek gelmiştir. 1998 yılı sonrasında Suriye'nin terör desteğini kesmiş ve iki ülke ilişkilerinde normalleşme gözlenmiştir. Suriye'de Beşar Esad'ın başa gelmesi ve Türkiye'de Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin iktidara gelmesiyle ilişkilerde gözle görülür bir iyileşme olmuştur. 2009 yılına gelindiğinde iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler vize kaldırmaya dek gelmiştir. Buna rağmen iki ülke ilişkilerindeki sorunlar net bir şekilde ortadan kaldırılmamıştır ancak görmezden gelinmektedir. Bu nedenle iki ülke için tam bir güven ortamı oluşamamıştır. Yine de 2009 yılında Türkiye ve Suriye birbirine hiç olmadığı kadar yakınlaşmıştır.

Yöntem olarak kütüphane araştırması yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the relations between Syria and Turkey between 1991 and 2009 and puts forth how Syria and Turkey relations went down and increased after Cold War. In the period after 2000, there is a closeness in the relations of Syrian and Turkey. But, Turkey and Syria who looks as friends in 2009, were in tension about water, Hatay and terror. Especially they were in an intense tension because of terror issue. This tension came to the verge of war in 1998. After Adana Agreement signed in 1998, Syria stopped to support PKK and other terrorist organizations. We can say that the relations between Syria and Turkey normalized after Adana Agreement. When Bashar Al-Assad came to power in Syria and AKP in Turkey, the relations improved more. The good relations reached to abolishment of visas in 2009. Nevertheless, all the issues between parts haven't been solved yet, but are shelved. So that a real confidence hasn't been constituted yet. Nontheless, Turkey and Syria became closer than ever before in 2009.

As method, bibliography research is used.

ACRONYMS

ADL: Antidefamation League
AID: Agency for International Development
AKP: Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ANAP: Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
ANN: Arab News Network
ARGK: Artêşa Rizgariya Gelê Kurdistan (the military wing of PKK)
ASALA: Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
AYÖD: Ankara Higher Education Organization
BOP: Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative - Great Middle East Project
CIA: Central Intelligence Agency
DDKO: Eastern Revolutionary Culture Hearts
Dev-Genç: Revolutionary Youth
DEV-SOL: Revolutionary Left
DEP: Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi)
DHKP-C: Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front
DHP: Democratic People's Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi)
DKP: Democratic Masses Party
DP: Democrat Party
DSP: Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti)
DYP: True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi)
EB: Union of Labour (Emeğin Birliği)
EU: European Union
FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation
FKF: Federation of Ideology Clubs
FTA: Free Trade Agreement
GAP: Southeastern Anatolia Project
GNP: Gross National Product
G-7: An economic and political group of seven developed countries with large economies
G-8: An economic and political group of eight developed countries with large economies
HAMAS: Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, Islamic Resistance Movement

IAI: Israeli Aircraft Industry

ILA: International Law Association

KADEK: Kongreya Azadî û Demokrasiya Kurdistanê (Kürdistan Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Kongresi) a branch of PKK

KCK: The city organization of PKK and a secret civil organization of PKK

KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party

Kg: Kilogram

KGB: Committee for State Security (Russian: Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti)

KKTC: Northern Cyprus Turkish Republic

Km: kilometer

Km2: square kilometer

Kongra Gel: A branch of PKK like KADEK

MEPI: Middle East Partnership Initiative

MHP: Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)

MIT: National Intelligence Organization

MLKP: Marxist-Lenininst Communist Party

MOSSAD: Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations (of Israel)

MP: Member of Parliament

MTCA: Military Training and Cooperation Agreement

m^3: cubic meters

m^3/s: cubic meters per second

M-7: Muslim countires 7. An economic and political group of seven developed Muslim countries with large economies

NATO: North Athlantic Treaty Organization

NGO: Non Governmental Organisation

NSC: National Security Council

NTV: National Television

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OIC: Organization of the Islamic Conference

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

ÖY: Liberty's Way (Özgürlük Yolu)

PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkeren Kürdistan)

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization

PRC: People's Republic of China

PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

RP: Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)

SALSA: Syrian Accountability Act and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act

SHP: Social Democratic People's Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti)

SYP: Syrian Pound

TAF: Turkish Air Forces

TBMM: Grand National Assembly of Turkey

T-DKP: Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi)

TDP: Turkey Revolution Party

THKO: People's Liberation Army of Turkey

THKP-C: Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi)

TİKKO: Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey

TIP: Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi)

TKEP: Communist Labor Party of Turkey

TKP: Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Komünist Partisi)

TKP-B: Communist Party of Turkey-Union (Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Birlik)

TKP-KIVILCIM: A branch of TKP

TKP-KONFERANS: A branch of TKP

TKP-ML: Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist

TV: Television

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

USA: United States

USD: United States Dollars

USSR: Soviet Union

WWI: World War 1

WWII: World War 2

1. INTRODUCTION

Both Syria and Turkey are Middle Eastern countries which have intense historical and cultural relations that is coming from Ottoman Empire reign. Although they have a common history, they have lived in a tension since the foundation of Turkish Republic until 1998 Adana Agreement. Syria who has never accepted the joining of Hatay to Turkey, has made sharp explainations about the issue. Syria and Turkey have problems about Euphrates, Tigris and Orontes Rivers. In addition to those issues, they added terror issue after Turkey put forth the GAP. The deal of terror and water together in reciprocal negotiations shows us that water and terror issues are estimated nested. The main issue of the two countries which had always tensioned and problematic relations along 1990s, is terror. Syria sponsored PKK which is a terrorist group that aims to establish a Kurdish state that contains East of Turkey, sheltered Abdullah Öcalan who is the leader of PKK and let PKK to make congress inside her borders and gave weapon and educational aid to that organization. While Syria didn't stop her support to PKK, Turkey became closer to Israel which is a country that has problem with Syria because of Golan Heights. But the close relations between Turkey and Israel couldn't stop Syria, and Syria continued her support to PKK. Nevertheless, with the help of the confidence taken from Israel, Turkey could follow a more stable policy against Syria and Syria and Turkey came to the verge of war in 1998. Beacuse of the international atmosphere in the world and the close relations between Israel and Turkey, Syria abandoned the PKK card and sent Abdullah Öcalan out of the country. The Adana Agreement which was signed in 1998 can be seen as a milestone between two countries. After that agreement, Turkey and Syria relations developped slowly. The participation of Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer to funeral of Hafez Al-Assad intensified the relations. Bashar Al-Assad who is the son of Hafez Al-Assad wanted to develop the relations with Turkey and also in Turkey AKP came to power after the 2002 election and with the assignment of Ahmet Davutoğlu as Chief Advisor of Foreign Ministry, Turkey started to improve relations with Middle Eastern countries. In 2009, these reflected to the relations between Syria and Turkey and they reached to the High Level Strategic Cooperation and both parties' citizens have the right to travel free from visas.

If that's so, how did two countries' relations go down since the Cold War to 1998 and how did these relations arise since 1998 crisis until 2009? This study is observing the events because of which two countries came to the venge of war since Cold War to 1998 in the light of the events in Middle East and development in relations after 1998 to 2009 High Level Strategic Cooperation.

To understand well the development in relations between Syria and Turkey between 1991 to 2009, in the second part, we will touch on the independence of Syria after First World War and Hafez Al-Assad's reign, and we will touch on the main issues between Syria and Turkey.

In the third part, we will give place to the manner of two countries' foreign policies in world politics after the dispersion of bipolar atmosphere of Post Cold War Era and especially we will give a lot of attention to the politics of two countries after First Persian Gulf War. In 1990s, the close relations of Turkey with Israel will be added to the water and PKK issues between Syria and Turkey and we will estimate the relations between Turkey and Syria around the Israel Syria Peace Talks and Turkish-Israeli cooperation.

In fourth part, we will give place to the 1998 crisis and Adana Agreement which is seen as a milestone for Syria and Turkey relations.

In fifth part we will give place to Hafez Al-Assad's son Bashar Al-Assad's foreign policies and the Middle East policies of AKP which came to power with 2002 elections in Turkey and which paved the way for development in the Syria and Turkey relations. After that, we will give place to the events that changed the foreign policy of USA, such as 9/11 attacks and Second Persian Gulf War and we will touch on the effects of those to the foreign policies of two countries and to the relations of eachother. Finally, we will mention to the amicable attitude of Turkey in Lebanon crisis which carried the relations to the top, the mediator role of Turkey in Israel-Syria Peace Talks and the abolition of visas after they reached to the High Level Strategic Cooperation.

2. COUNTRY PROFILE OF SYRIA

In order to make sense of the issues in Syria – Turkey relations, and the development of these relations, the general country profile of Syria should be emphasized. In this chapter, the general characteristics and history of Syria will be touched upon briefly.

2.1. General Characteristics

Syrian Arab Republic, with its Arabic name El-Cumhuriyetü'l-Arabiyetü's-Suriye, is a Middle East state situated at the South-Eastern strand of Asia. With the regions of Golan Heights occupied by Israel, she covers an area of 185.180 square kilometers. She is surrounded by Turkey at the north, by Iraq at the east and southeast, and by Israel and Lebanon at the southwest. She spreads nearly 500 kilometers from North to South, the widest part spreads 465 kilometers from East to West. Damascus is the capital city. (Ana Britannica, 1994: 409)

Her population, with regard to government estimates in mid-2006, is 18.7 millions. The major cities, in which this population lives, are Damascus with its 4.005m population, Aleppo with its 4.230m population, Homs with a population of 1.519m, Hama with a population of 1.441m, Al-Hassakah with 1.329m people, and Idlib with 1.310m people. Syria has a republic form of regime. The official language is Arabic. English and French are also spoken, although they are not common. (Aydın, 2008: 1) Arabs constitute 90.3% of the population. 74% of the population comprises of Sunnite Muslims, and 16% comprises of Alawite, Shi'ite and other Muslim sects; as for the remaining 10% of the population, it is comprised of Christians and Jews. The monetary unit is SYP. (Konya Ticaret Odası, 2008: 1) The total external debt of Syria is 6.600 million dollars as of 2006. (Aydın, 2008: 1)

Syrian land is divided into three main zones starting from the west in terms of physical geograpy: Coastal Strip, Highlands and Syrian Desert. The most important river and the only fairway is the Euphrates. This river, after entering the country from the northwest, moves in the southeast direction across the eastern region of the country. The Al-Tabka

dam, started to hold water in 1973, provided large areas to be used in agriculture. The Yarmouk River, which is a tributary of the Sheria River (The Jordan River) draws the borderline between Syria and Jordan. The Orontes River flows through northern direction and flows into the Mediterranean after entering Turkey. The soil is deprived in terms of phosporus and organic material and mostly clayed soil and soil with clay, aluvion and sand mixture are found. Alluvial soil is found in the Euphrates Valley and Al-Ghab Basin. (Ana Britannica, 1994: 409-10) There are five diffent climate zones in Syria. In the north of the country, at the coastal planes facing the Mediterranean winters are rainy and mild and summers are hot and humid. The eastern regions and the regions at the Turkey border receive rain from the higher regions of Turkey. In the south the summers are severe and winters dry; whereas winters are cold and rainy and summers are dry and hot in Damascus and around. (Aydın, 2008: 4) Higher areas are cold and rainy in the winter. The hottest month is August (18-37 degrees Celcius), and the coldest month is January (2-12 degrees Celcius). The most arid month is August. The average precipitation in August is 0mm. The rainiest month is January. The average precipitation in January is 43mm. (*ibid*: 1) The annual precipitation varies between 760 and 1.015mm in the west. This value is around 500mm in the steppes. The southeast of the country only takes 125mm of rainfall annually. (Ana Britannica, 1994: 410)

The Syrian Constituion was adopted by a referendum in 1973. (Konya Ticaret Odası, 2008: 2) According to this constitution, Syria's regime is a multi-party republic. The political power is in the hands of Ba'ath Socialist Party. (Ana Britannica, 1994: 411) Ba'ath Socialist Party is the leader and the intendant of the National Progressive Front which comprises of a coalition of several parties. (Konya Ticaret Odası, 2008: 2) The Apparatus of Syrian Ba'ath Party includes National Command, Regional Command and People's Council. The 250 membered People's Council also functions as the legislative organ. (Ana Britannica, 1994: 411) The sovereignity is vested in the people who exercise it in accordance with the Constitution. Ba'ath Socialist Party leads the state and the people, the people's organizations and cooperatives with the purpose of advance the people and enhances the interest of the individual. Execution comprises of the President, the Cabinet and Regional Councils. (Konya Ticaret Odası, 2008: 2)

Syria is one of the countries with the greatest population growth in the last 25 years. Syria has a young population due to rapid population growth. 75% of the population is below 35 and 40% of this is below 15. (Aydın, 2008: 3)

Education, at the primary level is compulsory and free. (Ana Britannica, 1994: 411) The literacy rates of Syria are relatively high compared to most of the countries in the region. According to the UN, the literacy rate for 15-and-over population increased to 79.6% in 2004, while it was 65% in 1990. The literacy rate of the young population in Syria is 92.2% as of 2004. The educational institutions are mostly state-owned. However, establishing private schools and colleges was permitted after 2001. As of 2002-2003 academic year, nine-years compulsory education was started. The resources allocated for education have increased but are still insufficient considering the young population. Computer courses in highschools, and English and French courses in primary schools were made compulsory. The number of the students attending to five state universites in Syria is around 250.000. Via The Syrian Virtual University, put into service under Damascus University in September 2002, students can get graduate and post-graduate education from American Universites through distance learning. (Aydın, 2008: 4)

Despite the climate diversity seen in Syria, only one-third of the land can be cultivated due to insufficient irrigation. The Euphrates River, which is one of the two major rivers in the country, meets the large proportion of the irrigation demand. However, this potential gradually decreases due to pollution in the last few years. (*ibid*: 4) Arable lands are the costal strip, the North of the county, the South of Damascus and the Euprathes basin. Agriculture is the most important sector for Syrian economics. Wheat, barley, cotton, sugar beet and olives are the important agricultural products. In addition to this, cotton is the most important product of Syrian agriculture. Nearly half of the cotton production is used in the developing textile sector. (Konya Ticaret Odası, 2008: 5)

A mixed economy, depending mostly on agriculture, manufacturing and service sector, is implemented in Syria. Most of the key branches of the economy are controlled by the state except for agriculture, retail trade, and some light industry sectors in which private sector is active. A substantial amount of resources are allocated to defence in Syria, and this

places a great burden on the economy. While stockbreeding has an important place, forestry and fishery industries are not so developed. Petroleum and natural gas are the most important underground sources of Syria. The exploration, processing and production works are executed by the Petroleum General administration which is a public enterprise. (Öztürk, 2006: 3)

The agriculture sector in Syria has changed significantly in the last few years and taken the second rank in exportation after petroleum. The agriculture policy runs parallel to the general policy of the state and steps are being taken toward a liberal agriculture policy. The liberalization in the country had begun in the mid-80's and this led Syria to become a country which exports agricultural products as of mid-90's. (Konya Ticaret Odası, 2008: 5)

There is a state of siege by the government on banking sector. Foreign trade, sale of agricultural products and foreign exchange are executed by the Commercial Bank of Syria. Syrian State, since the beginning of 1960, has expropriated important sectors such as banking, insurance and industry. The purpose of the reforms made since 2000, and the reforms made as part of the liberalization is to constitute a private banking sector and a stock exchange, and to quicken foreign capital inflows and therefore to make the economy more productive. (Öztürk, 2006: 3)

The major export commodities of Syria are crude oil, and other petroleum products. Other important export commodities are fruits, vegetables, textile, cotton, wheat and other agricultural products. (Erciyes, 2004: 21) More than half of the crude oil exported is for the EU. (Öztürk, 2006: 7) In Syria's exportation Italy has a 19.6%, France has a 8.8%, Saudi Arabia has a 8.7%, Iraq has a 6.4%, the UK has a 4.3%, and Jordan has a 3.9% share. (Aydın, 2008: 23)

In Syria's importation the major commodities, due to Syria's economic policies, are especially machinery equipment, automobiles and other vehicles, and chemical products. Other important commodities are products with insufficient production to meet the demand in the country such as iron and steel products, synthetic and artificial threads, herbal oil. (Erciyes, 2004: 21-2) It is seen that the importation of Syria gradually shifts from the EU

states towards Asian and Middle East states. With respect to 2006 reports, in Syria's importation Turkey has a 4%, Italy has a 4.9%, Saudi Arabia has a 5.1%, Republic of Korea has a 4.2% and Ukraine has a 5.3% share. (Aydın, 2008: 24)

Syria, which has an Ottoman heritage social order, has the characteristic of a country comprising of ethnic groups with different cultural features. When considered in terms of religious and sectarian differences, the majority of Syria comprises of Sunnite Muslims. Considered with respect to language and ethnic differences, Arabs are the majority. Apart from Arabs, Turcomans, Kurds, Circassians, Armenians, Asyrrians and Jews maintain their ethnic identities. The largest religious minority is the Nosairians. Nosairians generally live in the rural areas of Latakia and around Anti-Lebanon Mountains. Muslims which are members of other sects are the Druses and Ismailis. As for Christians, they are grouped as Greek Orthodoxes, Syrian Orthodoxes, Armenian Gregorians, Armenian Catholics and Nestorians. (Sağlam, 2006: 23-4)

Most of Arabs are Sunnites. In addition to these, there are Arabs who are Nousairi, Ismaili and Shi'ite. Also, there are Druses, Jews and Christians who speak Arabic. For most of the Syrians, who are both Arap and Muslim, one cannot be an Arab without being a Muslim. Therefore, they do not see the ethnic groups as threas since they are few in number. (*ibid*: 24)

One of the ethnic groups in the country is the Kurds. Notwithstanding that most of these are Sunnite Muslims; there are Christian and Yezidi ones too. The places where Kurds live are the Syrian land between Hatay and Gaziantep provinces of Turkey, known as Kurd Mountain; the area of Jazira province between Turkish and Iraqi borders, known as Al-Hasakah; and the town called Ayn Aş-Arab which is situated at the east of the area in which the Euprathes enters Syria. Armenians comprise 2% of the population and they are included in Christian societies. As for Turcomans, they are mostly assimilated. They belong to the Sunnite sect and mostly live in Latakia and Aleppo regions. (Erciyes, 2004: 29)

The largest religious minorty is the Nousairies. Nousairis, which started to be called as Alawites later on, have some authentic esoteric beliefs affected from old Syrian and Phoenician paganism, most probably from Christian Trinity and from some Christian rituals and holy days. (*ibid*: 30) Nousairies have obtained a fatwaa from Shi'ite scholars that they are a branch of Shia. This sect has four branches; Haidaria, Shamalia and Shamsia, Khalazia and Kamaria, and Ghaibia. (Akdemir, 2000: 206) Hafez Al-Assad, who presided for a long time, belonged to the Nousairi sect. Nousairies mostly are engaged in agriculture. Nousairies, who are not accepted as they are by the Sunnites, are strongly organized. The Nousairi organization is seen in the Al-Asad family, and in the critical positions of the army and the state. With Al-Asad's gaining the power, a visible improvement has been experienced in the economic statuses of the Nousairi villagers. (Erciyes, 2004: 26-8)

Christians comprise 10% of the Syrian population. These are engaged to different churces with the influence of the states who pretend to be political actors in the Middle East. The Orthodoxes are mostly Christian Arabs. Some of them are detached from the Orthodox Church. The majority of this group is comprised of Armenian Gregorians. There are also people who are engaged in Roman Churches and become Greek Catholics. As for Druses, they mostly live in the city of Al-Suwayda and mostly engaged in agriculture. Most of the Druses in these regions are relatives of the ones who came from Lebanon, Palestine and Aleppo in the 19th century. Ismailis are engaged in Shi'ite sect and mostly live in Hama and are doing agriculture. (*ibid*: 28-30)

2.1.2. History of Syria (from French mandate to Ba'ath regime)

In the period from 1914 in which the WWI had begun, to 1922 in which the League of Nations had granted France the mandatory authority, the Syrian Arabs gained their independence for a very short time. The driving force in the course of independence was the wakening of Arab nationalism. Since the beginning of 19th century, Syrian intellectuals had received education in educational instutions administered by Europeans and Americans. These intellectuals, after returning their country, contributed to formation of the intellectual basis of Arab nationalism by the studies they conducted on the Arab

language, history and literature. Some of them frankly demanded reforms from the Ottoman government. These groups, later, continued their endeavours as secret societies. But this awakening had taken its extreme status during the French mandate. (Okur, 2004: 2-3)

The Middle East territories under the reign of the Ottoman Empire was shared out by the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement dated 16 May 1916, signed by Mark Sykes of British Government and Georges Picot of French Government. According to this agreement, France received Syria, Lebanon, Cilicia and Mosul regions; the UK received Jordan, Iraq and North Palestine. By the agreement, an international regime and an Arab State with undefined borders would be founded in the remaining parts of Palestine. (Sander, 2007: 382)

The British wanted to take Arabs' support against the Ottomans and to strengthen her position in the Middle East against the French. Therefore, the British had told Sharif Hussein, who had been granted the government of Hejaz that they met him as the representative of all the Arabs, and Hussein inferred that he was seen as the King of Arabs. (Okur, 2004: 5) Also, an agreement was signed between Sharif Hussein and British High Commissioner McMahon, anticipating the foundation of an Arab Kingdom over the territory shared between France and the UK with Sykes-Picot agreement. (Sander, 2007: 382) Sharif Hussein, with his sons, started a rebel against Turks on 5 June 1916, and a son of Sharif Hussein entered Damascus after the Turkish army retreated in October 1918. Faisal exercised power on all the Syria except for the coastal strip, in which the French Troops were situated, in a short time. In July 1919, The Pan-Syrian Congress had convened and declared an independent state of Syria. The Congress declared Faisal as the King of Syria in March 1920. Faisal and his supporters declared Arabic as the official language, founded the Faculty of Law at the Syrian University, founded an Arab Academy in Damascus, and established a committe for preparing a constitution in order to rebuild Syria. (Okur, 2004: 5-6)

The Sykes-Picot agreement had not been welcomed by the French. Newspapers in Paris and in other cities were mentioning that Syria was being Anglicized in a methodical way

and they were blaming the UK for following an opponent policy against France. (Umar, 2002: 300) Thereupon, the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and French Prime Minister Clemenceau signed a British–French agreement known as the Syrian Agreement. According to this agreement, the UK would retreat from Syria and Cilicia as of November 1, and leave her position to the French. France would obtain some part of Cilicia and East and Southeast Anatolia, and would found a French regime in Syria and Lebanon. Arab states would be founded in the cities of Aleppo, Damascus, Hama and Homs. (Yavuz, 2005: 227) The need for foreign consultants and teachers would be met by France. (Umar, 2002: 300) Faisal and independence supporters, who were supported by the British, objected to this agreement and declared that they did not want the French in their territory; but the UK remained underwhelmed in this issue. (*ibid*: 300)

The European states arrived at a concensus on the mandates to be distributed in the Peace Conference on Middle East which was held in San Remo on 24 April 1920. Syria was left to French mandate and Iraq to British mandate. These were Class A mandates, defined in the Covenant of League of Nations, and would gain independence after some time. (Sander, 2007: 77) After the San Remo conference, the relations between French authorities and French occupation forces commander General Gouraud and Faisal were clashing. In addition to this, the attitudes of the French in Lebanon became severe. France sent an ultimatum to Faisal for recognising the French sovereignity; however, when Faisal contravened (Umar, 2002: 301), France expelled Faisal from Syria in July 20. (Yavuz, 2005: 245) King Faisal was obliged to flee to Europe and did not return to the Middle East until the British made him the King of Iraq in 1921. (Okur, 2004: 8)

French occupation forces comprised of three segments. First of them was in Adana region at the command of General Dofiou, the second was at Aleppo, Antep, Kilis and Urfa regions at the command of General Do Lamout, and the third was near Beirut. The French started invading Syria, occupied Rayak and Baalbek regions; protest marches against the French were organized in Aleppo due to these occupations. (Umar, 2003: 23) With the occupation of all Syria, the French mandate period began in Syria.

The French implemented a divide and rule policy under the mandate regime. (Sander, 2007: 83) Through this policy France aimed at weakening the Arab nationalist and strenghtening their own positions by supporting religious and ethnic minorities, since France was anxious for the nationalists to be manipulated by the British and feared the rekindlement of nationalism in Syria to spread over her dominions in North Africa. (Okur, 2004: 9) As part of the divide and rule policy seperate mandate states were founded in Syria. These were (Yavuz, 2005: 258);

"Latakia Government: It was covering the coastal regions from widened Lebanon border to Sanjak of Alexandretta with Latakia as capital. Jabal al-Druze State: It covered the mountainous area between Damascus and Trans-Jordan region with Suwaida as capital. Syria State: It covered the remaining areas of the mandate region with Damascus as capital. Sanjak of Alexandretta: It was included in the Syria State but had an autonomous government."

With the request of General Gouraud, the borders of the old Sanjak of Lebanon were widened towards Syria and a new mandate state was founded under the name of Great Lebanon State. Despite this new state includes coastal cities such as Tripoli, Beiriut, Sidon and Tyre, and generally barren land it was twice greater than the Sanjak of Lebanon in terms of area and population. The population of this new state was Christians and Muslims, however, the Christians controlled the cities of Tripoli and Beirut which are almost all coastal cities, through sea routes. (*ibid*: 258)

The structural weaknesses of each political unit had been an advantage for the French mandate. France could be in control in the area for a long time without facing substantial opposition. (Sander, 2007: 83) The French wanted to take Lebanon from the Maroonites and make it the base of French Middle East policy. The Lebanon state gained independence in 1943 and in 1947 France retreated wholly from Lebanon. The administrative organization was being conducted by the regional government and mandate services. The Alawite State, with Latakia as capital, and the government in Jabal al-Druze was in the hands of the mandate agents. The present Syria state was founded in 1942 by the incorporation of Latakia and Jabal al-Druze states within the Syria state founded by the French. (Umar, 2002: 302)

The French mandate implemented economical sanctions. The French Francs was placed at the center of the Syrian economy and the administration of the monetary mechanism was given to France. (Okur, 2004: 11) The economical structure of Syria and the traditional commercial structure were abolished systematically; the customs tariff, caused by the increase in the gap in the administrative bugdet, affected the economy negatively. The domestic industry collapsed due to France's placing lower tax rates for European commodities. (Umar, 2002: 303-4) France banned the exportation of grain from Syria, thus the prices fell and French tradesmen made a fortune by selling the grain they bought cheap. Almost every aspect of life in Syria was under French control. In addition to this, it should be mentioned that France had holdover investments from the Ottoman reign. Beside the investments in silk and tobacco industries; Port of Beirut, Beirut-Damascus railroad and the road connecting Damascus and Aleppo were constructed by the French and they monopolized the transportation activities on these roads. Therefore Syria was of vital importance for the French in terms of economy. (Okur, 2004: 11-2)

During the mandate goverment, there was continuity in domestic politics between the Ottoman system and the sytem at the French mandate period. In both periods, the ones who had the power were the same persons or families. In Ottoman reign, the cities were at the center of the political power. This situation continued during the French reign. There was also continuity with respect to the staff. Among the political figures which became prominent after the mandate, there were several Ottoman governors. For instance, Kamil Pasha al-Qudsi who took the chair in the new Aleppo state was an old Ottoman general. In additon, the judicial system from the Ottoman era was used by Faisal and the mandate with some amendments. (*ibid*: 13-4)

Since the mandate regime was temporary, France should not protect her benefits in Syria by the decision taken by the League of Nations. Accordingly; the mandatory state would not implement privileged tariffs against other great powers, would ensure the preparation of a new constitution in three years, would make laws that protect the people in the mandate and their interest and wishes, would monitor the progress towards being an independent nation and would enable the motivation of local autonomy insofar as the circumstances permit. No part of the state would be divided and given to any other state.

Foreign religious missions would be free in their activities provided that they are limited to religion. The official languages will be French and Arabic in the areas under French mandate. In foreign affairs, it was France's duty to get in touch with the foreign mission who wanted to work up a connection with Syria. (*ibid*: 11-6)

France supported every religious and ethnic trend in education; was attentive to cut the budgets of educational institution which instilled national feelings, and increasing the number of Catholic schools which serve the purposes of the French. She tried to inculculate French classics, French history and geography instead of Arab-Islam culture. By doing this, she planned to raise individuals loyal to French reign. Young Syrian students were forced to salute the French flag and to sing the French national anthem. In cultural domain, France tried to control the newspapers, limited the licences for publishing newspapers and refused to issue licences, and closed down many newspapers and imprisoned their writers. (Umar, 2002: 303-4)

Nationalism, as an urban ideoloji, found support in Damascus, Aleppo, Hama and Homs; the communication of the independence movements with rural areas and other regions continued with interruptions. The French strove to cut the communications between the cities, in which they prevailed, and the rural areas. (Okur, 2004: 16)

Alawites, Druzes and Bedouins started rebellions in 1925 from place to place facing French pressure. However, these rebellions were far from being an organized movement for an independent Syria. When Iraq obtained the right to found an elected assembly from the British mandate in 1924, the Arab nationalists in Syria made a move against French reign in order to obtain this right. France, on 9 February 1925, gave permission to the Arab nationalists in Syria to establish the People's Party. The purpose of this party was to obtain the territorial integrity of Syria which was divided in seperate memberstates. In this context, Aleppo and Damascus integrated in 1925, and Lebanon was passed to France mandate as a seperate state in 1926. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 92)

In 1925, in the rebellion first started in Jabal Al-Druze and later spreaded all over Syria; with the great resistance of the people the French took susbstantial damages in the

beginning (Umar, 2002: 304), the Druze forces commanded by Sultan Pasha and Al-Atrash captured Salkhad on 20 July 1925, and As-Suwayda on 2 August; and they captured Damascus area as a result of the rebellion spreading to Damascus. Thereupon, the French bombed Damascus and Druzes were stopped after giving 5000 casualties (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 92); however, the total quelling of the rebellion could be possible in 1927. (Umar, 2002: 305) The Druze rebellion was the most prominent example of the failure of the French in Syria. 10.000 people from Syria and 2.500 from French died in the rebellion. (Ada, 2005: 79)

After the rebellion, in 1928, France made a call to the Syrians to establish a National Front in which every society in Syria would be represented and that would provide them self-governance. The National Bloc was presided by Ibrahim Hannanu and Hashim Al-Atashi. Ibrahim Hannanu prepared the constitution which involves the integrity and independence of Syria without minding French mandate. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 92) The French highcommissioner demanded an article that refers directly to the mandate government to be added to the constitution and demanded any articles that influence the operation of the mandate government to be removed. When these demands were neglected, the constitution did not enter into force, and the assembly was prorogued sine die. (Okur, 2004: 21) France put into force the constitution that gives Syria the right to self-govern in 1930 however. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 92)

Syrian nationalists continued to indent the French for signing an agreement that would put forth the aims of France on Syria. A similar agreement that the Syrian demanded was signed in 1922 between the British and the Iraqis. (Okur, 2004: 22) But, France did not want her mandate rights and authorities to be a matter of negotiation. The strike movements in 1936 followed the protests and acts of violence in 1935 caused by the assasination of Ibrahim Hannanu, the president of the National Bloc. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 92) This strike lasted 72 days, and separate meetings were organized in the districts of the city; and the national demands were reported to the representatives of foreign states. Children and women participating in these meetings were killed in French fussilade. (Umar, 2002: 308) After these incidents France started dialogues with political leaders in Syria to make an agreement. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 93) On 22 December 1936 the liberal-

socialist government of Leon Blum in France could sign the Syrian-French Treaty of Alliance. The Treaty was similar to the agreement between the British and the Iraqi signed in 1922. In the Treaty, Syria and Lebanon joined to the League of Nations as independent states; however France maintened some of her privileges. The document had the characteristics of an allience, amity and peace treaty which includes elements such as defence, peacetime conferring, and wartime mutual cooperation. Syria, in wartime would lend assistance to France by opening its naval, aerial and territorial domains and her facilities. France would use the two airbases in the North as long as the treaty remains in force, would continue to keep troops in some areas for five years, and an army would be founded in Syria by means of using French equipment and receiving support from the French mission. French envoy would protect the rights of the Syrian citizens; the French embassy in Syria would be on top of others; and a parity value would be established between French and Syrian currencies. The capitulations would be in effect again, and the concessions made for foreign institutions would continue for 25 years. France accepted the integration of Alawite and Druze regions by the treaty. Meanwhile, Hashim Al-Atashi took the chair in Syria, and France did not approve the treaty for this reason. (Okur, 2004: 22-3) During the 1936 French-Syrian negotiations, Turkey demanded that the issue of Sanjak in which the majority of the population were Turks and which were designated with special status as of 1921 Ankara Treaty to be brought to agenda. After the issue was tranferred to the League of Nations, the Sanjak was accepted as a separate entity in 1937. In 1939 the Sanjak of Alexandretta which took the name of Hatay, joined to Turkey. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 93) Syria, as it will be mentioned later on, argued against this situation and reacted with the allegation that France did not defend Syria's interests.

After the surrender of France during WWII, the Vichy Government, which came to power in 1940, assigned a new highcommissioner to Syria, and a new government leaded by Khalid Al-Azm, who was a member of agrarian elite, deep-rooted family, acceded. (Okur, 2004: 26) Despite the German success continuing in Europe, the British and Free French forces supported by the Arab Legion situated at Trans-Jordan defeated Vichy forces and the control of the region passed over to Free French. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 94) With the entering of Allied forces into the region, the Free French Forces Commander De Gaulle promised for independence, but declared that the mandate government would continue

until it is officially ended by France. As a result of the elections in 1943, the National Bloc came into power. During 1944, the Syrian government incorporated 14 administrative departments which were under French control and which included customs, social relations, commodity taxes, control of corporate franchise and control of the clans. As for France, she was left with the responsibility of the Special Forces of the Levant[1] which was used in social, cultural, educational and security services. (Okur, 2004: 27)

Despite the objections of France, in July 1944 the USSR, in September 1944 the USA declared that they recognized Syria and Lebanon as independent states. As for the UK, she declared that she recognized Syria as an independent state in 1945. Syria declared the establisment of her national army in 1945, and declared war on the axis powers. In March 1945, Syria's membership to UN, which authenticates her independence, was accepted. Syria later joined to the League of Arab States, which plans to realize the ideal of Arab Union. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 94)

French, however, behaved uncomprimisingly at taking her cultural, economical and strategic interests to be ensured before withdrawing the Special Forces of Levant, and bombed Damascus during the conflicts in Damascus and Aleppo in 1945. De Gaulle declared armistice when British Prime Minister Winston Churchil threatened with sending troops to Damascus, and French forces had completely left until 15 April 1946. On 17 April 1946, Syria declared that French forces left Syria completely. (Okur, 2004: 28-9)

At the beginning, Turkey did not recognize the independence of Syria. The most important reason for this was the Hatay issue. Hatay is an important part of Great Syria plan which was the dream of Syria. However for Turkey, this was not acceptable. Since Turkey did not recognize Syria, she continued relations with this country through the consulate in Damascus. Turkey had decided not to recognise Syria unless she accepted Hatay issue. But, in 1946 Turkey recognized Syria via the mediation of Iraq, and assigned Apdülahat Akşin as the first ambassador to Damascus. Despite recognized by Turkey, Syria had never

[1] These forces were the units which were consisted of Syrians. These units were among the ones in which French minority politics were felt most. French built up an army predominantly consisted of country and minority ones. That dispersion were valid among especially the ranked officiers. Some of those units which would be the skeleton of the Syrian army after French mandate was finished, was consisted of completely minorities. That had effects on Syria's regime structure which continues till today.

give up the dream of Greater Syria. While the UK supported this Project, France argued against it with the fear that Syria would get under the influence of the UK. (Yavuz, 2005: 310-1)

With the withdrawal of France from Syria, clash of ideas surfaced between the political leaders. The Aleppo group started to quarrel with the Damascus group over taking the economical and political control. Druze and Kurds started to gather around their own clans. As for Alawites, they started struggling to break loose from control of Sunnites. Politicians were seperated with respect to the regime that Syria would have. Old Aleppo leaders, who were close to trade preferred the Hashimi Kingdom and Iraq as they had supported Faisal in 1918. However, young, educated Damascus leaders denied Kingship arguing that Hashimi Kingdom was being supported by the British. Syria passed her first years of independence bereft of a real leader, under the presidency of Shukri Al-Quwatli supported by the assembly comprised of warring factions. In this period, Syria invaded Israel with the Arab states of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq after the UK and France ended their mandate in May 1948. However, Israel launched a conter assault and Arab forcec were obliged to leave Israel territory. On 31 October, Syria admitted defeat under Israel assaults. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 95)

After this period, an era of coup d'etats had started. In March 1949 General Husni Al-Za'im taged a coup and vacated all political parties by taking the power over from Al-Quwatli. (Erciyes, 2004: 45) Al-Za'im achieved particular succes during his short reign. These were, preparing the Project that would transfer water to Aleppo from the Euphrates River and the Port of Latakia Project; starting the construction of highways and hospitals; and reforms such as protection of women's rights by making new laws on civil and commercial rights; legislation of the penal code; and abolition of private charitable foundations. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 96) However, Sami Al-Hinnawi seized power by a coup d'etat. (Erciyes, 2004: 45) During Al-Hinnawi reign, although the government of the country was left to staff presided by Al-Atasi, Syrian Armed Forces continued its positon of keeping a close wath on the political authority. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 96) On 19 December, Colonel Adib Shisakli seized the control by a coup. (Erciyes, 2004: 45) The Constituent Assembly elected in the period following the military coup adopted a new

constitution on 4 September 1950 to restore the order in the country. The Constituent Assembly was assigned as the legislative assembly. However, in this period the political turmoil had not ended; inflation had rised due to economic crisis caused by political distrust; rebellions had started due to bad straits. Shisakli founded his own Arab Liberation Movement Party after closing all other political parties on 16 April 1952. In the ballot in July 1953, Syrian voted a new constitution, and therefore elected Shishakli as president, and also accepted Syria being a republic. Thus the assembly was filled with the members of the Arab Liberation Movement Party. With the rebellion of Druzes in 1953, it became obvious that Shishakli's government would not be a long standing one. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 96-7) During the era of coups, the support of the officers with the Ba'ath ideology to Syrian Social Nationalist Party which defended Great Syria ideal had increased. With a new military coup in 1954, this time Colonel Faisal Al-Atasi seized power. (Erciyes, 2004: 45)

The political turmoil that arose in this new is caused the Syrian Ba'ath Party and the Syria Communist Party, which was in relation to the USSR, to come to the fore. As a result of the increasing propaganda of the USSR in the country, and the invasion of Sinai Peninsula by the British, French and Israeli forces, anti-westernism started to rise. So, Syria engaged with the USSR and other communist states. Between 1954 and 1956, military equipment and weapon purchase agreements and cooperation treaties were signed with these states. In this period, while Syria got engaged with the USSR and other communist states, she moved away from the Arab World. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 97) During the Cold War period, the Middle East witnessed the conflict between two superpowers. Syria caught in the middle of Iraq and Egypt rivalry was affected more than Egypt. The Baghdad Pact signed in 1955 between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and the UK drove Syria towards Egypt. (Erciyes, 2004: 45)

When it comes to 1957, the conservatives in Syria were completely drawn away from the government. As for the radical groups, they came Ba'ath Party's way with a new party. Therefore, it can be argued that there was a struggle between radical parties and Ba'ath in this period. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 98)

Middle East was in an important position for the USSR's quest for warm waters. Thus relations with Syria were paid attention by the USSR. In 1956, a committee presided by the Minister of Defence Khalid Al-Azm visited the USSR and signed a number of agreements. After these agreements were made public, the period known as 1957 Syrian Crisis had started. According to the agreement, the USSR will provide a 500m dollars military and economic aid to Syria; with this aid a port would be constructed in Latakia, highways and railroads would be constructed, six new airports would be constructed, and financial support would be provided for irrigation and energy projects. Upon the manifestation of this agreement Turkey felt herself as surrounded by the USSR in the North and by Syria in the South. On 24 August 1957, King Faisal of Iraq, King Hussein of Jordan, Turkish President Celal Bayar, Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and the USA Secretary of State Loy Henderson started negotiations and Arab states and the USSR gave reaction to these negotiations. On 10 September 1957, Henderson stated to Turkey that they did not have the intention to make operations againts Syria, and recommended Turkey to take any action rather than enforcing Arab defence movements. Turkey, not satisfied with this decleration deployed a motorized unit comprising of 33.000 soldiers tantamount to two infantry divisions and an armoured division. The tension was resolved with Syria's founding of the United Arab Republic with Egypt in 1958. (Erciyes, 2004: 46-7)

The political turmoil experienced in the country due to the conflicts continuing between the radical groups and Ba'ath members, and engagement with the USSR drove Syria towards the President of Egypt Gemal Abdel Nasser. Nasser found the concerns of Syria about Israel as justified and following the plebiscites conducted between two countries, Egypt and Syria were united under the same roof of the United Arab Republic. However, after a while Syria started to be governed by more powerful Egypt. The Temporary Constitution issued in 1958 anticipated a unified government and a 600 member assembly comprising of 400 members from Egypt and 200 members from Syria. Nasser was elected president, and of the four vice-presidents two were Syrians. One of these was the Ba'ath Party leader Akram Al-Hawrani. 14 members of the 34 membered united governement were from Syria. As it is seen, Ba'ath Party could not obtain a concession it expected. Nasser started to govern the United Arab Republic. The worsening economic conditions in 1961 and the Nasser policies over Syria started to cause disturbance in Syria, and with a

military coup on 28 September 1961 the United Arab Republic came to an end. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 88-9)

Due to the disintegration from the unity with Egypt, the period between 1961 and 1963 was named as The Seperatist Period. (Akdemir, 2000: 218) The assembly, predominated by moderates and conservatives, of the new government formed as a result of the 1961 coup elected Nazim Al-Kudsi as president. The anti-government tendencies developed in the people conduced towards a new coup d'etat. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 98-9) The soldiers that put an end to the United Arab Republic were Sunnites. Their leader Abd Al-Karim Al-Nahlawi from Damascus planned a military coup to reinforce his position on 28 March 1962, but could not succede. In this period, while Sunnites were wearing out each other, their positions started to be filled with officers from minority groups. Here, it should be emphasized that the minority groups' remaining in the back ground and thus wearing well paved the way for them to replace the positions left by Sunnites.(Akdemir, 2000: 218-9) The new coup government did not last long. In 1963 officers engaged with Ba'ath seized power. (Erciyes, 2004: 48) On 9 March 1963 Salah Al-Din Al-Bitar took the chair as prime minister. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 100) The absolute control of the pro-Ba'athists was ensured by the purge of the pro-Nasserists among the junta. The government of Syria completely came under the rule of Ba'ath with a new military coup in February 1966. (Erciyes, 2004: 48)

During the period between 1963 and 1966, governments predominated by the left and righ fractions of Ba'ath party had taken office. In this period, while Amin Al-Hafiz held the government, two Alawite generals started to come to the fore. In 23 February this two generals Salah Al-Jadid and Hafez Al-Assad, with Noureddin Al-Atassi, staged a coup which brought the radical wing of Ba'ath to power. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 100) In 1966, Amin Al-Hafiz was being suspended, as Hafez Al-Assad seized Air Forces Command and Ministry of Defence. Hafez Al-Assad and Salah Al-Jadid, who controled the party, started to govern the country. (Arı, 2007: 465)

Hafez Al-Assad was a member of Syrian army as mentioned before. His membership in army let him to be an authority in the country. Because the Syrian army has a big

importance in the society. Syrian army was established during WWI by the French under the name of Syria Legion. In 1923 the French established the Special Forces of Levant. In 1945, these armies were given at the command of Syria and Lebanon governments. There were many volunteers from minorities and subordinate groups among the Special Forces established by the French. This is because France wanted to benefit from the differences between these minorities. Later on, these groups tried to improve their socio-economic conditions arising from ethnic issues via their positions in the army. The story of Hafez Al-Assad could be an ideal example for this policy of the minorities. First the Special Forces, later the Syrian army had had a significant influence on Syrian people including the socio-economic and politic issues. The army brought together individuals of different backgrounds and world views. Syrian army, as in other Arab states, had great influence on the daily life. Some argued that this involvement was unavoidable in states devoid of societal or civilian frameworks since they lacked an educated politically conscious middle class capable of filling the vacuum created by the end of mandate. In such a condition the army came to the fore as a modern instituion with its professional unity, ideology and wish for change. In 1950's and 1960's the army stage coups in Syria and some of them resulted in failure. Because, in Syria, the army as the people was divided, as the people, into groups and factions such as family, ethnic affiliation and ideology. As there were no hierarchy in these sanctions, there were no unity in the army too. (Zisser, 2001: 3-4)

Hafiz Al-Assad, Muhammad Umran and Salah Al-Jadid were officers belonging to the Alawite sect. These officers established a secret military committee comprising of two Ismaili officers - Abdel-Karim Al-Jundi, and Ahmed Al-Mir - and five individuals behind Ba'ath. After the coup on 23 February 1966, struggle between Salah Al-Jadid and Hafez Al-Assad started. On 13 November 1970, in a coup staged by Hafez Al-Assad, the top-brass of the party including Al-Jadid and President Noureddin Al-Atassi were sent to prison. Therefore the reign of Hafez Al-Assad, in which the coups would never be staged, started. (Akdemir, 2000: 220)

Hafez Al-Assad was a representative of Ba'ath. The Ba'ath party was a political character emerged in the Middle East, especailly Syria and Iraq. Ba'ath was used meaning resurrection or Arab Socialist Resurrection Party. The Ba'ath party was founded by the

integration of Arab Resurrection Party leaded by Michel Aflaq, and Arab Socialist Party headed by Akram Al-Hawrani. The party adopted unifying all Arab states in one Arab state as its purpose. Establishing a United Arab League and integration with Iraq remained one of its struggles. Ba'athists aimed at providing development by defending principles such as, practicing soicalist reforms, reducing social differences, limiting property, nationalizing all means of production, protection inheritance rights, maintain capital and private enterprise. Its ideology was Arab Socialism. However, for Atay, it is difficult to study Arab socialism since it does not have an evident theory. Therefore Arab socialism should be understood as socialism customized for the special needs of Arab World. This ideology remained as a nationalist movement supported by the USSR. As Ba'athist, the nationalists too, considered socialist ideas as having a sufficient role in gaining independence from foreign reign. Socialism had developed as a part of the nationalist revolution. Ba'ath ideology gives priority to nationalist aims along with the socialist ones. The Ba'athists who aspired after socialism, nationalism and unity could fight at two fronts with this ideology; the emperialist enemies who did not want to see that Arabs united, and the domestic affairs of a backward society. By the phrase of the enemies of the Arab unity Israel and emperialism were meant. Unity was a requirement before achieving socialism. Because the Arab states appeared far from realizing the development one by one. (Atay, 2000: 131-6)

The Syrian Ba'ath party originated from the middle class, but was taken over by the officers. Socially speaking, the Ba'ath Party was essentially a means of social mobility, and was used for clientelism to achieve perquisites from the government. This was actually an adaptation of the zaim networks common in Arab world, especially in Syria and Lebanon. Secularism was an important element for the Syrian Ba'ath. Because 25% of Syria's population was not Sunnite Muslims or they were non-Arabic Sunnites. Therefore, for Ba'ath, secularism functioned as a barrier before Sunnite efficiency and fundamentalism. (Bar, 2006: 359)

The ideology of the Syrian Ba'th was a mixture of 19th century nationalism and twentieth century humanistic idealism. The nineteenth century German nationalist philosphers and the mid-twntieth century French philosophical ecoles had a great influence on their ideology. The defining ideological documents of the Syrian Ba'th were the party

constitution accepted in the first Party Congress in April 1947 and the Points of Departure that were ratified in the sixth National Congress in October 1963. Although there were some temporary alterations, there had not been any change about the general stance of the party. Party's taglines were Unity, Freedom, Socialism. This slogan summarized the main tenets of the party (*ibid*: 363);

1. Arab Unity; the belief in the natural unity of Arab nation.
2. Independence from imperialist and colonialist rules, not only politically, but also culturally; and economic self-sufficiency
3. Socialism; a tenet which should be understood as a particular brand of Ba'th socialism, adapted to Arab traditions.
4. Other tenets include modernism, equality of sexes and human rights.

Hafez Al-Assad was born in Latakia region, where Alawites lives, finished his primary and secondary education there. He entered active politics at the age of 16 by getting into act in Ba'ath. He continued his education in the military academy he registered in 1950 and graduated from this school as an air force officer. In these years he received pilot training from the Soviet Union, and he continued his activities in Ba'ath, benefiting from the structure of Syria in which the army was into politics. Although he was an admirer of Nasser, he argued against Nasser's neutralizing Ba'ath and governing Syria, he became a potential threat to Nasser government during the years he was in service in Cairo. He found the opportunity act freely after the disintegration of the United Arab Republic in 1961. In this period, the influences on the government of the Alawites, who constituted 10% of the population, had increased noticably. He became one of the four names that comprise the skeleton of Ba'ath at the age of 32. He took over the presidency of Syria from Salah Al-Jadid as of 1970. (Arı, 2007: 463-5)

Syrian regime was rendered, by Hafez Al-Assad, as directed reinforcing his reign. Hafez Al-Asad was both the reference point for national identification and the source and focus of real power. The president controlled all the pillars of power: he was commander-in-chief of the armed forces; an authority for inteligence services, and he was the secretary of the Ba'ath Party controlling the parliament. He had much more power unofficially. His regime

was very similar to the autrocratic Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, particularly Ceausescu's in Rumania. It was possible to see the resemblances between these regimes with respect to the centralized control of the leader, the use of terminology of the personality cult, the marginal role of the party in power, and the dominant role of the family in government creating sense of monarchy. Al-Asad, once stated that he was also influenced by North Korean regime of Kim II Sung. (Bar, 2006: 354)

Hafez Al-Assad's being the sole leader manifested itself in taglines such as Suriya Al-Asad, (Al-Assad's Syria). The leader was given several titles imitating the Stalinist ideology. For instance "Leader of the March" ("qai'd al-masira"), the "Eternal Leader" ("al-qa'id ila al-abd"), "Builder of Syria" ("bani Suriyya"), "Hope of Nation" ("amal al-ummah"), "Hafez of honor" ("Hafez al-Karamah"), "Struggler" ("munadil"), "Hero of Tishrin" ("batal Tishreen") are some of these titles. Although Hafez Al-Assad was an Alawite, and even he was not accepted as Muslim in the eyes of many Sunnites, he was named as a Muslim. He was described as an almost supernatural being of infinite wisdom, worthy of being of infinite wisdom, the one to obeied without question. (*ibid*: 354)

Al-Assad placed his close friends, his relatives and the one to whom he trusted most, to continue his authority. So that, during Al-Assad era, a little Alawite minority came to power. Apart from government, in military bureaucracy and intelligence, Alawites were in power. Also, the companies which constitute the defence industry were presided by Alawites. All the companies were tied to Rıf'at who is the brother of Hafez Al-Assad, till 1984. They were careful about not to choose the Sunnis who work in inferior administration among the old political city-dweller elites. (Arı, 2007: 467)

Al-Assad was a firmly in control of the decision-making process in both political and military areas, although he seemed to trust his close advisors. His system had little space for delegation of authority in matters of political importance and no institutionalized bureaucratic process for making decisions on war and peace. He was not an advocate of groupthinking, his way to access opinions and informations from his subordinates was in direct one-on-one reporting of the latter to the president. Al-Assad was rarely known to hold multiparticipatory consultations or participate in brainstorming sessions of a large

numbers of individuals. This centralist and micromanagement leadership style along with total loyalty to the president and a clear allocation of areas of resposibility, restrained court intigrues and limited blatant rivalries among members of the leadership. Al-Assad's leadership style may derived of a divida et impera tactic, by limiting the exposure of his senior deputies to the information that was brought before him, he could maintain a high level of uncertainty between members of the elite and control the balance of power among them. The Syrian bureaucracy lacked a culture of Scenario building and discussing sundry alternatives. As a result the information background and analysis of the situation available to president for decision making were based primarily on the personal knowledge and analysis of senior advisors who directly participated in decision-making process. (Bar, 2006: 354-5)

In Hafez Al-Assad's period, the Ba'ath Party had lost its internal decision making organs which existed in the pre-regime Ba'th. The party became an instrument for collection of informations on domestic area and mobilization support for the decisions taken by leader, but the party itself did not really participated in the decision making process. Although the inner circle of the President were senior members of the party, their right not have the floor in decision-making process was related to their membership in president's gang, not to their formal party status. These people both functioned as the main source of advice for the President and his main source of information. (*ibid*: 355)

In Syrian regime, there was a legistlative branch dominated by the Ba'athists as a part of the nominal National Progressive Front, which was rendered powerless; the technocratic executive also was not a vehicle of power, for instance ministers with formal power owed their power not to their membership in the formal executive but to their membership in the informal inner circle, a de facto cabinet of the President's main political, military and security advisors. (*ibid*: 356)

Pan-Arabism, which was a kind of Arab nationalism used by the British to make the Middle East go out of Ottoman's hands (Akdemir, 2000: 221) was a good reason to unite the people speaking Arabic in Syria's multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure. However, the disappointment experienced in uniting with Nasser caused a frustration about Pan-

Arabism. The Neo-Ba'athists emerged in this period put Syria on the front instead of Arab nationalism. Thus, the ideal of Great Syria became prominent in the party. (*ibid*: 223) The policy of this new period was called Pan-Syrianism. Pan-Syrianism did not emerged a Syrian identity wholly distinct from Arabism, kept the content of Syrian identity Arab, and the Ba'athist regime continued to consider its legitimacy as depending on being regarded as representing Arab causes, as it was represented in the examples of Palestine issue or the opposition to Iraq's invasion by the USA. Under Hafez Al-Assad, like most Arabs in the Arab states, Syria claimed that Syria was entitled to speak for the assumed higher Arab national interest. (Hinnebusch, 2008: 264-5) Hafez Al-Assad combined Pan-Arabism and Pan-Syrianism. (Akdemir, 2000: 225) In addition to this, the Al-Assad regime which referred to the historical accumulation, and characterized Damascus as the cradle of civilisations and the heart of Arab nationalism, thought, in its analysis of various groups in Syria, that this kind of an Arab union would be realised over religion and found it dangerous for herself. Because the ethnic groups in Syria also had different religious identities. The discourse advocating Pan-Arabism only succeded in the struggle against Israel and in the Middle East policy. (Arı, 2007: 473-4)

The Greater Syria Project had taken its roots from the pre-mandate Bilad as-Sham. Bilad as-Sham included todays Syria, Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon. Therefore, Syria accepted these territories as her own. This ideology made itself more evident in Hafez Al-Assad period. Indeed, in some Syria maps, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Jordan, not excepting Hatay, is being shown in Syria's borders. (Akdemir, 2000: 224)

Syria had an economy in which private sector was active in 1960's, the first years of the Ba'ath regime. However, after passing over of banks and all companies in business in industry and transportation sector due to nationalization, Syria acquired an etatist economy. During Hafez Al-Assad's period, the dominance of public sector had continued, but the private sector was given a limited freedom of action. In 1970's Syria shed the image of exporting only cotton and became a country in which oil industry, as well as services, trade and industry sectors became important sources of income. Despite the foreign aid provided by the Oil Exporting Arab countries enlivened economy, the

continuity of these economic resources were bound up with Syria's policies about the region. (Arı, 2007: 468)

As for the education system in Syria, it was directed to raise the society in line with the Ba'ath ideology. It was seen as a means to ensure the loyalty and obedience of the masses to the regime. The educational instutiton and all other administrative duties were under control of the party and thus the central government. The students and academicians to be accepted in the universites were being strictly controlled. (*ibid*: 468) Al-Assad had been determinative in foreign policy and kept his people off from the developments in the world. The use of the Internet was limited to businessmen, few in number, and some of the notables. Therefore he could develop his dictatorship. (Erciyes, 2004: 52)

Establishment of an Israelite state in the territory which was known as South Syria in the Ottoman era, and losing land to this state in successive wars caused Israel to be the center of Syria foreign policy. During Al-Assad period, Syria's military and financial support resource against Israel had been the USSR, and thus the Soviet Union became one of the most important allies to Syria. (Arı, 2007: 469)

Hafez Al-Assad, after his government, started operations on the government and in the elections in February 1971, Ba'ath won 87 membership of the 183 member national council. Al-Assad was elected president in the referendum held in the same month. In March 1973, the Temporary Constitution, which increased Al-Assad's authority, entered into force. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 103) Prime minister was Abdul Rahman Kleifawi and Mahmud Al-Ayyubi, of the Sunnites, was vice-president. Hafez Al-Assad had fallen out with the USSR for some time, due to elimination of communists in the party. However, from 1971 on the relations had been recovered. In the mean time, due to good relations with Arab countries, a trial of the Federation of Arab Republics, to be comprised of the union of Egypt, Libya and Syria, but it did not succeed. In 1972, an organization under the name of National Progressive Front was formed, which included both Ba'ath and four other political groups in the country. The groups included in the Front other than Ba'ath were the Syrian Arab Socialist Union, the Nasserist group headed by Gamal Al-Attasi, the

Socialist Union Movement under the leadership of Jamal Sufi, and the Arab Socialist Party. (Arı, 2007: 465-6)

The Temporary Constitution, entered into force in 1973, had caused distress in the country. Protests and rampancy were performed in the conservatives cities of Hama and Homs, alleging the constitution had been prepared by the secular Ba'ath elites. In the conflicts for controlling the protests many protesters died or injured. After these protest, Al-Assad added the article that states "the president should be a Muslim" to the constitution, which was criticised by many Sunnites. The constitution's winning the vote of confidence in the referendum in March, ceased the incidents. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 103) Al-Assad, after seizing power, thought that the Muslim card is an important trump in a country with a Muslim majority. In the fatwa given by Imam Musa Al-Sadr, one of the most important leaders of the Shi'ites and at the same time the head of the Council of Shia in Lebanon, it was emphasized that Alawism was a branch of Shia Islam. Thus the obstacles before Al-Assad was removed, and he started to use Islam more openly. (Erciyes, 2004: 49) With the newly adopted version of the 1973 constitution, the statement that the president should be Muslim, meaned the acceptance of Alawism as Islam. (Arı, 2007: 466)

In itself, Hafez Al-Assad's seizing power in November 1970 brought about a new era by softening the anti-Islamic tone of his predecessors. Despite being an Alawi himself, Al-Assad prayed in Sunnite mosques, went on pilgrimage to Mecca, and as said before, had the Alawi religion declared a legitimate branch of Shi'ite Islam. However Muslim Brethren[2] rejected his outstreched hand and considered Syria as an infidel regime headed by non-Muslims. (Zisser, 1999)

The success earned by the Syrian Armed Forces against the Israeli Forces, in 1973, was considered as a victory in Syria. In the agreement signed in 1947, Syria recaptured some

[2] Muslim Brethren is the world's oldest and one of the largest radical Islamist groups, and is the largest political opposition organisation in many Arab states. It was founded in 1928 in Egypt by the Islamic scholar and schoolteacher Hassan al-Banna, and has spread to many other countries. Its slogan is "Islam is the solution". The Muslim Brethren is currently designated as a terrorist organization by one United Nations Security Council permanent member and several Middle East countries. Muslim Brethren in Syria was founded in the 1930s or in 1945, a year before independence from France. In recent years, it's aim is to overthrow Al-Assad regime which is an Alawite regime, it has renounced violence and adopted a reformist platform, calling for the establishment of a pluralistic, democratic political system.

parts of the Golan Heights which was occupied by Israel before. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 103) In the mean time, Syria developed her relations with West Germany, which had ruptured in 1965, due to relations with Israel, while seeing about recovering relations with the UK and the USA, which had been ruptured since 1967. In 1975 a recovery was observed in Syria – Jordan relations in 1975, and these two countries decided military and political cooperation against Israel. (Arı, 2007: 466)

In 1976, Syria performed operations against the leftist Muslims in favour of rightist Christians in the Lebanon incidents, and therefore the relations with the Arab nations, especially with Egypt, became tense. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 104) However, the Arab Deterrent Force, which was constituted with the joint decision of the Arab states, concerning Lebanon, comprised of mostly the Syrian soldiers. Meanwhile, Al-Assad was elected president for the second time, for a seven year period, in 1978 after the elections repeated in 1977. (Arı, 2007: 467)

1970's, infact, was a period in which opposition to Al-Assad existed. The organization with the highest members, among other underground organizations, was the Muslim Brethren. Other organizations were the Islamic Liberation Movement formed in Aleppo in 1963; the Islamic Liberation Party - Hizb-ut Tahrir al-Islami - of Jordan which was founded in 1950's; and apart from these some small groups such as Muhammad's Youth, Jundallah, and Mervan Hadid group of Hama founded in 1965.

Syria believed that these groups received financial and military support from Saudi Arabia and other countries. Also, some opposition, which did not aim at overthrowing the regime, arose from the intellectuals. Some of these were the protests in Hama and Aleppo on 31 March 1980. In addition to these there were some opposition from the Sunnite groups in Ba'ath and the most important among these was leaded by Salah al-Din al-Bitar. However the most important movement was the Muslim Brethren which grew stronger after Al-Assad's pressure on Sunnites. (*ibid*: 470-1)

In the end of 1970's, the Muslim Brethren was performing many religious-driven attack against Al-Assads regime, Ba'ath members and Alawis. In 1979 spring, they declared that

they hold the responsibility for the assaults against individuals mostly Alawis, and the assults against government and military facilities. In these attacks, 50 military academy students were killed. These incidents were as the signs of what could the organization do. The terrorist incidents concentrated in Damascus, Hama, Homs, and the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartus. In March 1980, they concentrated in Aleppo. With the attack on March 5, they took aim of Ba'ath Party building and military facilities. On all of these incidents, in March and April, the Security Forces started attack on the Muslim Brethren. 300 person were killed in the conflict. It was declared that affiliation with Muslim Brethren would be punishable by death. In July 1980, an unsuccessful assassination was conspired against Al-Assad. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 105)

In the end, the Hama rebellion started in 1982 under the leadership of Muslim Brethren. This rebellion spread out due to Islamic Front's taking control over some parts of Hama. The Sunnite Muslims' taking control in Hama and Homs was prevented by the excessive force of the Syrian army commanded by Rif'at Al-Assad. In the quashing operations, which were not limited to Hama, many people, considered as the opposition, were either killed or imprisoned. According to different resources, the number was between 10.000 and 25.000. While Arab countries reacted against this intimidation operation, Iran remained silent. (Arı, 2007: 471)

Another problem before the regime appeared when Al-Assad left Syria in 1983 for his heart trouble. His brother Rif'at tried to take control by placing his own men to important positions. Placing Rif'at's posters on the walls after Hafez Al-Assad's return on 28 January 1984, and withdrawing the day after, were the evidences that there was a problem inside. Hafez Al-Assad got through this danger by Rif'at's flying to Russia first and then to Europe in 1984. Rif'at returned Syria in November 1984. Hafez Al-Assad did not exclude Rif'at in order not to turn him against himself, and tried to hold him under control; but decreased Rif'at's efficiency in the intelligence and in the army. (*ibid*: 471-2)

These two incidents were incidents that indicate how Hafez Al-Assad was devoid of society's support in domestic policy. Hereupon, Hafez Al-Assad toughened his policy. In the referandum in 1985, Hafez Al-Assad was elected president by collecting 99.9% of the

votes. In the elections, in 1986, for the National Assembly, Ba'ath won 129 of 195 seats in the Assembly, other parties in the National Progressive Front won 57 seats, and Syria Communist Party won 9 seats. (*ibid*: 472)

For many years, Israel, in the eyes of Syria, was seen as a racist, agressive entity created by the Western Imperialist ideas. For instance, in 1967, Chief of the General Staff Ahmad as-Suwaydani stated that, "Israel is a military base of imperialist camp, not a country". Syria, for long years, had been considering Israeli civilians, soldiers and politicians or people as a part of the same whole without discrimination. (Zisser, 1994) In the beginning of 1980's Israeli – Syrian relations were strained. Israel, which annexed Golan Heights in 1981, entered Lebanon with a Peace of Galilee Operation on 6 July 1982, in order to create a security zone in North Lebanon freed from Shi'ites and Palestinians. This operation aimed at destroying PLO's infrastructure facilities, controlling Beirut-Damascus highway with the operations in the central regions, and ending the Syrian military existence in Bekaa Valley and Lebanon through the eastbound operations by following the Beirut-Damascus highway. After the intensive operations between the parties, Israel ended the existence of PLO and Syria in Lebanon except for the Bekaa Valley. However, with the assasination of Lebanon president Bachir Gemayel on 14 September 1982, Israel entered West Beirut to prevent sectarian conflicts. After the war Israel was settled in the South of Lebanon, and this situation distressed Syria. While Syria sought international support, Israel stipulated Syria's and PLO's retreat for leaving Lebanon. As a result of increasing international pressure Israel retreated from Lebanon. With the agreement on 17 May, Israel left Beirut to Lebanon and to a Multi-National Security Force comprising of 3000 person. Israel withdrew her forces from South Lebanon, in 1985. This agreement was considered as a success of Hafez Al-Assad in Syria. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 106-7)

Syria took sides with Iran counter to Arab countries in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. Despite Syria wanted Iraq to weaken, she did not want a powerful, pro-Iran Shi'ite state to be established in Baghdad. When Iran started to loose territory, Hafez Al-Assad declared, in October 1986, that the invasion of Iraq was unacceptable.

After this declaration, Iraq and Syria authorities leagued together to improve the relations. Despite, Al-Assad's declaration was reacted against by Iran, Syria continued to support Iran during the war. (*ibid*: 111) Syria's support on Iran instead of Iraq which had a Ba'athist regime like herself caused the Syrian-Iraqi relations to detoriate. Syria's supporting Iran instead of Iraq against the Shia danger, parted ways with Iraq and other Arab states, and thus Syria was isolated. As for Syria, she tried to show, with this policy, that she would not accept a Middle East peace without Syria, and would sabotage it. (Arı, 2007: 470) A peace process excluding Syria would both complicate the retrieval of Golan Heights, and would jeopardize Syria with respect to isolation from the Arab World. Therefore, Syria pursued a policy to obstruct all kinds of peace process, and this policy had become decisive about Lebanon and Palestine. (*ibid*: 474) The intervention policy of Syria on Lebanon and the policy supporting Iran met with reaction in the country of a Sunnite majority, and had caused uprisings since 1976. (*ibid*: 470)

By the occupation of Golan Heights by Israel in 1967, Hafez Al-Assad started to think that these territories could only be retrieved through war; however the war in 1973, after forming alliance with Egypt, these lands could not be retreived. After this, Hafez Al-Assad, who did politics over forcing Israel to peace, argued against the agreement signed with Israel by Anwar Al-Sadat in 1978-1979 and led the exclusion of Egypt from Arab Union. However, this situation caused Syria to loose an important ally and therefore required more armament. Syria tried to take the helm of PLO, Lebanon and Jordan. However, Syria's stance in 1975-1976 Lebanon Civil War both caused her sincerity towards Palestine issue to be questioned in the Arab World, and her endeavours to control Lebanon to get complicated. (*ibid*: 469)

Syria was a preferable country fort he USSR among other third world countries. A great proportion of the military equipment and weapons of Syria had been supplied by the USSR for over 20 years. The USSR-Syria relations developed with respect to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the USSR and Syria in October 1980. According to the treaty, bi-party and multi-party issues would be considered periodically and cooperation would be made in military issue by determining the steps to be taken in crises. In a protocol annexed to the treaty, the USSR guarenteed that she would send troops

and cooperate with Syria in defence in case an attack from Israel. The USSR, despite these aids, could not find a chance to penetrate in Syria's internal affairs and other regional issues over Syria. What made Syria to get close to the USSR were the Israel controversy and the pro-Israel stance of the USA and the Western states. Syria's convergence with the USSR during Cold War, distressed Turkey, and Turkey, as a member of the NATO, demanded the threat caused by Syria to be taken into NATO defence plans and demanded Article 5 of the NATO agreement to be executed against this threat. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 109-11)

The USA had supported Israel since her establishment. However, after the 1973 Arab-Israel war, there had been a change in her policy and the USA argued that Syria was right about her discontent against Israel. The USA president Reagan, again, supported Israel against the Syrian forces in Israel and Lebanon. In December 1983 the USA-Syrian relations were at the lowest level. In June 1985, the relations started to improve after Syria intervened, on behalf of the USA, to a plane hijaked from Beirut. However, Syria's convincing the terrorists was corroborative that Syria supported terrorist groups. On 17 April 1987, when Nizar Hindawi, who tried to enter an Israeli Airways plane with a bomb confessed that the attack had been organised by Syria and she had given arms and logistics support, Vice-president George Bush gave the declaration "We believe that Syria is supporting terrorist groups." The USA, on 14 November 1986, took the decision of placing an embargoe on Syria. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 108-9) As it will be mentioned later, The USA policy on Syria changed during the Persian Gulf War. In the meantime, Syria started peace talks with Israel as part of the Middle East Peace Process, she had not accepted before.

Hafez Al-Assad, after seizing power, strived to trim the army from state policy. However, the army had been used for the stability and existence of the regime. For instance in the Islamist rebellions between 1976 and 1982, the support of the army had been used. The rebellion started in 1980, was an important uprising before the Syrian Ba'ath regime and could be quelled using the army. In 1983, though, the army was used against Hafez Al-Assad's brother Rif'at to cause danger when Al-Assad was abroad due to heart conditions. (Zisser, 2001: 4)

Al-Assad ensured that the army became a good and loyal sentinel. First of all, Al-Assad supported the existence and control of the persons from Alawis and Khalabiya clan. The military had remained the preferred means for social mobilization for the Alawis, however some of them had found their way into other state or party institutions. Also, Hafez Al-Assad established clientelist networks to ensure the complete loyalty and support of the army generals, mainly the Alawis. These generals were well-rewarded and even allowed to turn their units into political and economic fiefdoms, provided with secure power and substantial financial earnings. These sources of income were essential in view of the fact that they average salary of a senior Syrian officer during the 1990s was around SL 8.000 a month. In addition to these, Al-Assad ensured the people to be afraid of the army. The regime established strike forces to ensure its existence and defend it from any threat coming from within the army's own ranks or from opponents in Syria. These strike forces had been equipped with the best military equipment and personnel and were almost exclusively comprised of Alawis. They were under direct control of President Al-Assad, not the army command. Rif'at al-Assad's Defence Companies unit was one of these forces. However, Rif'at used this unit as an obstacle before Hafez Al-Assad. Therefore, in 1980, the Republican Guard Division was established under the command of Adnan Makhlouf, a relative to Al-Assad's spouse. Both Bashar and Basil who are Hafez Al-Assad's sons, worked in this unit. Bashar took the place of Makhuf, and Hassan Turkmani took the place of Ali Habib. By taking these steps, Hafez Al-Assad ensured having influence over the army and governing Syria for long years. (*ibid*: 4-6)

Hafez Al-Assad ensured that the senior army officers remain in the Ba'ath Party institutions; since he was aware of the important role these institutions played as a meeting point between members from different apparatus on which the regime was based. (*ibid*: 5)

After Al-Assad's seize of power, he faltered between trusting the support of the army for the stability of the regime and establishing a professional army to accomplish Syria's nationalist demands against Israel. Internal security considerations had remained the regime's principle concern, though Al-Assad did manage to strike some balance between these two missions. For instance the increase in the volume of Al-Assad's army was caused by the controversies with Israel. The reason for Al-Assad's refraining from the

influence of the army on the internal policy was due to his wish about the army to be interested more in the contoversies with Israel. This was a lesson that Al-Assad learnt from 1967 Israel defeat. After the 1982 war, the army got bigger and bigger. The number of the personnel increased to 500.000 from 300.000. New divisions were formed and the army was equipped with advanced Soviet weapons: fighter planes, improved long-range surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles and electronic war and air defense systems. These were to close the qualitative gap between Israel and Syria which was considered as the reason for the defeat in Lebanon. However, it was difficult for Syria to afford these developments in the army. In the following years almost half of Syria's GNP was allocated to the army. And this caused economic crises to arise, and even a total collapse of the economy in 1985. In this condition, Syria had received Soviet Support against Israel until the collapse of the USSR. (*ibid*: 7-8)

3. The Main Issues Between Turkey and Syria

The Middle East region had remained under Ottoman Empire reign for long years. However, after the WWI, this region remained under the mandate of European states, and many states, like Syria, emerged as a result of the borders drawn in accordance with the European States' interests. The close interest the UK and France had maintained on the Middle East over many years came into existence via the Sykes-Picot agreement which disintegrates the Ottoman Empire. The aims of the allied powers could be realised by the Armistice of Moudros, of 30 September 1918 (cf. Soysal, 2000). The UK and France took the helm of the Middle East region under the mandate regime. After the Independence War, the National Pact was established, and relations had started between Syria under French mandate and the independent Republic of Turkey, after the establishment. With the 1921 Ankara Accord, which drew the borders between the two countires, Hatay fell out of National Pact's borders, but was taken into a special government status. Later, with Atatürk's resolut policy, Hatay was taken into the borders of the Republic of Turkey, and Syria had never accepted this situation. The distrust in bilateral relations started with Hatay issue, had come to a deadlock with the sharing of the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris, issues concerning the Orontes River and the following terrorism issue. The general issues between Syria and Turkey should be investigated under the titles of Hatay issue, Water issue and Terrorism issue.

3.1. Hatay issue

The Sanjak of Alexandretta which is the name of Hatay before it incorporated into Turkey, is a crossroad, from where the great route that overtops the Southestern Toros Mountains via the Belen Pass, which connects Anatolia to Syria, and is a transshipment center of the great eastern trade done between the Mediterranean and the desert. Therefore, it has geostrategic importance with respect to both trade routes and security of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Sanjak of Alexandretta had been a place on which France had coveted since the 8th century; France had tried to place her dominance in the region by investments in education, health, religion and railroads. (Sarınay, 1996)

In order to make a better sense of Hatay Issue, its importance in Turkey – Syria relations, the incorporation of Hatay within Turkey should be touched upon.

The UK and France, shared the Middle East region with the Sykes-Picot Treaty they signed secretly on 16 May 1916, during WWI. (Opruklu, 2006: 3) According to this treaty, Syria, Lebanon and Çukurova -the Clician plain- surroundings together with the Sanjak region were left as France's domain. (Sarınay, 1996) In November 9, the British units occupied the Sanjak with reference to the Article 7 of the Armistice of Moudros. By adhering the agreements signed during the WWI, they left Urfa, Antep, Adana and Mersin to the France occupation forces. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 280) France, too, wished to strengthen her dominance over the region. For this, the Sanjak of Alexandretta was established by the decree issued by the French High Commissioner General Gouraud, stationed in Beirut, on 27 November 1918. By this decree, the Sanjak, whose government and rules would be determined by the High Commission in Beirut; was established over a region including Antioch, Harem, and Belen towns, Alexandretta as administrative center. (Sarınay, 1996)

During the war of independence Atatürk's policies were built on the foundation of ensuring the full independence of the country and reaching National Pact borders. (Bolat, 2006: 59) The determining article is the first article of the National Pact. (Ada, 2005: 35) This article is as below (Oran, 2009: 105):

"Since it is necessary for the parts of the Ottoman Empire, especially with Arab majority, which are under enemy occupation as of the Armistice of 30 September 1918, to determine their future with respect to the votes the people would declare freely; all of these parts, with Ottoman-Islam majority, which are connected to each other, in or out of the framework of the Armistice, via religion, tradition and ambition, which bear mutual respect and self-devotion, which respect to each others' and the region's ethnic and social rights are really and by default an indivisible whole on no consideration."

Since, the Alexandretta-Antioch region was not under occupation as of 30 September 1918, the signing date; it was not the case for the people to freely declare their future in terms of this article. However, in the article, it is emphasized that the parts of the Ottoman-Islam majority in or out of this line are an indivisible whole. Therefore, Hatay remains in the borders of the National Pact, according to Ada. (Ada, 2005: 36) People of Hatay attempted to clarify this issue. Tayfur Sökmen, one of the leaders of the resistance in

Hatay, asked whether Sanjak region was in National Pact borders or not; and Colonel Recep replied that "The Sanjak of Alexandretta and environs are inside the National Pact borders." Therefore, it was confirmed that the Sanjak of Alexandretta was inside National Pact borders. (Sökmen, 1992: 32-5)

In March 1920, the allied powers officially occupied Istanbul. On 23 April, the TBMM was convened. As for allied powers, they divided Ottoman land into mandate regions in San Remo Conference in April. After these developments, France was caught between Kuvay-ı Milliye -Turkish Revolutionaries- in the north and Faisal forces in the east. For this reason, France resorted communicating with Ankara. The diplomacy conducted during this purtsuit of negotiations, according to Ada, had been decisive in terms of the future of Turkey – France relations, and their stance in Hatay issue. (Ada, 2005: 38-9)

On 10 August 1920, the Treaty of Sevres was signed, which documented the absolute disintegration of Ottoman territoty. This treaty was the beginning of the splits in opinions of the allied powers to become apparent. Short after the signing of Sevres, revision of Sevres came to the fore. The allied powers wanted the representatives of Ankara to take part in the Ottoman Council that would participate in the London Conference to begin in February 1921. Ankara government appointed Bekir Sami Bey. Bekir Sami Bey's committee's participation in London Conference means the recognition, even unstraightforward, of Ankara government. (*ibid*: 36)

Despite the opposition of the administrators in the region, in April 1921, France resorted to a pursuit of a new agreement to place the first agreement that had never been carried into effect. In early June, the French Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Franklin Bouillon prepared an agreement draft after his interview with Ankara. According to Bouillon, Ankara's belief in victory had increasing each day, and order had been restored in Anatolia. Bouillon also inspired that an agreement should immediately signed. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 280) After the Sakarya victory between 23 August 1921 and 13 September 1921, France signed Ankara Accord on 20 September 1921, understanding that she could not be successful in Anatolia. (cf. Soysal, 2000) By this accord, the state of war between the two states ended, a special administration was determined for the Sanjak of

Alexandretta, where Turks gained opportunities to develop their culture, and the temporary borders between Turkey and Syria under the French mandate. (Sander, 2007: 412) With this accord, the Sanjak, even though it did not remained in Turkish borders, was accepted to be governed by a special regime in which Turks ensured their certain privileges. This accord played a decisive role on Turkish – French relations in the post WWI era. (Ada, 2005: 52-4)

On 21 November, in the negotiations held in London Conference, Turkish – French opposing views became apparent. In Lousanne negotiations, the weight was given on Turkey-Iraq border and Mousul issue, since the border between Turkey and Syria had been drawn with Ankara Accord signed on 20 September 1921. (*ibid*: 59-60) As for the Turks of the Sanjak, they brought up the Sanjak issue to the agenda of Ankara, in order for this issue not to be forgotten. Tayfur Sökmen, with three of his friends, came to Ankara to remind the Hatay issue in January, and he declared in the telegram he sent to the Lousanne Committee on 22 January 1923 that, they belive that a decision would be made in line with the demands of the region's people, with Turks as overwhelming majority. (Sökmen, 1992: 68-9)

In the mean time, Ankara was about to cut a deal with the UK on Mousul issue. While Ankara settled on with the UK, she can also apply pressure on France. Ada indicates that the reason for this was France's being considered as the weakest element of the power balance in the West. The Lousanne Treaty was signed on 24 July 1923. (Ada. 2005: 61-2) According to the Article 3 of this treaty, the Syrian-Turkish border was designated as the border determined in the France-Turkey treaty, signed on 20 September 1921. (Soysal, 2000: 80) Therefore, the validity of the Turkey-Syria border drawn in 1921 and the special government entitled to the Sanjak was approved once more. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 280) As for Hatay people, they were restless due to this treaty. Tayfur Sökmen, on behalf of the Antioch-Alexandreta and Environs Protection of Rights Society, conveyed their complaints to İsmet Pasha (Sökmen, 1992: 80) and requested the private government to be carried into effect from Ankara. İsmet Pasha replied that nothing could be done at the moment, and demanded the Society in Adana and the Sanjak to continue their duties. (*ibid:* 81)

On 29 September 1923, the agreement, dated 24 July 1922 and approved by the Leauge of Nations, regarding Syria's becoming a French mandate entered into force, and France started to reinforce her regime in Syria including the Sanjak. France divided Syria and Lebanon. France also established the Autonomous Sanjak of Alexandretta dependent to Aleppo. On one hand, France separated all these territory from Syria, in line with the divide and rule policy; on the other hand she initiated a process of centralization which is dependent on herself in each of the states. (Ada, 2005: 83)

Right after the French occupation, on 27 November 1919, Alexandretta, Antioch, Harem and Beylan towns gained a separate administrative status under the name of the Autonomous Sanjak of Alexandretta. This decision is a type of mandate, applied by France in order to ease the government of Syria. On 1 September 1920, the Autonomous Sanjak of Alexandretta was made dependent to Aleppo without changing its status. The Sanjak would be governed by a district governor with the power vested by the Aleppo Governor and this district governor's decisions would enter into force by the approval of a French counselor assigned to the Sanjak. Also, with this decision a Board of Governors of 12 members was established. (*ibid*: 83)

As a result of France's divide and rule policy, Arabs started a great nationalist movement in the region in 1925. France, stifling these rebellions with Armenian forces at first, understood that she had to take administrative precautions too. On 1 January 1925, France united Aleppo and Damascus. The day before this day, it was declared that the Sanjak region, along with protecting its current regime, was attached to Syria, namely to Damascus. Therefore, the powers of the Aleppo governor were passed over to the President of Syria. (*ibid*: 82) Thus the dominance and authority of Syria over the region increased more and more. French government took some precautions to unbalance the absolute majority of Turks in the region. First, the Turkish population was tried to be decreased with respect to the Arab population by expanding the Sanjak towards South, foreign elements were places, especially Armenians, to the region and the Anti-Kemalists fleeing from Anatolia were accepted into the Sanjak. These changes in the social structure disturbed the balances in the region and accelerated the political conflicts between the

sects. French mandate authorities preferred to provoke these conflicts underplottedly and thus reinforce their positions in the region. (Sarınay, 1996) Together with all of these, in a decree issued on 4 April 1926, it was declared that an election would be held in the Sanjak on 18 April, a national assembly of 12 members would be established and this assembly would determine the future of the Sanjak. The assembly established as a result of the elections declared the Sanjak of Alexandretta independent, and prepared a constitution. With Syria's pressure, the assembly revoked the independence decision in the Sanjak in June. This independence attempt, even though short in period, proves that the inhabitants of the Sanjak did not want to be a part of Syria. (Ada, 2005: 82-4) After the interviews with the ministers of Syria and the representatives of Sanjak, on 12 June 1926, the Sanjak assembly abandoned the decision and the Sanjak became an autonomous region for Syria. (Gönlübol, 1997: 84) Except for the Arabs, who wanted to be engaged to Syria, Turks, Alawis and Armenians who did not speak Arabic, objected to the engagement of the Sanjak to Syria. Turkey, who was busy with the Sheikh Sait rebellion which rekindled in East Anatolia and Mousul issue, could not respond to the demands of Turks in the Sanjak. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 281)

From 1921 on, the agreements between Turkey and France, concerning the bestowal of official language right to Turkish and envisaging the development of Turkish culture, provided favourable conditions for Turkish cultural activities. The Sanjak Board of Administrators adopted the Latin Alphabet in 1929, and awarded scholarships for Turkish students in the Sanjak from the educational instutions in Turkey and these young Turks were provided to get education from the Republic of Turkey in 1930s. Turkish was used commonly in publications in the Sanjak. (Ada, 2005: 90-1) This situation caused Turkish to spread in the Sanjak in educational and cultural areas. France and Turkey, who did not had difficulty in the implementation of Ankara Accord, had serious problems on determining the Turkish-Syrian border. In article 8 of the 1921 Ankara Accord, it was decided that a commission to be established to determine the Turkey-Syria borderline after one month the sign date, but the commission could be established in September 1925. In February 1926, the Syria High Comissioner De Jouvenel visited Ankara and after the interviews with Tevfik Rüştü Aras, on 18 February 1925, an Agreement, 5 protocols and a signatory protocol were written and initialized. However, due to the continuation of the

Mousul issue, the signing of this agreement was delayed for about two and a half month. (Gönlübol, 1997: 84-5) The agreement was signed on 30 May 1926 under the name of Agreement of Friendship and Good Neighbourty Relations Between the Republic of Turkey and France Who Behaves In Line With the Authority She Had Over Syria and Lebanon Pursuant to International Agreements, six days after signing the the treaty between the UK and Turkey on Mousul. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 281)

The 1926 agreement is the first important document that regulates the relation between the two countries afger Lousanne. In this agreement, Turkey-Syria border problems, and the general relations between Turkey and France are discussed. According to the agreement, if the parties can not solve the problems through diplomacy, they would appeal to arbitration. In case of an armed attack towards one of the parties, the other would remain impartial. In the protocols annexed to the agreement, there are wide provisions in order to prevent illegal crossings at the Turkey-Syria border. Other protocols are about division of the waters of Kuveik and Euphrates rivers (Gönlübol, 1997: 85), and that the provisions of the agreement would in no circumstances change the provisions of 1921 Ankara Accord. This article refers to the issue of private administration of the Sanjak included in 1921 Ankara Accord. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 282)

Improved Turkish-French relationship, after this agreement, provided opportunity to the Turks living in the Sanjak to better their conditions. In this period, the Turks in the Sanjak were closely monitoring Turkey. They started to implement all the reforms in Turkey, and established a People's Party and performed their organizations in a more disciplined way. France supported these developments, because she thought that she could use the Sanjak as a trum card against Damascus who made an opposition to French government. (*ibid*: 282)

At the same time, after the UK abolished her mandate over Iraq in 1930, the Arabs in Syria got into action, and nationalism started to gain support among the Turks in the Sanjak. Thusly, on 14 May 1930 some laws were annexed to the Syrian constitution, both satisfying the feelings of the Sanjak Turks and reminding Syria the private condition of the Sanjak. When it became apparent that France could not continue her existence in Syria for a long time, the relations between Syria, Turkey and France on the Sanjak had become

severed more and more. The Sanjak Turks carrying Turkish flags during the visit of Gaziantep Governeor in 1934 gave signs of the future. (*ibid*: 282-3)

The 1930s were ardous for France. The Great Depression of 1929 had taken hold of France towards the end of 1931, in 1932 the President Paul Doumer was assassinated, and there were 11 cabinet changes during the presidency of Albert Lebrun, successor of Doumer. (Ada, 2005: 95-6) Therefore, there was instability and financial crisis for France. In 1936, there were important developments in the international environment. Italy, who occupied Ethiopia, became a serious threat in the Mediterranean. Germany started to arm Rennes region violating the decisions of Versailles. As for France, she wanted to concentrate on Europe, and instead of governing an Arab community, who were enemies, she found it more reasonable to form alliance with a friendly Syria. In addition to this, continuing the mandate in Syria was condisered as a burden for the bad condition of the France finance. Also, France could not find the petroleum she expected in Syria, and this was a disappointment for France. Due to all these reasons, Leon Blum, the socialist leader of the Popular Front, in line with his ideology, declared that he would end the mandate in Syria already undertaken temporarily, despite the objections of the conservatives and the soldiers. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 283) The Franco-Syrian Treaty of Independence was signed on 9 September 1936, in Paris. This treaty brought certain restrictions on Syria's independence with the privileges granted and with the provisions envisaging the establishment of autonomous regimes in some regions. (Ada, 2005: 108-9) There were not any article about the Sanjak but Article 3 was endangering the status of the Sanjak. This article states that (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 283):

"The high contracting parties, at the day the mandate regime ended, will take all precautions to hand over all rights and obligations, resulted from all treaties, agreements and other international guarantees signed by France government about or on behalf of Syria, to only the Syrian government."

As it can be understood, this article of the treaty hands over all rights and obligations on the Sanjak to Syrian government. The meaning of this is that the Sanjak's passing to Syria in the future, and the Turks becoming a minority group in Syria. (Sarınay, 1996)

The treaty, at first, was received silently in Turkey, but this silence was due to the expectation of declaration from one of the parties. The Syrian committee made a brief visit to Turkey after signing the treaty, but they refrained from making any declarations about the Sanjak. Thereupon, Turkey started a campaign about Sanjak, in which all senior state authorities, all press members and people of various ranks and files attended. (Ada, 2005: 110)

On 26 September 1936, in the League of Nations meeting, Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştü Aras, brought forward the Sanjak issue. Aras argued that France should sign a treaty with the Sanjak similar to the treaty signed with Syria, and the Sanjak's people should govern themselselves like Syria. France, on the other hand, stated that this would mean the disintegration of Syrian territory and it was against the mandate agreement. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 283) Thus, despite it was a very short time after the Franco-Syrian Treaty signed, the Sanjak issue was brought to League of Nations' agenda. (Ada, 2005: 111)

Atatürk waited for the Montreaux Convention Regarding the Regime of Turkish Straits to end to conclusively solve the Sanjak issue. Atatürk said to Afet İnan, who returned to Turkey, on 20 July 1936, the day the Montreaux Convention Regarding the Regime of Turkish Straits signed, that "… now we have the issues of Antioch and Alexandretta, namely the Sanjak issue". In an agreement signed on 9 September 1939, between France and Syria, that would ensure the independence of Syria three years later, and that would pass the rights of the Sanjak to Syria prompted Turkey. Turkey, who wanted to solve the problem with France, also considering the responses of Syria, supported Syria's independence. (Şahin, 2008: 608)

The Sanjak issue had widespread media coverage in Turkish press. On one hand, the issue was considered as an international one; on the other hand, the language against France had gotten stronger and stronger. In Sanjak, the Turkish representatives informed the Turkish government that they did not want to go under French mandate; and held France and Syria governments responsible for any possible incidents. In the Sanjak, shops were closing and

boycotts were started in the schools. (Ada, 2005: 112-3) In this period, Atatürk named the case as Hatay. He called Tayfun Sökmen to Çankaya Palace, and told him that "The name of Antioch-Alexandretta and environs is, from now on, Hatay. So change the name of your society as Hatay Sovereignity Society." (Sökmen, 1992: 95) Atatürk used this name to emphasize the Turkish identity of the region. The name Hatay, was supposedly brought about to confirm the Sun-Language theory, when the theory was most popular. According to this theory, the words Eti-Ata-Hata-Hatay are Turkish words originating from the Hatay state, established in Middle Asia. Thus, both the Hittites among ancient Anatolian civilizations were proven to be Turk, and the Turkish etnic roots of the people living around Antioch-Alexandretta were finalized. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 279-80) The main reason for Hatay to be considered as a domestic issue for Turkey was the unwanted opponents' – especially the ones called 150lik – gathering in Sanjak region and Aleppo after their deportion from Turkey, and continuing their activities there. Therefore, the resolution of Hatay issue was of vital importance to render the unwanted elements at the southern border ineffective. (Ada, 2005: 114-6)

In 1936, a two level election was planned in Syria to elect the assembly that would approve the Franco-Syrian Independence Treaty. In Sanjak, though, the decision of not participating in the elections was taken with the fear that they would be minority in the Syrian Assembly. The whole November and December had passed in turmoil and in conflicts in the Sanjak. The Turks in the Sanjak established the Hatay People's Party. Despite the harsh measures taken by the mandate authorities, the participation in the first level election was low in Hatay. The incidents had continued without ceasing until the second level of elections. The second level elections were held on 30 November 1930. The pressure of the mandate to force the people to vote in the elections increased the tension, and as a result of election of people who drew reaction in the Sanjak the incidents grew bigger. In Turkey, in the mean time, in case any peaceful resolution could not be found, the idea of pursuing military solutions had developed. (*ibid*: 116-9)

With the proposal of French Minister of Foreign Affairs Delbos, (*ibid*: 120) France, who understood that they could not agree at the bilateral negotiations, carried the issue to League of Nations. On 14 December, the League of Nations assigned Sandler, from

Sweden, as the reporter and decided to send three supervisors to the Sanjak. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 283)

The UK who was troubled with Germany's expansionist policy, applied pressure on France through the Minister of Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden, and as a result of this pressure France declared that she already accepted the decision that the League of Nations would take regarding the Sanjak. In those days, it was understood that the Franco-Syrian Treaty of Independence would not pass the French parliament. The reason for this was both the idea of the conservatives that any independence to be given to Syria would have a bad influence on North Africa and on other France dominions, and the increasing strategic importance of the dominions in the changing international conjuncture. (*ibid*: 284)

On 27 January 1937, the report submitted to the League of Nations by reporter Sandler was accepted unanimously. According to this report (*ibid*: 284);

"1. The Sanjak, whose separate status and constitution would be prepared by the Committee of Experts, would be accepted as a distinc entity (entité distincte), it would remain independent in its domestic affairs, and the foreign affairs would be administered by Syria. However, Syria could not take decisions harming the independence of the Sanjak without the approval of Ligue Of Nations.
2. There would be a common customs and currency unity between Syria and Sanjak, and coordination would be provided for special officers for common duties.
3. The official language in the Sanjak would be Turkish, League Of Nations would take decision for a second official language.
4. A French delegate would be assigned to the Sanjak to supervise the status of the Sanjak and legal compliance on behalf of the council.
5. The Sanjak would not have any military force except for adequate gendarmerie and police.
6. Turkey and France would remain respectful to the decisions of the council, and would ensure the integrity of Sanjak by signing an agreement.
7. With an agreement to be signed between Turkey, Syria and France, the obligations would be met in terms of the immunity of Turkish-Syrian border and prevention of provocations.
8. Provisions would be placed in the status of Sanjak in order Turkey to benefit from the Port of Alexandretta.
9. The status of Sanjak and its constitution would be in effect by the decision of the Council, and the decisions about Sanjak could be taken by 2/3 majority."

The stages that Sanjak had gotten through in way from autonomy to an independent state were substantial success for Turkey. The Turks in Hatay did not spare any support, President Atatürk and the public behaved in an organized way. Turkey implemented a political campaign with definite aims, but that shows some flexibility according to the conditions when needed. Turkey made use of British and French interests in line with her policy in Europe. As for Syria, she reacted to this report. The importance of Sanjak for

Syria rooted from the reality that Alexandretta was the only port left in Syria. Port of Latakia was left in the Alawi region, Port of Tripoli was left to Lebanon via the France-Lebanon treaty. The privileges granted to Turkey in the Port of Alexandretta meaned that Syria was left with no exit to the Mediterranean. Syria declared her reaction to French Ministry of Foreign affair and League of Nations through a protest message. For the Arabs in Sanjak, the situation seemed calm at first. However, with the start of protest in Syria, the Arabs in Sanjak also started to move. (Ada, 2005: 128-30) Syrian Prime Minister Jamil Mardam, in a declaration he made in Damascus, described Sanjak as an indivisible part of Syria. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 284) France wanted to involve Syria into the France-Turkey bilatereal guarantee system that was thought to be signed after the implementation of the regulations about Sanjak; however, Syria preferred to behave as if she was presented a fait accomli, in order not to annoy the society, in case she failed to change the 27 January decision of the League of Nations. For France, though, Syria would lose her right to be a party in Hatay issue, if she did not participate in this formation. Turkey, only declared that Syria would need her friendship, instead of provoking the crisis in Sanjak. (Ada, 2005: 130)

The solution to be found for Sanjak would be affective on the security of Eastern Mediterranean and Europe. In Spain, General Franco started a large scale attack on the Republicans in January 1937; in the end of April the German Air Legion –Condor- bombed Guernica, and the Republicans were overwhelmed. With these developments, it was seen that the policy of neutrality followed by the UK and France would not be effective. Therefore, the UK and France needed Turkey's support. Turkey made use of this international conjuncture by tying the possible cooperation to the Sanjak issue. (*ibid*: 232-3)

A committee of experts of 5 persons prepared the status and the constitution of Sanjak in line with Sandler report. The documents were submitted to the League of Nations on 29 May 1937 and accepted unanimously. Therefore, Sanjak was established as a distinct entity. Kürkçüoğlu and Fırat examined these documents under three titles (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 285-7):

“a. International agreements that establish the ‘distinct entity” of Sanjak of Alexandretta: The establishment of the Sanjak as a distinct entity was realized by three documents adopted by League of Nations: ‘Borders of the Sanjak of Alexandretta’, ‘Status of Sanjak’, ‘Sanjak Constitution’.

Borders of Sanjak of Alexandretta: the borders drawn in detail with this document would constitute, with minor alterations, the Turkey-Syria border when Hatay incorported with Turkey.

The Status of Sanjak: in the Article 1 of this document, it was stated that ‘Sanjak is a distinct entity, fully independent in terms of domestic affairs (…) the foreign affairs of the Sanjak is administered by Syria (…)

In addition to these, the government of Syria was weakened by many exceptional provisions. Article 15 includes the statement ‘any international agreement, signed by Syria, that would affect her independence and sovereignity by any means, cannot be implemented in Sanjak (…) without the official allowance of the League of Nations in advance.’; also, Article 16 states that, Sanjak government would have the right to demand any international agreement [she considered necessary] before signing, to be subjected to a private investigation’.

Article 1 of the status, again, declared that ‘There is one single customs and currency order for the Sanjak and Syria’; but, other articles were listing the exceptions of this provision: Article 34: ‘(…) Syria’s and the Sanjak’s customs office will be distinct from each other’; Article 36: ‘An agreement between Syria and Sanjak (…) will determine the shares in the customs incomes. In no circumstances the share of the Sanjak can be lower than one tenth of the incomes.’; Article 39: ‘Sanjak will participate in the agreement that Syria will sign with a central bank. This participation will provide Sanjak similar rights that are bestowed to Syria and will be as protective of her private rights and interests. (…) Should any of the governments demand, some part of the bills can carry the official seal of Syria, and others the official seal of the Sanjak.’; Article 40: ‘(…) In all kinds of benefits and profits resulting from the monopoly of coining money (…) the share allocated to Sanjak cannot be below one tenth of these benefits and profits.; Article 41: ‘Syria and Sanjak (…) will have the right to coin identical coins.’; Article 54: ‘(…) Sanjak will have the right to issue post values to use domestically.’

On the other hand, the existence of Turkey in Sanjak was considerable: Article 43: ‘Turkey will have the right to use extensively the Port of Alexandretta for her transit passes. For this purpose, Turkey will be provided by Syria government, by rent (…) an area of adequate capacity. The rental contract will be done for 50 years, in exchange for Syria gold liras.’; Article 44: ‘The area called Turkish Free Zone is a part of Sanjak and it is under Sanjak’s authority in terms of police and juridisdiction. However, since this area is considered as Turkish region, it will be administered by Turkish customs authorities.’; Article 45: ‘All officers and agents of the Turkish Free Zone will be assigned by Turkey. (…)’; Article 47: 2 [All economic activities of the zone] will be performed by the Turkish government. The taxes and dues concerning the use of these buildings and facilities will be determined by the Turkish government and will be for her benefit.’

The status that demilitarized Sanjak with its Article 22, bestowed such rights to ethnic, language and religious minorities under the title of ‘Minorities’ that these rights were quite similar to the ones that Turkey undertook to implement with the Article 38 and 43 of the Lousanne Treaty. The guarantee article 44, which brought League of Nations guarantee for non-muslim minorities, was reflected in the status as Article 33.

Sanjak Constitution: According to Article 5 of the constitution that ‘(…) can only be interpreted, implemented and annexed without prejudice to the status provisions’, by definiton of Article 2, ‘the legislative power is used by the assembly on behalf of Sanjak’s people. Assembly is a single entity comprised of 40 members elected for four years.’

In the elections to be held in two levels, the primary voters are recorded to the electoral register as being a member of the following groups: Turkish society, Alawi society, Arab society, Armenian society, Greek-Orthodox society, Kurdish society and other societies (Article 9). According to article 10, the number of the voters registered for the same society will determine the number of the MPs and the number of the secondary voters to be allocated for this group in all Sanjak.’ The secondary voters also elect MPs. In other words, to be recorded in the registry is a kind of voter census, and it will determine all.

By the way, article 10 determines the minimum number MPs allocated to each society, whatever the election result are, in such a way that it can be possible to make an inference about France’s perception of Sanjak: Turks 8 MP, Alawis 6 MP, Arabs 2MP, Armenians 2 MP, Greek-Orthodoxes 1 MP.

By definition of article 19: ‘The executive power is used by the President of Sanjak and the Executive Council on behalf of Sanjak People.’ ‘The president is elected by the assembly for 5 years. (…)’ The Presidents receives a salary and loss recovery that cannot be changed in favour of the president.’ The president, despite being elected by the assembly, is powerful. He can return any law issued in one month by not announcing it (Article 22). He can adjourn the assembly on the at the request of the Executive Council (Article 23) , and he selects the chair of this council (Article 24)

On the other hand, according to Article 26, although '(…) The decisions of the juridical power cannot be corrected or changed by any other powers', according to Article 27: 'The supreme court and the appellate courts do not have the authority to check the constitutionality of the laws.'

The constition ends with articles bearing the title 'Fundamental Rights', which brought about a real constitutional state for that period.

b. The agreement securing the Territorial Integrity of Sanjak: With this agreement signed between Turkey and France, these two countries secure the territorial integrity of Sanjak (Article 1); also, they undertake 'informing the League of Nations without delay, together or separately, in case the Sanjak state's integrity enters under threat' (Article 2); and to prevent this threat by all means (…) if any threat or action of attack against Sanjak state requires immediate precautions' (Article 3).

c. The agreement concerning the security of Turkey-Syria border: Again signed between Turkey and France, the parties that recognize the certainty of this border and that secure the immunity of this border, by Article 1 of this agreement, 'will take all precautions that lie in one's power to prevent the preparation and realization of any action, on both Syrian territory and Turkish territory, directed to the other parties political government or security (Article 2). This article was thought against a Kurdish rebellion."

France was provoking the Syrian National Party –Vatani-, which was the defender of Arab nationalism, against Turks. This party argued that all Syria, including Sanjak, comprised of Arabs, and non Arabs did not have any right in this country. The Syrian National Party started propaganda against Turks. (Umar, 2003: 222) In these propagandas, they were spreading that Turkey was an unbeliever country that performed a hat revolution, that Turkey made propaganda to occupy Aleppo, Tripoli-Damascus and Jazeera regions, and the first threat came from Hatay. (Sarınay, 1996) With these propagandas, they declared that the status of Sanjak, given by the 1921 Ankara accord would be abolished and Sanjak would be engaged to Syria, and they did not accept speaking of Turkish in Sanjak. (Umar, 2003: 222) They concentrated on Hatay, in order not to lose the Port of Alexandretta, in addition to the pressure they apply on North Syria, and they increased their pressure on Turks. As soon as the Sandler Report was accepted in the League of Nations, protest started in Syria, Turks wearing hats were attacked, and Turkish consulates of Damascus and Aleppo were put under protection. (Sarınay, 1996) In the conflicts in Sanjak on 6 June 1937, seven Turks were murdered, and many others were injured. As for Turkey, in the special session concerning the incidents in Sanjak, Syria was cautioned not to break the peace and it was decided that Turkish military forces cross the border to take the incidents at hand if France did not stop the incidents. (Umar, 2003: 222)

Syrian Assembly, on 3 June, declared, with a notice it published, that these documents were intented to separate a part of Syrian territory and they would not recognize any solution that damages the both integrity and the rebirth of Syrian nation, and they would

defend themselves with all their might. However, Syria's protests were effective neither on Turkey nor on France nor on the League of Nations. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 287)

The Turks in the Sanjak started to get organized in order not to be engaged to Syria. Tayfur Sökmen, with the directive from Atatürk, established the branches of the Hatay Sovereignity Society in Mersin, Dörtyol, Hassa, Kilis and Antakya, and Dörtyol branch was added to the activity center. (Sökmen, 1992: 95) The struggle between Arabs and Turks increased more and more, and from time to time the people of the city went on boycotts and closed their shops. The Turks in Sanjak were impatient to incorporate into Turkey. On the other hand, Arabs were provocated against Turks due to Syrian media's intense propaganda. While some of the Egyptian newpapers defend the Syrian arguments, the number of the Arab newspapers that defend the Turkish argument was very few. (Umar, 2003: 224-6)

When Sanjak was accepted as a distinct entity, its population, according to Frenc statistics, was 219.000. Of this number 39.7% was Turks, 28% Alawis, 11% Armenians, 10% Sunnite Arabs, %9 Greek-Orthodox, and 3% was Kurds, Circassians, Jews, Ismailis and Albanians. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 287) According to the article 32 of the Status of Sanjak and the articles 6 and 15 of the constitution, in order to organize the assembly elections to be done until 15 April 1938, the League of Nations sent an election commission to Sanjak in 1937 summer. This commission prepared an election regulation with the French mandate authorities without reference to Turkey. Turkey, on account of the fact that it was against the Sanjak Turks' interest, demanded the election regulation to be amended by appealing to the League of Nations on 15 January 1937. (Umar, 2003: 227-8)

At this point, the problem was on which society would the primary voters registered. Since societal divisions were done according to both religious and ethnic belonging, the election commission could take decisions against Turks. The problem was especially focused on Alawis. The mother tongue of some Alawis was Turkish and some other's Arabic. Some of them registered themselves to Turkish society, some to Arab and some others to Alawi society, via guidance. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 287) For some time, Alawis in the

region were tried to be won over. France argued that Alawis were neither Turk nor Arab; Syrians tired to won over Alawis, arguing that they were Arabs; and Turkey was trying to spread the idea, via Hatay Sovereignity Society, that Alawis were both Turks and Muslims. (Sökmen, 1992: 97) As it can be seen whileas the issue on whose side Alawis were to be placed was open to turmoil, the deeds of the election committee caused this turmoil to get complicated.

Atatürk, in his opening speech of the TBMM on 1 November 1937, declared that the resolution of the Hatay issue, which he called "my own personal matter", would be decisive on Turkey-France relations. After the election committee's sending an election regulation without reference to Turkey, Turkey terminated the Turkey – French friendship agreement dated 1930 on 29 December 1937, and on 29 May 1938 Atatürk, despite his illness, visited Mersin and Adana for a command inpection of the armies there, and placed a military force of 30.000 soldiers to the southern border. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 287-8) This visit created the expected impact on France, and the France Eastern Army Command, demanded instructions in a letter sent from to the Ministry of War, in case Turkish troops entered into Sanjak. (Ada, 2005: 166-7) In Europe, with the intense pressure from the UK, who wished to form an alliance with Turkey in the Mediterranean against the revisionist states that became increasingly aggressive, France was obliged to retreat. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 288) Turkey presented her solution package for Hatay issue to France on 10 March 1938; France accepted this package, and an agreement was signed. This document had the characteristics of solution before resolution before the beginning of the electoral registrations; and its content was hidden from Syria. (Ada, 2005: 158-60) France, who understood the militart operation possibility of Turkey, took immediate action for fulfilling the obligations of the March 1938 agreement; Turkey and France demanded, in the League of Nations, an additional condition to be added to the regulation that people of Sanjak who wished to be listed in Other Societies list should also indicate their society explicitly. The League of Nations assembly did not change the date of the election and decided that it should be done in 15 July. (*ibid*: 168)

France officially informed Syria that the 1936 Franco-Syrian Treaty of Independence was not accepted in 1937, showing Syria's nonattendance in the LON regulation of 29 May as a

justification. Syria, realizing that this decision would be taken, made an offer, via Iraq Minister of Foreign Affairs Tawfiq Al-Suwaidi, for sharing out the lands of the Sanjak, in order to get Turkey on her side. Turkey declared that, she was not intended in the annexation of Sanjak, even partially, and refused Syria's offer. In 1937, in these circumstances, both the future of Turkish-France relations and the independence that France will bestow to Syria depended on Hatay issue. President of Syria Jamil Madram, who realized the power of Turkey, visited Turkey towards the end of 1937 and implied that he would not cause trouble in the resolution of Sanjak issue in line with Turkey's requests, and Turkey repeated her opinions that she supported Syria's independence. (Ada, 2005: 150-1)

Also, Turkey had sent people of Hatay born, especially officers to be assigned in Hatay state, in order to provide majority from the beginning of 1938. (Umar, 2003: 228) It is not known that how many Hatay born officer and self-employed people were sent to Hatay from Turkey. In the council of ministers decree issued on 7 April 1938, it was approved that 252 Hatay born officers and personnels to be granted a leave of absence for 2 years. The Armenian newspaper Haratch, published in Paris, asserted overdone claims in an article titled Turkish Danger, such as Turkey had ensured to pass 7000-8000 people to Hatay with some trick and ploys, the number of the immigrants in the last month summed up to 3000, and the number of the people to pass to Hatay would reach 35.000, with their families. (Sarınay, 1996)

Turkey was not satisfied with the works of the Election Comission, despite the amendment made. On 20 June Turkey started the bilateral negotiations with France, and appealed to the League of Nations with France, and demanded the works of Election Committee to be ceased. Upon the appeal of the two states, the League of Nations Election Committee left Sanjak on 29 June, and the election was freed from international inspection. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 288)

On 3 July 1938, a military agreement concerning the security of Sanjak's territorial integrity and political status together by the Turkish and French military authorities in Antioch. In line with the military agreement and the protocols annexed to this, the public

security of Sanjak would be maintained by a force of 6000 soldiers. 1000 of this force would be from Sanjak, and the remaining part would be represented by Turkey and France in equal numbers. On 4 July, a friendship agreement was signed in Ankara between Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs and French Ambassador of Ankara. One day after this agreement, Turkish Forces entered into Sanjak. (Gönlübol, 1997: 137-8)

With the progression of Turkish-French relations, the election was started in Sanjak on 22 July. At the end of the election completed on 1 August, 35.847 people were registered as Turk, 11.319 as Alawi, 5.504 as Armenian, 1.845 as Arab, 2.098 as Greek-Orthodox society. According to these numbers, 358 Turkish, 113 Alawi, 55 Armenian, 18 Arab and 20 Greek-orthodox people were elected as secondary voters. At the end of the second level elections held on 24 august 22 Turkish, 9 Alawi, 5 Armenian, 2 Arab and 2 Greek-orthodox MPs took seat in the assembly. In the Assembly opening on September 2, all the MPs took their oath in Turkish. Abdülgani Türkmen was elected the president of the Assembly, Tayfur Sökmen the President of the State, and Abdurrahman Melek prime minister. The name of the state, commemorated as Sanjak up to that day, was change into Hatay. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 289) Turkish National Anthem was accepted as the National Anthem of Hatay. It was adopted that the military force of Hatay would be educated by experts from Turkey. (Ada, 2005: 186) A flag very similar to the Turkish flag was selected as the Flag of Hatay. In Hatay, the prominent names of Turkish nationalism were assigned to important positions in the state, and this pointed toward that Hatay stay would not be long-lasting state. In addition to these, Turkish laws started to be adopted in the assembly one by one, and Arab and Armenian population, especially the ones that joined the Arab nationalist who understood the state of affairs. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 289)

After Hatay state was established, Syria supported all the movements against Hatay. They worked against the Turks, and that assaulted border villages to cause turmoil. The assaulting gangs were not organized and were comprised of rambling groups of Arabs and Kurds. Arabs showed activity in Harem and Hamam regions they left before. (Umar, 2003: 240-2) Also, they started to raise difficulties to the ones who wished to pass Hatay from Syria's northern border. The reason for this was to cut the connection of Hatay with

Aleppo, which Hatay was in a close economical relation, and to cause trouble in Hatay's trade and economy. As for Hatay government, they abolish the visas in the passes to and from Turkey as a solution to this problem. (Ada, 2005: 187)

In 1939, Europe was marching towards war. On 15 March; Germany occupied Czechoslovacia, Poland enden the nonaggression pact; and on 22 May the Pact of Steel was signed with Italy. These developments were worrying the UK and the status quoist powers. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 290) For the UK, who switched from moderation of Germany policy to retention policy, Turkey was seen as an ally to be won over definitely. (Ada, 2005: 205) Turkey prepared a Joint Declaration in 12 May 1939. However, Turkey stipulated the incorporation of Hatay in order to participate in an alliance including France. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 290) After the UK, the USSR too recommended France to solve the problems with Turkey. (Ada, 2005: 205) Within France, also, on the contrarty to the politicians who saw colonialist and mandate policies as require, the French General Staff took a stance in favour of stepping back in Hatay issue, regarding the importance of an alliance with Turkey. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 290)

In the mean time, there had been serious changes in Hatay and the convergence between Hatay and Turkey increased. The courts, in which the French took charge, were abolished. Hatay Customs Administration was established and commodity traffic with Syria was taken under control. The customs gate in Payas in the Turkish border was closed. A Turk was assigned to the Captainship of the Port of Alexandretta. The ships under foreign flags were imposed a condition that they should carry the Hatay flag. It was decided that Turkish Lira would be used instead of Syrian currency. The Central Bank of Turkey opened a branch in Hatay. Therefore, no economic or financial ties were left between Hatay and Syria. French intelligence officers were made to leave Hatay. (Melek, 1991: 71-8) As it is seen, Hatay became more independent from Syria each day and convergence with Turkey increased.

The Turkish-French Declaration concerning the alliance was signed in Paris on 23 June 1939, and the Agreement towards the absolute resolution of Turkey-Syria border issues, concerning the incorporation of Hatay was signed in Ankara the same day. According to

the first article of this agreement, The Borders of the Territory Left to Turkey was drawn in detail and the retreat of French forces on these territories before 23 July 1939 was envisaged. In accordance with the Articles 2, 3, 4 and 5 the inhabitants of these lands would be citizens of the Republic of Turkey, but they could decide to acquire Syrian or Lebanese citizenship in 6 months and they could immigrate to these countries in 18 months; they could clear up their real estates and they could take away their movable properties. Article 7, gives place to provisions that Turkey would reproach any kinds of action that would be a threat to the territorial integrity and domestic peace of Syria, and she would prevent any such action. According to the Articles 8, 9 and 10 of the agreement, France, on behalf of Syria, and Turkey would respect each others security and regime and would prevent the unwanted actions. (Ada, 2005: 211-2) This article was placed in the agreement as a precaution against Kurdish rebels. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 290) Also, in line with the same articles, the Friendship and Good Neighbority Agreement would remain in force until 1940, in order a new agreement to be signed. (Ada, 2005: 212)

Before the agreement entered into force, Hatay assembly, convened on 29 June, decided to incorporate into Turkey unanimously. Turkey, on 7 July, established Hatay province with the law. French soldiers withdrew from Hatay and after the process of the agreement entering into force completed, it was published in the Official Gazette of the League of Nations. (Fırat snd Kürkçüoğlu, 2009, 291)

During the incorporation of Hatay within Turkey, there was a complicated political environment in Syria. Peaux, who visited Paris in May, was authorized to amend the 1936 treaty in line with the requests of France. Autonomous governments were established, in defiance of the 1936 agreement, in Latakia, Mount Druze and Jazeera. As for Peaux, depending on the authority he had been vested, he adjourned Syrain Assembly, suspended the constitution, and transferred the administration to the officers he assigned. Therefore, the mandate regime was restored in Syria. (Ada, 2005: 215) In such a conjuncture, Syria's reaction to Hatay's incorporation was harsh. Political Parties such as Kitle-i Vataniye, Şehbender Partisi, Usbetü'l-Amelü'l-Kavmi and El-Şebibetü'l-Vataniye protested the situation with declerations and the telegrams they sent to the League of Nations. (Umar, 2003: 247) The president of the Syrian Assembly sent a telegram protesting this event to

the French government and the League of Nations, and stated that Hatay is a part of his own country, and they would not accept the decisions taken and the incorpotation processes. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 291) Some Syrians tried to spread hostility against Turks and level one and tow officers and some civil servants caused this hostility to increase. (Umar, 2003: 249) In addition to these, some Arab and Muslim states, which acted in favor of Syria, reacted against the incorporation of Hatay. (Ada, 2005: 216)

Syria, after the first reaction to the agreement, declared that Syria would show respect to international and bilateral agreements that France had made on behalf of Syria, after she won her independence in 1944, thus indirectly recognized he 1939 agreement. In reply to this, Turkey recognized Syria and opened an embassy in Damascus in 1946. (Umar, 2003: 250)

However, with the Ba'ath Party taking the control at hand, Hatay's accretion had become a national aim for Syrian governments. The Hatay claims shaped in the framework of the Great Syria Ideal which included Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, was among the main problems with Turkey. Turkey emphasized on all occasions that Hatay was a part of Turkey and Syrian claims on this matter would harm the relations between two countries. (İbas, 2004: 59) Especially after 1950, Hatay issue was tried to be brought up to the agenda. In the books used in schools, the Turkish – Syrian border is drawn beginning from the Tigris – Habur juncture and Mardin, Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Adana and İçel provinces are shown in Syria's border. These provinces are mentioned in the books as "Our land seized by Turkey."(Umar, 2003: 250) At the same time, in these maps, the natural borders of the Arab world which is situated to the south of Toros Mountains, the line that covers Southeastern Anatolia and the area to the south of this line is in Syria's borders. (İbas, 2004: 59)

Authors that recount the developments on Hatay, wrote that the League of Nations had sent a commission to Hatay after the signing of 1936 treaty, that Turks and French had placed great pressure on this commission, that Turkey had passed 5000 people into Hatay for voting, and spent 10 million liras to buy votes; and blamed Turkey and France with rigging

the elections by resorting to brute force. Also, they argue that the Hatay issue has not already been solved in term of legal procedures. (Umar, 2003: 250)

In the charter of the Ba'ath party adopted in 1947, which was the basis of the regime of Syria, it was mentioned that the "Arab Motherland lies between the Toros Mountains, Persian gulf, Arab Sea, the Great Sahara, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean". Among the duties of the party there is the struggle to save all the Arab Motherland from foreign mandates. (İbas, 2004: 60) Syria's UN permanent representative Al-Muallim, during an interview broadcasted in the TV channel the Arab Network of America, in New York in May 1998, in his answer to the question "Why would we demand Syria to retrieve Golan Heights but do not indent for Hatay?" declared that "one of the problems with Turkey is Hatay. We give detailed information on our stolen provinces to our children in schools. We teach them that Hatay belongs to Syria. We've never forgotten Hatay" and added "Logic tells that everything has its time." With these words Al-Muallim implied that after Golan Heights retrieval, it would be Hatay's turn next. (Milliyet, 7 May 1998) When the declarations of the state authorities and the policies implemented are considered, it is a fact that Syria sees Hatay as a piece of land, ready to be taken back when the required circumstances created. In order to ensure this ideal, it has been tried to prevent the citizens of Hatay with Arab origin from mix with Turkish people, to encourage the families to have more children, and to bring Arab elements from Syria via secret immigration. Thus, what is being attempted here is to increase the Arab population in Hatay. With the increase of population, the possession of land by the people of Arab-origin increases. The land belonging to Turks are being bought for very high prices. (İbas, 2004: 60-1)

Syria established an organization named Alexandretta Redemption Society in order to keep the issue alive. The headquarters of this society is in Hassa and it is supported by Al-Assad government. Hatay has been a domestic policy means for Syrian governors. (Umar, 2003: 250-1)

As it is seen, Hatay issue had emerged as a problem between Turkey and Syria until 1920s, and had evolved into a real problem after 1936. The aim of taking Hatay back, which is one of the aims of the Ba'ath party, with Hafez Al-Assad as a member, and which was

percieved as one of the primary distrust recources between Turkey and Syria, seems to lose its significance after Bashar Al-Assad's taking control and in the light of his declarations.

Hatay and water issues were pegged for the relations in the new era not to get worse. In February 2001, Syria Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Sharaa indicated, in a TV interview with NTV, that he did not want to talk about Hatay issue in a period in which his country's relations with Turkey was getting better, and declared that this issue could be solved without disturbance through developing relations. However, he did not forget to add this pointer: "When Atatürk defined these borders, he did not include Hatay in them…" (Şalvarcı, 2003: 251) However, this thesis of Syria is far from being true. As it was mentioned before, the answer sent from Ankara to Tayfur Sökmen's question whether Hatay was in National Pact's borders, in 1921, was Hatay's being a Turkish land. For that period, the conjuncture was not suitable for Turkey to retrieve Hatay. Turkey was just out of the Independence War and was trying to establish her own nation state. In such a circumstance, she needs the support of foreign powers including France. Therefore, she temporarily retracted from Hatay with 1921 Ankara Accord. Syria's Hatay insistance continued for hall 1990s and caused tension, but when we look at that relations between Syria and Turkey since 1998 to 2009, the change in Syria and Turkey relations could be felt in the speech given by the Vice-President, the second man in Syria, Abdul Halim Khaddam during the reception given to some Turkish intellectuals in Damascus. In this speech, he said: (*ibid*: 251-2)

"I consider the last 50 years in Turkey-Syria relations as lost. The governments of two countried have not behaved according to their people's will… There is nothing we cannot solve between ourselves. Every time the hope of improving the Turkey-Syria relations is born, some say, in both capital cities, 'All very well but Hatay?'. Yet I believe that the problem, whatever size it is, will be solved by the improvements in our relations."

3.2. Transboundary watercourses issue

Water is the most significant factor in the survival and maintaining the life of a nation. During the history of civilizations, the welfare of the nations has been based on regular access to water and taking control of it. By developing irrigation systems, Egyptian civilization has been developed via River Nile, Indian civilization via Indus River, Chinese civilization via the Yellow River, and the Mesopotamia civilization via the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in the Middle East. Together with capitalism, use of water increased in many commercial and manufacturing stages from agriculture to producing electricity, from transportation to creating social entertainment areas. In the 20th century the demand for water had been greater than the increase in the population. As urbanization increased with the industrial revolution, water had started to be used not for agriculture but for industry. However, this situation differs with respect to development level of the countries. While in industrialized Western Europe 49% of the total water use is in industry and %37 in agriculture; in the Middle East %89 of water is used in agriculture. Due to unbalanced water distribution and increasing water usage areas, water shortage is being experienced in many countries in the world. (Aytemiz and Kodaman, 2008: 527-8)

The international disputes arising from the strategic significance of water are generally about water quality, water sharing and accessibility. The main reason in the disputes is water, but disputes are various. The geographic positions and properties of the states also have a role in these disputes. While the areas in the north of the Northern Hemisphere do not have water shortage, the Middle East, including Turkey, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries have this problem. (Kodaman, 2007: 5-6)

According to the Freshwater Future 2003 report by the UN, the most problematic region of the world, in terms of water, is the Middle East. 5% of the world's population live in the Middle East, but only 1% of the fresh water resources is there. States, agencies and institutions that perceived the significance of water resources are developing strategies to capture water resources, or at least to control them. For the Middle East states, waters of Turkey are precious as petroleum. Therefore, the relations between Turkey and the Middle East states have always been unstable. (Karakılçık, 2008: 21-2) In addition to this, Turkey

can have a role in the resolution of the water problem in the Middle East, for instance by exporting water, and this would increase the significance of Turkey in the region. (Pamukçu, 2004: 253)

The present water resources in the Middle East have fallen behind in satisfying the needs. As the population in the region, and relatedly the water consumption per capita increased in the region, there is always a danger of increasing water shortage. By this way, water becomes an issue of conflict. All these reasons caused water to be a significant factor in the Middle East. Water's being such an important issue in the Arab world is due to Arab states being downstream riparians and having poor water resources. (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affaires, 1996)

Turkey is not a water-rich country as it is supposed. It is a fact that she has more water resources than her neigbours. However, Turkey is one of the countries to experience water shortage in time. According to the report of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996 Turkey's average annual runoff is about 186 billion m^3. The amount available for consuption from this capacity is mere 110 billion m^3, including 12 billion m^3 of ground water. The quantity of water per capita will be 1833 m^3 taking Turkey's population 60 million. Countries with 8000-10.000 m^3 of water per capita per year are regarded as rich in water resources. Put another way, the available water per capita in Turkey is about one-fifth of the water-rich countries. Turkey is supposed to have excess water but Turkey is not in a position to fully utilise her water resources. Turkey utilises only 4.2% of her available water capacity. The remaining portion, 84.1 billion m^3, is an amount which can not yet be allocated for proper utilization. (*ibid*) Recently, Turkey has still a danger of experiencing water shortage and those amounts can give us the clues about not being a water-rich country. Also when we look at 1990s and 2000s we can say that this danger had a big effect on Turkey's water policies.

The rivers, lakes, canals, ground waters, glaciers in landlocked countries are called watercourses. Watercourses, sometimes, appear in the country of a state and comprise the inland waters of that state. However, they sometimes pass through the countries of two or more states or they constitute the border between them. In this second situation, the

international watercourses, or with its name in Helsinki Agreement transboundary waters are mentioned. (Pazarcı, 2008: 236-7) An international river appears in the lands of two different states and constitutes a border between these states, and it is shared between two countries. As for transboundary waters, they spring in the borders of one state and then flows in another country's land after crossing the border of another country and disembogues there. (Dursun, 2006: 25)

However, the international water concept is being used instead of transboundary waters recently. The rivers springing from the states' own territories and disemboguing through their own territory are called the national rivers, and the state has absolute sovereignity on these waters. For international watercourses, though, rules are determined for navigational and non-navigational utilization. The general tendency seen in Europe in the last century concerning the navigation regime of the international rivers is towards allowing free pass right for ships riparian or not. Three main utilizations observed for the non-navigational utilization of international waters are: fishing and livestock hunting, agricultural usage and industrial utilization. (Pazarcı, 2008: 237-40) We will make a point of agricultural and industrial utilization in line with our subject.

Utilization of watercourses for agricultural purposes is realized as irrigation. The industrial utilization of watercourses can be in two ways: energy production and industrial washout or inclusion of water in the manufactured goods. For both of the purposes mentioned two kinds of activity can be in question. These are consumptive or privative activities, and modulating or polluting activities. (*ibid*: 236-42)

There are two concepts that relate to international rivers. These are riparian states and water basin. With respect to navigational and non-navigational utilization, the term riparian state is used to define the related states in international rivers. (Tiryaki, 2003: 10-3) The state situated at the top of the rivers flowing direction is called upper riparian state, the state situated below is called lower riparian state. As for water basin, it is the region that constitutes the feeding area of a river and its tributaries. (Kodaman, 2007: 17)

States have utilization rights on watercourses. The utilization right of an upper riparian state is inversely proportional to the rights of the lower riparian state. There were some opinions that granted the utilization right to the upper riparian state only for some time. (Pazarcı, 2008: 242) As an example to these opinions, the Harmon Doctine, named after the USA Attorney General Judson Harmon, can be given. According to this doctrine, the upper riparian state is under no duty or obligation, in international law, of restraining her utilization of the waters within her territory to accomodate the needs of another state. According to Hakki, there are references to this doctrine in Turkey's water policy. (Hakki, 2006: 447)

In transboundary waters, the sharing of waters and utilization of international watercourses are realized by agreements between riparian states. According to Pazarcı these agreements are prepared in two different ways. One is sharing the waters between the concerned states in terms of amount, and the second one is entitling the states to utilize exclusively the waters in certain regions after dividing the water course into geographic regions. In situations where no agreement is in force, the equitable and reasonable utilization principle of the international law is used. Another issue in utilization of international watercourses is the issue whether the prior utilization of a water course bestows acquired rights or not. This argument called as Preliminary Utilization Right does not constitute an accepted rule in international law. Another issue is about the right of a riparian state to modify the natural order and the physical conditions of the water course. International law does not impose a ban, however, it present that each substantial condition should be evaluated in its own circumstances. On the other hand, the most important issue is a riparian state's, who will build a dam or make modifications, informing or seeking permission from other riparian states. The most important standard in the international law is the possibility of harming. There are agreements that envisage a riparian state should bein negotiations or inform other riparian states in case there is a possibility of significant harm, appreciable harm, and significant adverse effect. (Pazarcı, 2008: 243-4)

The ILA and UN International Law Commission made some regulations concerning the non-navigational utilization of transboundary waters. The Helsinki Rules emerged in the meeting organized by ILA in 1966, presents the fair and equitable utilization, but this

principle does not mean equitable utilization. The guidelines presented by the Helsinki Rules article 5/2, which should be taken into consideration, are as below: (Kodaman, 2007: 25-6)

"i. The geographical position of the basin including the drenage area share of each basin state
i.i. The hydrological conditions of the basin, including the water contribution of each basin state
i.i.i. The climate conditions that affect the basin
iv. The past utilizations of the water of the basin, covering the present utilization
v. The economic and social needs of each basin state
vi. The population whose living depend on the basin water, in each basin state
vii. Comparison of the remedies of each basin state to satisfy their economic and social needs
viii. Finding other soruces to utilize
ix. Preventing waste in basin water utilization
x. Possibilities of compensation for one or more basin states, as a remedy of reconciliation of utilization conflicts
xi. The degree of satisfying the needs of a basin state without giving serious harm to other basin states."

These rules are not binding. However, they shed light on future studies.

In 1970, the General Assembly of the UN appointed the International Law Commission to develop the practice of law concerning the non-tranporting utilization of international watercourses. These studies had been completed in 1994 in the Geneva meeting, and presented to the General Assembly as a draft. The International Law Commission, organizing a conference between 7 and 25 September 1996 could not obtained any results; in the Agreement on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Pazarcı, 2008: 243) voted on 27 May 1997 (Kodaman, 2007: 27), 133 out of 188 states participated, 18 states abstained from a vote, 3 states including Turkey, China, and Brundi voted against (Dursun, 2006: 36) The agreement mentioned enumerates the following decisive elements with respect to fair and equitable utilization (Pazarcı, 2008: 243-4):

"i. Geographical, hydrographical, hydrological, climatic, ecologic and other natural conditions
ii. Social and economic needs of the related riparian states
iii. Population of each riparian state that are dependent on the watercourse
iv. The effect of utilization in one riparian state on others
v. The present and future utilization of the watercourse
vi. The essence of preservation, improvement and saving of the water resources of watercourse and related precautions to be taken
vii. Possibilities that can alternatives to the planned or present utilizations."

Turkey's voting against the agreement and declaring that she is against the provisions of the agreement and she would not accept these provisions to create any legal effects with regard to Turkey via vote statement, rendered the practicability of these provisions on

Turkey. (*ibid*: 245) Turkey would never be part in the agreement that would remain open for signature until 2000, was expressed by the Turkish Permanent Representative in the UN. (Dursun, 2006: 36)

In the introduction of the agreement, it is mentioned that this agreement is an outline agreement. However, Turkey thinks that the agreement goes beyond aim. (*ibid*: 36) Article 7 titled obligation not to cause significant harm in the agreement, the obligation not to cause significant harm to other riparians and to exercise due diligence for this were adopted. However, this is not explicit according to Denk. The agreement does not present exact criteria with regard to which activities are significant harm or what is included in due diligence. Another issue is acquiring the consent of the lower riparian. Consent is against sovereignty, but informing the lower riparian state about the significant harm and consulting on the matters are envisaged. (Denk, 1997: 27-8)

In UN texts, international rivers are defined with expressions such as rivers with various parts in various states, and no explicit definition of the international rivers is given. According to Turkey's stance, the waters constituting the border between two countries are international waters, waters springing from one country's territory and flows thorugh another one are transboundary waters. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 35) Turkey does not accept the term international watercourses since it may force her to a water sharing agreement and characterizes the Euphrates and Tigris as transboundary waters. Since Turkey is not a party in the agreement, she does not have to reconcile with the lower basin countries for the utilization of the water of these two rivers. (Pamukçu, 2004: 262)

The provision of receiving the lower riparian states' consent for the construction of water facilities and utilization method of the water in the agreement runs counter to Turkey's interests. For instance, according to this article, if any riparian state does not accede with the construction of a dam, the construction will be stopped for one and a half year for seeking reconciliation, if the parties cannot reconciliate, the parties will enter into settlements by appealing to arbitration. The obligation to present that the principle of fair and equitable utilization is pursued, and including third parties in the issue are provisions that will cause trouble for Turkey. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 34)

The decisions of the agreement can be accepted as in favor of the lower riparian states. The reason for this is that the number of the upper riparian states, in which the waters spring, is more than the number of the lower riparian states. Thus, Turkey experiences a legal isolation. (*ibid*: 35)

According to the agreement concerning the Preservation and Protection of the Transboundary Waters and International Lakes prepared by European Economic Commission of UN, and put into effect in 1997, it is envisaged that the transboundary water resources should be administered by a joint organ comprising of the states in the related water basin. The Water and Health Protocol signed by 35 countries on 17 June 1999, and the Agreement Concerning Obtaining Information on Environmental Issues, Public Participation in Decision Making, and Seeking Remedy in a way reinforce the UN decisions. The EU is a party in all of the three agreements and Turkey has been demanded to be a party in the accession partnership documents of 2003 and 2005. (Karakılçık, 2008: 29)

International laws are not rules with precise binding and sanction. It is impossible to bind water basins with differences in theirselves to general rules. However, the stances countries take complicate things. While upper basin states do not want to compromise their sovereignity, lower basin states try to hinder every utilization activity of the upper basin states. (Pamukçu, 2000: 75)

In the beginning of the history the rivers Euphrates and Tigris were the passage way for the trade between East and West. Euphrates and Tigris had strategic significance for the control of the Silk Road and the Spice Trade Route in the course of this trade. With the discovery of Cape of Good Hope in 1498, the Spice Trade Route lost its importance. In the first half of the 19th century, there appeared a British-Ottoman rivalry on these two rivers. As for Germany, she entered into rivalry with the UK in the last quarter of the 19th century. With Germany's obtaining the İstanbul-Baghdad railroad privileges, the rivalry on colonization proceeded towards Euphrates-Tigris basin. (Kodaman, 2007: 12-3)

The Mesopotamia region between the Euphrates and Tigris has been a cradle for many civilizations during the course of history. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 53) This region, having the characteristics of both being a resource for civilization and being a trade route from the first ages on, became the new playground of imperialism after the discovery of petroleum, and now it started to witness the rivalry for water for the states in the region. (Kodaman, 2007: 13)

Water is of great importance for the development projects started by Syria after independence. Syria supplies her water needs from Euphrates primarily. However, Syria is a lower-riparian state on this river and thus Syria experiences problems with Turkey since 1960s. Another state, that Syria is problematic in terms of water, is Israel. Golan Heights were occupied by Israel in 1967. Therefore, one of the most important water resources of the area fell in the hands of Israel. In the Peace Negotiations by the parties in 1995 and 1996, the two parties do not want to give up the water resources at Golan Heights, and this situation renders an obstacle before a possible peace between two countries. (Şahin, 2004: 97)

Euphrates and Tigris have a share of 28.5% of Turkey's gorund waters and are the most voluminous rivers. The two rivers, at the same time, constitute the largest water resources for Iraq and Syria. (Karakılçık, 2008: 42)

Euphrates is formed by the combination of Karasu River springing near Erzurum in Eastern Anatolia, and Murat River springing from the Western hillside of Mount Ağrı, at Keban County in Elazığ province. It enters Urfa near Mektalan, close to Dağbaşı Town of Siverek County. It defines the province borders of Adıyaman and Gaziantep and then enters Syria. It constitutes the Shatt al-Arab river by combining with Tigris near the Persian Gulf in Iraq after throughly passing Syria flowing in Northeast-Southeast direction. The length of Euphrates in Turkey is 941 km. of a total border of 2800 km. Of the Euphrates water basin covering an area of 444.000 square km, 28% is in Turkey, 17% in Syria, 40% in Iraq, and 15% is in Saudi Arabia. While 88.7% of the Euphrates water springs in Turkey, 11% springs from Syria, and Iraq does not have any contribution.

(Kodaman, 2007: 31-3) On Euphrates, Turkey is the upper riparian, Syria is intermediary riparian, and Iraq is lower riparian. (Öziş and Özdemir, 2008: 434)

As for Tigris, it takes its main resources from the Eastern Anatolian Mountains and from the Hazar Lake near Elazığ and after constituting the 73 km Turkey-Syria border and 8 km Syria-Iraq border, south of Cizre, enters Iraq and disembogues in Persian Gulf after becoming Shatt al-Arab. The river combines with Great Zab and Little Zab Rivers that enter Iraq after springing in Turkey and continues towards south. Of the Tigris basin covering an area of 111.6555 km2, 12% is in Turkey, 0.2% is in Syria, 54% in Iraq, and 34% is in Iran. While Turkey 51.8% of Tigris water springs from Turkey, 48.1% is from Iraq, and Syria has no participation. (Kodaman, 2007: 33-4) On Tigris, Turkey is the upper riparian, Syria and Iraq are the lower riparians. (Öziş and Özdemir, 2008: 434)

The Rivers Euphrates and Tigris are important resources of division. Syria and Iraq demand two thirds of Euphrates and Tigris water from Turkey. Turkey does not accept this demand. (Karakılçık, 2008: 37) When the demands of the three countries added up, the resulting demand is greater thean the supply, thus it is impossible for the water of Euphrates and Tigris to satisfy these demands. (Kodaman, 2007: 36)

The rivers Euphrates and Tigris are of great importace for both countries. A great proportion of Syria's economy depends on the irrigation done by the water taken from the Euphrates basin. Irrigation constitutes 90% of the water use. In addition, Syria needs electricity from Euphrates to reduce petroleum export, just like Turkey. As it was mentioned before, Turkey is not a water-rich country. An important proportion of the water used is utilized in agriculture. The Rivers Euphrates and Tigris comprise 28% of Turkey's total river potential, and supply 48% of electric power. Turkey has 7 main projects, including 57 sub-projects, on Euphrates, and 6 main projects under GAP name on Tigris. (*ibid*: 37-41)

Since the beginning of their history, in the Middle East, there was an environment of distruct between Turkey, Syria and Iraq arising partially from their geography, partially from economic factors, and partially from the characteristics of the regimes in these

countries. To this distrust, a dramatic water issue was added also. The parties, that evaluate the water issue in the region as an element of conflict, argued that the GAP Turkey building on Euphrates and Tigris would reduce the waters of the lower basin countries, Syria and Iraq, the waters returning from irrigation and passing through power plants would reduce the water's quality and pollute the water; and it would reduce the amount of water Turkey obliged to give. In addition to these, there are publications in line with the argument that Syria and Iraq will become hard up for water, and even these difficulties will lead to a conflict. (Karakılçık, 2008: 36-7) When we look at the relations between Turkey and Syria in 2000s, we see that parties make positive statements about water problem but as we will mantion later, those statements have never turned out to be a real agreement.

In 1983, the GAP project has been started, which planned the construction of a total of 47 storage facility and 86 pumping stations distributed as 22 dams, 14 of which are on Euphrates, 19 hydroelectric dams, 11 of which are on Euphrates, 30 intermediary storage facility for irrigation and 1 forebay pool. According to the project, 27 billion kilowatts of increase will be provided in energy production and an area of 1.700.000 hectars will be irrigated. The project includes world's longest two irrigation pipelines, 26 km long, which carries the waters of the Atatürk Dam to Harran and Ceylanpınarı plains. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 143)

Syria an Iraq thought that the water amount would decrease by 50%, with the GAP stepping in. Therefore, they seek a sharing agreement before the completion of GAP. In addition to this, Syrian authorities worried about the water will be polluted and salted by pesticide and fertilizer residues, and argued that this polluted water will pollute the waters of the lower basin. (Pamukçu, 2004: 266) They didn't trust in Turkey about Turkey's denying the triple agreement, and they believed that Turkey would not keep the promise of 500 m^3/s of the 1987 protocol, which will be mentioned later. (*ibid*: 265)

As for Turkey, she emphasized the benefits the GAP project provided the lower riparian states. The water amount, released regularly from the border, prevented the water shortage, in the end 1980s and in the begininnig of 1990s, to affect adversely the lower riparian states. Turkish authorities argued that, since an amount of water greater than the annual

runoff of the Euphrates in Syria and Iraq was not stored, GAP project provided water security for these countries. Turkey also argued that, Turkish dams prevented any possible river floods in the lower basin in wet years. In addition, these dams prolonged the lifespan of the dams in lower riparian countries by minimizing the siltation harms by keeping the silt carried by these rivers. Turkey also asserted that, the increase in agricultural good in the GAP region could solve the food issue of the Middle East, could increase the commerce between the countries in the region, and would prepossess the relations. (*ibid* 263-4) According to Turkey, with the GAP project and the dams built in this project, the water amount going to the lower riparians was significantly regulated. This would prevent the lower riparians to be affected from the spates that could be caused by the difference in the runoffs of Euphrates and Tigris between seasons, and over-storage in Iraq and Syria would not be necessary anymore. Through irrigation of the region and the construction of artificial lakes, the climate would change in the region. This situation would contribute in the formation of a greenbelt along the Syrian border. Even, according to Turkey, with the natural inclination of the water accumulated in the base due to irrigation, Syria's underground waters would increase, and some part of the water used in Turkey would be added to Syria's use again. (Denk, 1997: 23-4) For Turkey, GAP's waters did not give so much harm to the quality of the water, and Turkey blamed Syria and Iraq with wasting water via wrong and unproductive utilizations. (*ibid*: 51) Turkey indicates that Syria's amount of irrigable land did not reflect the reality, and alleged the great difference between the numbers given by the official authorities and foreign experts. (cf. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996)

It is possible mention that GAP project also is of capital importance for Turkey's domestic stability. The opinion that GAP will increase the welfare in the region and will contribute in the resolution of the Kurdish issue is very strong in Turkey. Olcay Ünver, head of the GAP bureau, emphasizes that when the GAP project, covering the 9 provinces in the Southeastern Anatolia, is finished, it will increase the income levels 5 times more and provide an employment opportunity for about 3.8 million people, with its high agricultural and industial potential. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 126)

Turkey's water projects also should be mentioned briefly. With the Peace Water Project during Turgut Özal's prime ministry (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 114) in 1986 (Şalvarcı, 2003: 72), transfer of the water remaining after Turkey's own use in the rivers Seyhan and Ceyhan, both springing and disemboguing in Turkish land, to Saudi Arabia and Oman by two pipelines was offered. According to the project prepared since 1986 and the feasibility studies conducted by the Brownroot Company, the first pipeline carrying 3.500.000 m^3 per day of water would enter Syria over Hatay, pass through Jordan and would go to the cities of Mecca and Jeddah. From the second pipeline, 2.500.000 m^3 of water would be transferred to Kuwait, Quatar, United Arab Emirates and Omman through the east of Syria and Jordan. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 144-5)

Arabs rejected this project. The official reason for this is the high costs of the project. However, it is thouth that the reason was political. They suspected that Turkey was trying to provide water for Israel. Thus, Arabs thought that Turkey would strengthen her hand in the region and it would be dangerous to be engaged with Turkey in such a vital matter as water. Turkey gave up this project when Arabs insisted on sharing the waters of Euphrates and Tigris, instead of Turkey's selling water. (*ibid*: 145)

Turkey's another water project is the Manavgat Streamlet Water Practicing Project commissioned in 1992 by Mesut Yılmaz, prime minister of the period, and Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit. This project was taken into agenda in order to meet the water needs of the Middle East states such as Israel, Palestine and Jordan, and the Mediterranean Islands such as Northern Cyprus. The project primarily depended on the transfer of Manavgat's water by tanks or balloons. (Kodaman, 2007: 47) While Israel showed interest in the project on account that buying water from an ally instead of another alternative, Arabs rejected this project by the reason of Turkey's taking the control and Israel getting water also. (Denk, 1997: 64)

According to Syria, The Peace Water project and other projects that aim at Turkey's selling water were a result of Turkey's pursuit of leadership in the Middle East. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 146)

From 1920s to 1960s, the water issue had not been of great importance between the riparian states. Because neither Turkey, nor Syria nor Iraq had constructed development projects based on the utilization of the waters of Euphrates and Tigris until 1960s. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the main issues between Turkey, Syria and Iraq had been the border issues. Turkey-Syria border was drawn by 1921 Ankara Accord, and Turkey-Iraq border was drawn by 1926 Ankara Agreement. (Şahin, 2004: 97-8) The greatest problem between Turkey and Syria until 1960s had been the Hatay issue, as mentioned before.

The first international text, that concern Turkey and Syria is the Turkish-French agreement in Ankara on 20 September 1921. (Kodaman, 2007: 59) This Accord is known as the 1921 Ankara Accord. (Karakılçık, 2008: 38) According to Article 12 of the agreement (Soysal, 2000: 52):

"The Kuveik River will be shared in a way that would satisfy both parties between Aleppo and the Turkish region in the north. Aleppo city could receive water from Euphrates from the Turkish zone, in order to meet the needs of the region by spending own money."

Taking as basis the principle of fair and equitable use in utilizing the Kuveik River, and making benefit of this opportunities mentioned in Article 12 of the Accord, was limited to the needs of Aleppo only. The Kuveik River was shared fairly and equitably. According to this accord, Syria could take an amount of water from Euphrates that would meet the needs of Aleppo only. This was 0.7 m^3/s. (Tiryaki, 2003: 58)

The second important legal text is the Treaty of Lousanne dated 24 July 1923. Article 109 of this treaty is as follows (Soysal, 2000: 137):

"In default of any provisions to the contrary, when as the result of the fixing of a new frontier the hydraulic system (canalisation, inundation, irrigation, drainage or similar matters) in a State is dependent on works executed within the territory of another State, or when use is made on the territory of a State, in virtue of pre-war usage, of water or hydraulic power, the source of which is on the territory of another State, an agreement shall be made between the States concerned to safeguard the interests and rights acquired by each of them. Failing an agreement, the matter shall be regulated by arbitration."

According to this condition, making agreements between Turkey, Syria and Iraq is envisaged in order to provide continuance of the water regime between pre-war Turkey, Syria and Iraq. However, in case Turkey makes an agreement, Turkey might not accept giving an amount of water that would harm her own interests greater than the acquired rights. Also, if the amount of water use increases in Syria and Iraq after the agreement date, this is not to be considered as an acquired right. (Kodaman, 2007: 61)

According to the article 3 of the protocol signed between Turkey and France on 19 May 1939, the Thalweg line, which is the deepest point of Karasu Creek, Orontes and Afrin Rivers, where these creeks and rivers constituted a border would be accepted as borderline, and people of both parties would make use of the water equally. (Tiryaki, 2003: 59) In addition to this, the protocol did not include any regulation about what proportion of the waters flowing in Syria would be reserved for Turkey. (Dalar, 2010: 110)

The first agreement Turkey made for making regulations in Euphrates and Tigris basins is the Friendship and Good Neighbourity Agreement signed between Turkey and Iraq in 1946. According to the first protocol of this agreement, Turkey would inform Iraq about the projects to be realized on Euphrates and Tigris, and these projects would be determined in line with the interests of both parties via joint agreements. (Karakılçık, 2008: 38) This protocol is a co-operation development protocol between Turkey and Iraq, and even Syria. (Kodaman, 2007: 64)

Although Syria reacted to Hatay's incorporation within Turkey, in a diplomatic note she sent to a foreign mission, she declared that Syria, she would show respect to international and bilateral agreements that France had made on behalf of Syria, after she won her independence. (Umar, 2003: 250) Therefore, Syria accepted all agreements mentioned above signed between Turkey and France, on behalf of Syria. However, from the beginning of 1960s, sharing of the waters of Euphrates and Tigris constituted a problem between Turkey and Syria, because non-agricultural utilization began, and Turkey, making the least use of these waters before, started constructing dams. As a result of this, Syria and Iraq argued that the waters of these two rivers, especially Euphrates, would undergo a

change in terms of quality and quantity, thus affecting agriculture adversely. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 140)

Syria indicated that Turkey should come to an agreement on the use of a transboundary river after Turkey started to construct Keban dam on Euphrates and Tigris in 1964. However, when Turkey demanded the Orontes River to be brought into agenda during the meetings, Syria reacted to this and the joint meetings could not be made. (*ibid*: 141)

As mentioned before, Syria did not accept Hatay's being under Turkey's sovereignty; therefore avoided meeting with Turkey about the Orontes River. Turkey is a lower riparian state on the Orontes River. Syria's policy, on the other hand, is that, since Hatay belongs to Syria, the Orontes River is an international river but a national river. (Dalar, 2010: 110) By this reason, Syria did not want to treat of the Orontes River in agreements with Turkey.

Turkey got a loan of 40.000.000 USD from the USA with the agreement signed before the construction of the greatest dam of the region, the Keban dam between Turkey and the AID on 31 August 1966. However, guaranteed in return, that she would take steps towards making an agreement with Syria and Iraq, and in case any agreement could not be made, to let enough water to lower basin states during the first filling of the dam's resorvoires. This amount of water was determined as 350 m^3/s at first, but at the end of the negotiations between Syria and Iraq, it was increased to 400 m^3/s, and then to 450 m^3/s. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu. 2008: 141-2)

With the beginning of the filling process in March 1974, Syria and Iraq started to complain about Turkey letting less water. The amount of water let was 100 m^3/s, and it was indicated by Turkish authorities that the amount would be around this level for a couple of months. Syria's offer for a triple agreement was not accepted by Turkey; however when the amount of water increased to 300 m^3/s , the relation Syria returned to normal. (*ibid*: 142)

The first crisis on the Euphrates and Tigris basin emerged in 1975 when Syria cut off Euphrate's water during the filling process of Tabqa dam's reservoir. Iraq showed a great

reaction to this process, and a probable conflict was prevented by the interventions of the USSR and Saudi Arabia. (Pamukçu, 2004: 255)

The GAP project, mentioned before, started in 1983. With GAP's start, Turkey wanted to get loan from the World Bank, but the World Bank put forth the obligation to make agreement with the lower riparian states. When Syria and Iraq refused the GAP project, the World Bank abandoned supporting the project, and Turkey decided to carry out the project by herself. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 143)

In the Economical and Technical Cooperation Agreement Between the Government The Republic of Turkey And the Government of the Republic of Iraq on 7 February 1976 in Baghdad, the parties decreed to establish an economic and technical cooperation committee. This committee organized its first meeting in Ankara in 1980, and a Joint Technical Committee was formed on the utilization of Euphrates and Tigris by the two countries. Syria, too, participated in this Committee later. However, this committee could not convene again after the Persian Gulf War. (Kodaman, 2007: 65)

Turkey mentioned the Three-Step Plan (cf. Kodaman, 2007) that envisaged the fair and equitable use of transboundary waters in the Joint Committee meeting in 1984 for the first time. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 103) The plan envisaged taking the Euphrates and Tigris as a whole, and combining of the water resources, and the irrigable lands by inspecting the possibilities of transferring the remaining waters of Tigris into Euphrates. Syria and Iraq did not accept taking these two rivers as a whole, and the water transfer from Tigris to Euphrates. Also, problems concerning the scope of the inspections arose. Turkey demanded the allegedy irrigable lands to be inspected and evaluated by the experts from three countries via joint field surveys in the project areas. Syria and Iraq objected these inspections. (*ibid*: 130) Turkey thrived for the resolution of Hatay issue by providing the Orontes River issue be considered together with Euphrates and Tigris. (Kodaman, 2007: 71)

The greatest obstacle before this plan was the joint evaluation of the data in the basin with objective methods in order to determine the amount of water to be given to these three countries. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 131)

However, as mentioned before, Syria and Iraq adopted a policy of distorting the data on water issue, especially the amount of the irrigable lands. The different measurements between the national and foreign experts, as mentioned above, about the irrigable lands can be given as evidence to this. Therefore, Iraq did not want accurate data to be obtained for the fair and equitable utilization. According to Turkey's view, assertation of land and water inventoried by scientific data would manifest the real water needs of the three countries, thus the fair, equitable and optimum utilization of the waters would be provided. This would contribute the Middle East Peace, since it would increase the environment of mutual trust and cooperation. (*ibid*: 131)

As Iraq focused her attention on the war with Iran, the water issue was mentioned by Syria mostly. Also, Syria started an initiative to increase agricultural production and exportation in 1986, and within this frame, privatized the land, of thousands of acres, on the banks of Euphrates, and provided incentives for agricultural investments. Therefore, Syria faced an increased need of water. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 143-4) While Turkey did not consider water as a mean in foreign policy at first, when the increase in the PKK terror during 1980s and Syria's support was to be taken together, Turkey started to relate the water issue with terrorism. (*ibid*: 140) One example for this is the declaration of the Syrian Prime Minister Abdul Rauf Al-Kasm in 1986, close to the completion of Karakaya Dam. In this declaration Syria demanded from Turkey to release 500 m3 of water during the filling process of Karakaya and Atatürk Dams or else Syria would do everything in her power; however, after Turkey's promise to do so, the prime minister declared that Syria would not support PKK in return. (*ibid*: 144)

Upon the completion of Karakaya Dam in 1987, Iraq and Syria protested Turkey for the reason that the water released from Turkey would decrease by 27%, and indicated that they wanted to make an agreement; however, Turkey did not accept these demands. (*ibid*: 143)

With The Economic and Technical Cooperation Protocol signed between Turkey and Syria, releasing of 500 m^3 of water per second was envisaged. This amount is equal to 56% of Euphrates. Iraq and Syria argued for the equal sharing of Euphrates' water and their

water rights to be guaranteed. Syria, based on the agreement would be in power only during the filling process of Atatürk Dam, tried to retain the issue constantly in the agenda of the international opinion, especially the Arab World. Therefore the protocol could not bring a solution to the bilateral relations. (Karakılçık, 2008: 39)

In addition, the protocol is the first protocol that puts forth the connection between the terrorism issue and water issue as it deals with the Economic Protocol and the Security Protocol at the same time, although the security issue is handled generally and PKK is never mentioned. (Oktav, 2003: 104) Syria and Iraq started to offer a new agreement to be made and to demand 700 m^3/s of water, in the 1990s. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 144)

It was understood that this agreement would not last long from the intense reactions Syria and Iraq showed after Turkey declared that she would modify the flow of Euphrates between 13 January and 13 February 1990. In fact, Turkey took precautions to prevent Syria and Iraq from suffering from the water holding process, and released 750 m^3/s water between 23 November and 13 January, and demanded Syria and Iraq to take precautions with this extra water. Before the water holding process started, the release was increased to 800 m^3/s first, and then to 1000 m^3/s. In fact, Turkey kept her promise of releasing more than 500 m^3/s of water in the 1987 protocol, and released a minimum of 509 m^3/s of water between 23 November and 13 February. The water holding process, also, was perfomed in the winter in order the lower basin countries not to have significant harms. (Pamukçu, 2004: 255)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs visited the countries in the region in January 1990 in order to resolve the distress in Iraq and Syria. He indicated that Turkey did not want to apply pressure to the countries in the region, and released extra water before the process in order her neighbors to be harmed at the minimum level, but could not get a favourable result. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 145)

Syria sent a diplomatic note to Turkey in the second day of water holding process. With this note, Syria demanded the water holding process to be kept short and the released water amount to be increased. Syria made a complaint to Arab Union about Turkey, and the Arab

Union issued a call for fair sharing of Euphrates and shortening the water holding process. In addition to the diplomatic attempts, Syria started to give logistics support to illegal PKK. (Pamukçu, 2003: 256)

Hereupon, Syria had used the terrorist organization as a trump card against water until the tension experienced between Turkey and Syria and the Adana Protocol signed in 1998, and this issue has intertwined in the relations. The main reason of the water issue between Syria and Turkey was the lack of an agreement made by joint participation of Turkey, Syrian and Iraq. The Joint Technical Comitees which lose their functionality with the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and with the new formation after the invasion of Iraq by the USA in 2003, and the USA inclusion in the matter instead of Iraq can be given as another reason. (Karakılçık, 2008: 40)

The oppositeness in the theses of the parties complicated the resolution of this issue. First of all, Turkey defined Euphrates and Tigris as transboundary waters; however, Syria defined these two as international waters. Another factor was, while Turkey envisaged fair allocation of these waters, Iraq and Syria mentioned the sharing of waters. Turkey asserted that the absolute sovereignity of the parts of these waters remaining in Turkey was in her possession and argued that the sharing of waters was a political issue, not a legal one; but, since Iraq and Syria treated Euphrates and Tigris as international waters, they demanded a triple agreement. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 145-6)

Syria government treated Euphrates and Tigris as international waters, thus sharing of these waters, as a common resource, should be performed by sole mathematical formula between the riparian states. The thesis proposed by Syria is as below (*ibid*: 146):

"Each state will announce the amount of water she needed from the two rivers separately. The capacities of the the two rivers will be calculated for each county separately. If the amount of the water demanded by the three riparian states from one specific river is greater than the runoff of that river, the remaining amount will be proportionally discounted from the amount demanded by each state."

Syria argued that Euphrates and Tigris had been passing through her land since the ancient time and thus she had acquired rights on these rivers, while presenting this thesis on sharing water. (Şahin, 2004: 105)

According to Syria, Turkey behaved against good neighbority, caused significant harms on Syria's agriculture, power production and fresh water by lowering the water levels of Euphrates. And this showed that Turkey wanted to apply political pressure on Syria. Also, the Peace Water project and other projects were considered as tricks Turkey play to make the countries in the region dependent to Turkey. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 134)

According to Syria, the studies of the International Law Commission should be completed immediately, the rules should be carried into action, and thus any issue on international waters between basin states should be discussed and resolved at international institutions such as the International Court of Justice. International Agents should be present in the negotiations between the basin states, and sanctions should be imposed on the states that obstruct the sharing, with respect to the observations of UN agents. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 147) Syria, also, demanded an agreement on these rivers to be made. (Şahin, 2004: 106) For Syria, a country's making use of modern and economical techniques in the utilization of international water did not give her the right to make use of the water the most. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 134) The theses of Syria and Iraq showed similarity since both are lower riparian states. (Şahin, 2004: 106)

According to Şalvarcı, Syria's and Iraq's main purpose was to take precautions for a possible water shortage to appear in the 21th century. Otherwise, the water released by Turkey meets the needs of these countries. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 144)

In reply to Syria's thesis, Turkey asserted that Euphrates and Tigris are not international waters but transbondary waters and she had sovereignity over the part of these waters in Turkey borders. According to Turkey, Iraq's and Syria's pressure was away from being scientific. Acquired rights were not of capital importance alone in international law. The ideas about the mathematical sharing were in contradiction with fair and equitable utilization principle. Sharing of the common resources was an approach that did not gain

recognition for transboundary waters; because, transboundary waters were not considered as sharable natural resources. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 147)

The accusations of Syria about the filling process of Atatürk Dam was inappropriate; because Turkey provided the release of 500 m^3/s water as promised in the 1987 protocol signed with Syria, and gave prior notice to Iraq and Syria to fill their resorvoirs. Also, Turkey performed the filling operation in winter not to harm Iraqi and Syrian farmers. (Şahin, 2004: 107)

According to Turkey, the water issue in the Middle East was not only about the amount and sharing. For a long-lasting and permanent resolution of the issue every state should review their water policies. They should take precautions preventing waste, resort to a rational price policy, develop national and regional projects for recycling wastewaters, implement high technology in irrigation, and select appropriate crops in agriculture. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 147)

Another issue between Turkey and Syria is the Orontes River issue. The Orontes River springs from the Bekaa Valley, passes through Syria and reaches to sea in Hatay. While it is flowing toward north, it enters Syria, after disemboguing to Homs Lake, waters the Gab Valley by passing the cities of Homs and Hama; it disembogues to the Mediterranean at the southwest of Antakya after supported by Karasu and Afrin waters in the north. The Orontes River carries water, which is 8% of Euphrates, and while it can be used in Syria, it does not meet the need in the Amik plain in Turkey. 6% of the waters of the Orontes River spring from Lebanon, 92% from Syria, and 2% from Turkey. And the percentage for usage is the same. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 117-8) In the Orontes basin, Lebanon is the upper riparian, Syria is the intermediary riparian, and Turkey is the lower riparian. In other words, The Orontes basin is inversely proportional with Euphrates, in comparison, between Syria and Turkey. (Öziş and Özdemir, 2008: 436)

Since Syria did not accept Hatay being under Turkish sovereignty, she baned the negotiation of the Orontes River issue with Turkey. Syria argued that the river was a national river, not an international one, since Hatay belonged to Syria. The use of the

waters of the Orontes River was the most natural right for Lebanon and Syria. However, negotiating bilaterally the issue of the Orontes River would mean fro Syria to accept Turkey's sovereignty on Hatay. (Dalar, 2010: 111)

The execessive use of the river by Syria sometimes caused the river to dry on Turkey's side, and heavy toxic wastes are found in the water reaching to Turkey. This situation affects Hatay region adversely. Recently, with the water holding of Syria in the dams, the Orontes River which waters the Amik plain has completely dried. Syria's this usage is against the provisions of the 1997 Agreement of the UN that envisages not to cause significant harm and fair and equitable use. (*ibid*: 111)

Turkey wanted to include the Orontes River issue in any agreement about Euphrates and Tigris. Turkey presented Syria as the reason of the problem, who did not want to follow the same policy about the Orontes River, whileas demanding the sharing of Euphrates, and complained about Syria for excessive use of the river and causing significant harm on agricultural areas at the international level. (*ibid*: 112) Turkey also thought that Hatay issue was one of the reasons underlying Syria's support in PKK (Şahin, 2004: 111), and thus seeked resolution for the Orontes River issue.

Israel is another country that Syria experiences problem with. (*ibid*: 113) Since Syria has not signed a peace treaty with Israel, there have been recriminations about the sharing of the water springs in the Golan Heights, and Banyas and Yarmouk Rivers. (Pamukçu, 2000: 233) Golan Heights is the most important resource that feeds the Jordan River and Yarmouk River that water Jordan, Syria and Israel. Golan Heights, both with its strategic significance and with its water resources, is one of the main issues of Israel-Syria relations. The possibility of water resources' passing the opponent party, seals off the peace negotiations, because in case the Golan Heights is left to Syria, Israel will be devoid of a vital water resource. This will run counter to Israel's geopolitic plans and survival strategy. (Şahin, 2004: 113-4) Syria is worried about Israel occupying of Golan Spring, placing Jewish settlers in the region, and the Israel activities in the Disarmed Regions to the east and north of Tiberia Lake; and demands Israel to return the borders before 1967 Arab-Israel war. Syria, demanding a complete retreat of Israel from the Golan Heights, wishes to

ensure Syria's security; also to strenghthen her geostrategic position on Banyas and Yarmouk Rivers, and Tiberia Lake; and to become influential in the Jordan River basin again. (Pamukçu, 2000: 233-4)

Israel is not directly connected to Euphrates; however this issue was discussed in detail during the 1995-1996 Israel-Syria peace negotiations. The Golan Heights water issue had been an important problem in the negotiations. The USA thinks that if Syria meets the water need from Euphrates, peace will be established more easily. Turkey argued against this issue. (Şahin, 2004: 114-5) The details of this issue will be mentioned later.

3.3. Terrorism issue

The issue of Syria's sponsoring to the terrorist organizations in Turkey caused a serious distrust environment in bilatereal relations. Among these Syria's sponsoring to PKK terrorist organization from 1980s to the end of 1990s is the most significant terrorism issue in relations.

The old counterpart of the word terror in Turkish is Tedhiş. It originates from the word Dehşet (awefulness) in Arabic. There are many meanings to the word terror. (İlhan, 2008: 45) Encyclopedically, terrorism means resorting acts of violence against the state, people or individuals in order to accomplish a political aim. (Ana Britannica, 2008: 45) İlhan defines terrorism as an organized but ruleless act of violence. Article 1 of the Anti-Terror Law defines terrorism as below (İlhan, 2008: 45):

"Terrorism is any kind of act attempted by one or more persons belonging to an organization with the aim of changing the characteristics of the Republic as specified in the Constitution, its political, legal, social, secular and economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, endangering the existence of the Turkish State and Republic, weakening or destroying or seizing the authority of the State, eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms, or damaging the internal and external security of the State, public order or general health by using pressure, force and violence with one of the methods such as terror, intimidation, oppression or threat."

As for anarchy, it is a situation in which laws are not enforced, in which there is no legal sovereignty, there is non-recognition of authority, non-recognition of any law in case the actual circumstances transcend the legal circumstances, a state of chaos, turmoil and lack

of government. Although anarchy is different from terrorism; terrorism cannot find the suitable environment without anarchy. Terrorism benefits from the loopholes anarchy creates and develops thusly. According to İlhan, terrorists are at the same time anarchists; because terrorists aim at weakening the government and making the society to cast out the security forces by incriminating them, thus weakening them and psychologically breakdown the society. (*ibid*: 55-7)

Terrorism issue is of great importance in Turkey's politics. But why has Turkey been struggling with terrorism issue since the beginning of her history? Turkey has many geopolitical reasons for being a target in the terrorism issue. Turkey is in a sensitive location, as she has always been before, that would affect the balance of power in the world. Therefore, the physical, socio-cultural and economic interests of the European, American, Asian and African countries, with varying properties, coincide on Turkey. Turkey, due to her geographical location, is considered as a Balcan country, a Middle East country and also a Mediterranean country. Turkey is also considered as a European country due to her Western political organizations. The interests arisen by the various properties around Turkey, causes a regional threat against her. The collapse of the Eastern Bloc after the end of the Cold War, NATO's disputed position, increasing influence of the USA on the Middle East and the incidents in Bosnia-Herzogovina, Albania and Northern Caucasia has increased the geopolitical-geostrategic significance of Turkey. (Şahin, 2006: 80-2)

Terror, unlike war, selects difficult regions and difficult geographics. Turkey's geographical location which opens the north to the south, the south to the north, the east to the west and the west to the east, causes Turkey to become a center of attraction sensitive to terrorism. In addition, Turkey is a country of many borders. Anatolia constitutes the European border of Asia, and Thrace constitutes the Asian border of Europe. Under these circumstances, Turkey should live in harmony with culture to the east and the culture to the west. (İlhan, 2008: 249-51) The policies of the powers around Turkey towards the region pose a threat for Turkey; because, she is enroute the all the global powers' policies and at the crux of the regional powers. (*ibid*: 257-9) Also, Turkey is suffering from the instability of the surrounding countries and their reject of Turkey's getting powerful. All of these transform Turkey into a focus of terrorism. (*ibid*: 249-51)

Although the terrorism incidents before 1980 are considered as rightist-leftist conflict; it is thought that foreign powers were involved in the incidents. The 1967-1980 period is an anarchy era, because there is effective nongovernance, and unfit between opposing groups. It is an era that the people were divided as leftist-rightist, Alawi-Sunnite, communist-fascist, progressivist-reactionary. (Şahin, 2006: 85-6) Therefore, a disorder was at stake. It was mentioned before that terrorism develops in the anarchy environment. Therefore, the pre-1980 period paved the way for the formation of terrorist organizations in Turkey.

Foreign powers provided indirect sponsoring to these subversive and separatist organizations such as ideological, financial, weapons and explosives, training, sheltering aids. It is common that this sponsoring was provided by the international terrorism, namely the USSR. However, foreign intelligence agencies such as CIA, KGB, MOSSAD and other legal and illegal organizations in countries such as France, Germany, Netherlands, in which Turkish workers primarily live, contributed in this sponsoring. (*ibid*: 87-8)

After 1950s, the notables of the clans in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, some religious officials of madrasa origin, some intellectuals gathered under the roof of T-DKP organization which adopted the Kurdish Nationalist idea due to their admiration of Mullah Mustafa Barzani.

The youth of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, who generally are university students, were involved in Marxist-Leninist organizations such as TIP, FKF and Dev-Genç. In this period, the separatist activities were performed in the extremist leftist organizations. Later on, the people who combined Kurdish Nationalism with Marxist-Leninist ideology had taken charge in DDKO since 1969, and this movement paved the way for the ideology and mass for Marxist-Leninist Kurdish movements developed after 1970. The Marxist-Leninist philosophy constitutes the basis for PKK and some other separatist terrorist organizations. (Alkan, 2003: 6)

Republic of Turkey was modeled upon the nation-states of Western Europe, particularly France. The Republic was guided by six principles enunciated by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk;

they are: republicanism, nationalism, secularism, populism, etatism, and reformism. Nationalism is the most related founding principle to the Kurdish issue. The new state was based on Turkish nationalism, but the land of the republic comprised of many ethnic groups even before the large migrations that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ataturk and his associates aimed to create a modern nation-state modeling France as an integrated, unitary polity in these complicated circumstances. Therefore, the model of the nation adopted was civic, as expressed by the maxim that lies at the basis of Turkish identity: "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene," translated as "Happy is whoever says 'I am a Turk'", not whoever is a Turk. The word Turk defined a new national community which allowed individuals to integrate without paying attention to their ethnicity. Language reform and the introduction of the Latin alphabet added to the novel character of the nation. However, Atatürk's integrating policies was not enough for the resolution of the Kurdish issue, because, the Kurds are different from Turks in terms of their language and their clan-based feudal social structure. The Kurds were, with some exceptions, the only group that did not accord to the new structure, while the construction of the new nation-state of Atatürk proceeded successfully. There are some features that distinguish Kurds from other ethnic groups. First of all, the Kurds are the largest ethnic group that does not speak Turkish. Secondly, the Kurds were settled in a single area of the country that is distant from the administrative center and inaccessible because of its geographical conditions. Thirdly the Kurds differed from other large groups such as Slavs or Caucasians in that they were an indigenous group and not comparatively recent migrants. Immigrant populations that have displaced and suffered severe changes and hardships are significantly more likely to integrate into the new national identity than indigenous groups. Fourthly, the Kurds, unlike other populations, were organized according to a tribal and feudal social structure, a factor that remains crucial to this day. (Cornell, 2001: 16) Therefore, Kurdish Nationalist movements have not had difficulty in finding proponents in Turkey.

The international terrorism had been sponsored by the Syrian Air Force Intelligence Department head Major General Muhammad Al-Kawli since 1970s. It was confirmed that Syria sponsored two terrorist attacks in Turkey in the end of 1980s. Syria preferred using terrorist organizations, which did not make any impressions of relation with Syria, in order

to accomplish her political and military aims. Although the relation of Syria with terrorism was confirmed in 1980s by the Western states, Al-Assad had used the terrorism methods in the Middle East for long years. Jordan had asserted that her diplomats were killed by Syria. Syria's sponsorship of international terrorism had continued during 1990s. In many international reports, Syria was in the list of State Sponsors of International Terrorism, and it was stated in these reports that Syria had continued to sponsor many terrorist organizations along with the ones that were against the Middle East Peace. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 114-6)

Although, Syria has not been involved in any terrorist incident since 1986, she has appeared in the State Sponsors of Terrorism list prepared by the USA since 1979. The terrorist groups sponsored by Syria are the Hezbollah, a Lebanese group, HAMAS, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Palestine Islamic Jihad. Syria allowed these groups to open offices in her country, and to make weapons aids from Syrian land, and enjoyed refuge and basing privileges in Syrian-controlled Lebanon. The political tension between the USA and Syria is about the sponsorship Syria provided to these groups. In addition to this, it should be added as an extra detail that Hezbollah and HAMAS are not recognized as terrorist groups by Syria. (Hemmer, 2003: 235)

From a strategic standpoint, Syria's central international dilemma is being a state with broad regional ambitions, but a lack of resources for accomplishing those. Syria wants to play an effective role regionally. However, Syria is inadequate in overcome Iraq, Israel and Turkey in terms of sources of power. Sponsoring terrorist groups is a cheaper and less risky way of becoming effective in regional issues. Syria wants to retrieve Golan from Israel. Since Syria does not have the financial and military adequacy for this, she sponsors Hezbollah and other Palestinian groups. The path to bringing Turkey to reason about the water issue passed through sponsoring the PKK. Sponsoring the terrorist groups enabled Syria to develop relations with Iran, and helped her in the leadership role she played in the Arab World against Israel. (*ibid*: 235)

Syria adopted to weaken her opponents instead of getting stronger herself to achieve the Great Syria Ideal. Syria continued this policy on Turkey and sponsored the terrorist

organizations such as PKK, ASALA, THKP-C, DEV-SOL, and TKP. There were three aims of the terrorist threat directed to Turkey from Syria: First, hindering the economical development of Turkey and thus preventing her to be a political and militaray power in the region. Taking Hatay back was one of the primary goals of Syria. In a commentary published in the semi-offical Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, Syria estimated that if PKK obtain rights for Kurds in Turkey, the same rights would be possible for the Arabs in Hatay. Second, Syria tried to export the Kurdish issue, by taking advantage of the Kurds living in Syria. By the year 2004, the increase of the proportion of the Syrian Kurds in PKK reached to 30% and that can be given as evidence to that. By this way, both the power loss of PKK was prevented and the number of the Kurds in Syria was being reduced. Thirdly, Syria, who was against the GAP project, wanted to get concessions from Turkey about the water issue by using the terrorism card. (Erciyes, 2004: 99-100)

Syria had sponsored the extremist leftist groups in Turkey since the beginning of 1970s. Although Syria had not had any relation with the Alawis in Turkey since 1970 until 1980; she wanted to integrate them with the Alawis in Syria. Hafez Al-Assad, who was also a Nusairi, planned to establish an Alawi state including Hatay and Alexandretta region with Latakia as capital city. Al-Assad aimed training terrorist that would operate in Turkey and that would disturb the domestic balance of Turkey by making Alawi propaganda. However, he could not be successful. (*ibid*: 102)

In 1975, with the tension atmosphere caused by the filling process of Karakaya dam, Syria started to sponsor the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA. (*ibid*: 102) ASALA is an extremist leftist Armenian terrorist organization and is important for being the first Armenian terrorist organization. (Akgündüz and Öztürk, 2008: 438)

Syria gave military training and logistic support to ASALA. Syria trained ASALA militants in the Istabil Ganur farm between the villages of Bar Elias and Anjar in Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, controlled by Syria. The connection of ASALA with Syria was confirmed at the end of Israels attack on Lebanon. With this incident the ASALA headquarters was moved to Damascus. (Erciyes, 2004: 102)

Turkey, via the Minister of Foreign Affairs İlter Türkmen, visited Damascus and demanded Syria to stop sponsoring ASALA and other terrorist groups, but Syria refused the allegetions. Turkey sent strong diplomatic notices, and as a result Syria had to remove ASALA from the camps in her land. (*ibid*: 103)

At the end of 1983, ASALA lost its influence in Turkey. (*ibid*: 103) In the attack to Paris Orly Airport, 8 were killed and 60 were injured. But only 2 of the deaths were Turk. Before this event all the world remained silent against Armenian movements. However, this incident reversed the situation, which was in favour of Armenians, against them. Some countries, especially France, declared that they would not accept terrorist methods and this caused problems in the finance of the terrorist groups. In addition to this, Turkey started to protect better her officials abroad. But, the terrorist organization accomplished its goal and announced the idea that the Armenians were massacred in 1915 by Turkey. (Akgündüz and Öztürk, 2008: 438-9) For this reasons, ASALA lost its influence in Turkey and ended its terrorist actions. Syria, who could not get the desired result from ASALA, started to sponsor PKK after 1980. PKK is a terrorist organization that defends Kurdish separatism. Syria, who had provided shelter to Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of PKK for long years, came to the verge of war with Turkey in 1998. The foundations of PKK were laid in the atmosphere created by the leftist youth movements during 1970s. Abdullah Öcalan whose real name is Artin Agopyan, the leader of PKK, started to operate in a youth organization AYÖD in 1974. The same year, Abdullah Öcalen, Kesire Yıldırım (Öcalan), Haki Karaer, Cemil Bayık and Kemal Pir came together and laid the foundation of PKK in a meeting in Tuzluçayış district of Ankara. (Demirel, 2007: 464) Abdullah Öcalan convened the first congress of PKK on 27 November 1978 with his 25 proponents. The reason for the congress to be convened in the southeast was the region's being a center for many rebellions during the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the first years of the Republic of Turkey, continuance of the feudal structure and the conflicts between the villagers and the clan leaders who are close to the government. (Cabbarlı, 2004: 494-5)

The aim of PKK terrorist organization is to establish an Independent United Democratic Kurdistan State in line with the Marxist-Leninist principles in the region covering the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia of Turkey. With the support of foreign powers, they

have aims concerning the hindering of Turkey's development. The organization is based on armed struggle. PKK organized sabotages to prevent investments and services to the region for the continuance of the backwardness of the region, attacks to touristic facilities and tourists to harm tourism, and made propagandas abroad to prevent tourist from coming to Turkey. (Demirel, 2007: 466) PKK adopted the long-termed people's resistance strategy developed by Mao Zedong, based on armed actions. (İlhan, 2008: 188)

It is possible to divide PKK's strategy into three. First of them is the defence strategy it had maintained between 1984 and 1989. Since the Turkish Armed Forces greatly controlled the situation in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, PKK remained in strategic defence, and tried to wear out the armed forces by strengthening its armed units. Second is the Strategic Balance strategy it had maintained between 1989 and 1991. PKK by the armed attacks and propaganda activities tried to carry the struggle towards political struggle, and tried to put civil resistance actions into effect such strikes, boycotts, meetings in Eastern regions to achieve this goal. Third one is the Strategic Attack Strategy it maintained between 1996 and 1999. With this strategy, PKK aimed at continuing its activities in the cities, and continuing attacking the security forces that are in a difficult position, driving them towards the cities and destroying them, collecting all the youngsters, who have the capacity to make war, from the people of the region, and organizing attacks to the state security forces from inside and outside. (Cabbarlı, 2004: 399-400)

PKK started its first terrorist action by assaulting a military vehicle patrolling in Gölyazı village of Uludere county, Hakkari on 10 May 1983. (Cabbarlı, 2004: 400) It continued its act of violence with the assault on civil people in Eruh and Şemdinli on 15 May 1984 and had gained great success in these actions until 1985. (İlhan, 2008: 189)

In fact, PKK, in 1993, had been experiencing a loss of blood after Turkey's decision about pursuing a policy based on military solution, and had given its weight on politization strategy. It had been capturing the alignments of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) which supported PKK. In this process, it was undergoing a change, its Marxist-Leninist identity was being rasped, and its Islamic connections were getting stronger. During this time, ideological and individual rivalries arose between the leaders of PKK. The second

name of PKK Şemdin Sakık who was at odds with Öcalan took refuge from KDP. Ankara captured Şemdin Sakık, and brought him to Turkey on 13 April 1998 with an operation, using the developed relationship with KDP after Iran's assault on Northern Iraq on 2 March 1998. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 564) Syria's sponsoring PKK and moving its headquarters to Damascus caused serious problems between Turkey and Syria. In fact, Syria had supported Kurdish rebellions before. Syria had supported the separatist Kurdish groups in Sheikh Sait, Ağrı and Dersim rebellions, and had sheltered their leaders. (Cabbarlı, 2004: 402)

As mentioned before, Syria could not put up with the GAP project and Hatay's incorporation within Turkey. Syria started to sponsor PKK by combining the hostility against Turkey with the water issue. GAP project, as it was mentioned before, facilitated bringing welfare to the region and solving the Kurdish problem. However, GAP project meaned water cut for Syria. Thus, PKK issue had been felt more intensely with the start of GAP project. Syria provided training facilities to PKK forces in Bekaa Valley, and condoned the refuge of Abdullah Öcalan, its leader. Germany, France, the UK, and the USA, though very indirectly, supported the terrorist organization on account of human rights. These countries allowed PKK to organize in their borders under different names, and thus create public opinion, and provide financial support. (Arı, 2007: 648)

In 1984, Syrian government started to sponsor PKK. Syria armed PKK terrorist organization, trained it in the areas in her country and in the region and condoned to PKK to have training, and used it as a means against Turkey. Syria was in a suitable state that she can provide passage by being close to PKK's activity area, having a long border with Turkey, and she could afford all the financial resources PKK needs. Syria provided shelter to the PKK leader and even gave a passport. The Helve camp was the headquarters of PKK and was under control of Abdullah Öcalan. This camp took the name Mahzun Korkmaz Academy as an armed traning facility with Syria Support in 1986. According to testified that 15000 guerillas had been trained here until 1994. (Kodaman, 2007: 56-7)

It was mentioned that Syria sponsored PKK in return of water. For instance Hafez al-Assad tried to give a message that Syria had many pressure cards vis-a-vis Turkey to Ankara who

decided to interrupt the flow of water for one month during the impounding of the Ataturk Dam, by being present in the ceremony of the PKK in the Bekaa Valley. This example is evidence for water issue and PKK were intertwined for Syria. (Oktav, 2003: 102)

Turkey could not stop the sponsorship Syria provided for PKK until the end of 1981. In 1987, two protocols were signed between Turkey and Syria by Prime Minister Turgut Özal. One of these is the Economic Cooperation and Rivers Protocol, and the other one is the Security Cooperation Protocol. Article 5 of this second protocol is as follows (Kodaman, 2007: 17);

"Both parties guarantee that they will prevent all acitivities in their territory that will harm the other party's security and stability, and also they will be in all kinds of cooperation including information exchange about this kind of activities by organizations, groups and individuals in their territory."

Turkey, as mentioned before, kept her promise, but Syria continued to sponsor PKK against Turkey. A short time after this protocol, Syria provided Abdullah Öcalan the opportunity to meet with diplomats from the USSR. (Oktav, 2003: 104) In 1989, Turkey declared that she will cut the water of Euphrates unless Syria stops sponsoring PKK. (Cabbarlı: 403) However Syria continued sponsoring PKK. Also, Syrian Armed Forces on a training mission shot down a Turkish survey plane well within Turkey's border. In this assault five people died. (Oktav, 2003: 104)

Syria taking sided with the USA in 1991 Persian Gulf War (*ibid*: 105) signed the 17 April 1992 protocol with Turkey. This protocol reduced the tension between two countries but did not last long. When the Minister of Internal Affairs of the time, İsmet Sezgin asked Hafez Al-Assad "When I return to my county, may I explain how the PKK issue would be solved?", Al-Assad replied "We will make cooperation to resolve this issue." (Kodaman, 2007: 57) Just after the signing of this protocol, Syria closed the Dev-Sol camps in Bekaa Valley, and in autumn the Mahzun Korkmaz Academy of PKK. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 506) With this protocol Syria and Turkey agreed on matters such as the relocation of the boundary stones, border trade, struggle with cattle plague, the telephone

interconnection, and especially the prevention of terrorism, extradition of the apprehended persons and prevention of drug trafficking. However, this protocol could not prevent Syria from sponsoring PKK. Although Syria for the first time accepted PKK as a terrorist organization, she ignored the PKK guerillas' infiltration and assaults to Hatay via Syrian territories. (Oktav, 2003: 105)

Syria government supported that PKK considered as a political organization. Öcalan was allowed to have contacts with high-ranking German political and intelligence officials in Damascus. This situation worried Turkey, because she was afraid of PKK's being considered as a political organization by the EU. (*ibid*: 106) Although Turkey warned Syria for many times to stop sponsoring PKK, Syria did not give up this sponsorship. This situation caused Turkey to pursuit a hard feel in 1998, and the two counties came at the verge of war, as it will be mentioned later.

As it can be seen, when evalutating the relations between Turkey and Syria, it is difficult to evaluate separately the Hatay issue, the water issue and the terrorism issue. These are like the intertwined parts of a whole for 1990s. On the other hand, with the 1998 crisis and Bashar Al-Assads taking office to High Level Strategic Allience Agreement signed in 2009 there were a visible improvement in the relations. However, no solutions could be obtained for these issues, except for the terrorism issue, and no official declaration were made about the solutions of the issues, or any written agreement weren't made. Therefore, these issues were frozen in order not to harm the bilateral relations.

4. TURKEY – SYRIA RELATIONS IN THE PERIOD FROM THE END OF THE COLD WAR TO THE 1998 SYRIA CRISIS

Turkey and Syria, affected by the changing conjuncture after the Cold War, had carried their problems to this new era. Syria under the reign of Hafez Al-Assad increased the support to PKK and Turkey started to be affiliated with Israel in this new era. The PKK issue and water issue became intertwined in Syria-Turkey relations and Hatay remained as an issue between two countries. In this chapter, firstly, the effects of the end of the Cold War and the policies of the two countries during the Persian Gulf War will be touched upon. Later on, Syria-Turkey relations will be evaluated in terms of Turkey-Israel and Syria-Turkey relations in 1990s, and the Syria-Israel peace talks under the Middle East Peace Talks and the effects of these talks on Turkey will be emphasized.

4.1. End Of The Cold War, The Persian Gulf War and Effects Of These On Turkey, Syria and The Middle East

While evaluating the conjuncture after the end of the Cold War, Francis Fukuyama assessed the end of communism as the end of the history; Samuel Phillips Huntington argued that nationalism, fascism, and racist and religious struggles, the evils of history, were born again and the history had turned backwards. In reality, according to Mazower, neither had the history leave Europe nor had it turned backwards. But, with the end of the Cold War, Europe was again in her undivided status; however, she had not had the centralized power of the pre-war period. (Mazower, 2003: 463) Europe had lost her previous power. As for the Middle East, in the conjuncture emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR, Iraq tried to invade Kuwait, and after this invasion the Persian Gulf War broke out, also Cyprus issue broke out, and the terrorist assaults of PKK towards Turkey, and Hezbollah towards Israel and the USA troops in the Middle East started. We will only lay stress on the Persian Gulf War and the effect of PKK on Turkey-Syria relations, with respect to the scope of our topic, among the incidents occurred in this changed conjuncture.

4.1.1. The effects of the end of the Cold War on Turkey, Syria and the Middle East

In the conjuncture changing after the Cold War Turkey entered the period disadvantaged. We can relate the reasons for this to the internal and external causes. Turkey had an economy with increasing foreign dependency after 12 September 1987 and was dealing with the Armenian, Kurdish and Human Right issues remained from that period. Also, according to Oran, Turkey tried to cope with the risks caused by Özal government's policy aimed at changing the balancing status quo. As we will mention later, Özal made plans to reclaim Mosul and Kirkuk during the Persian Gulf War. (Oran, 2008: 238). In terms of the external dynamics, Turkey had lost her strategic significance due to the collapse of the USSR. The world drifted towards a unipolar conjuncture in which she could not maintained the balance policy continued until the Ottoman era, neither economically nor politically, and this led to a stalemate in Turkish foreign policy. However, Turkey succeeded in reclaiming her geostrategic significance during the conflicts arisen afer the collapse of the USSR. (*ibid*: 238-9)

The ideation that Turkey foreign policy turned towards the East leaving the Westernism policy which she had continued since the Ottoman era after the new conjuncture emerged in 1990s is common. We can identify the external causes for this as the USA's encouraging Turkey for converging towards the East in order to prevent Iran from expanding towards the Central Asia, Turkey's thinking that a vacuum of authority had emerged after the collapse of the USSR and the expectations of the Turkic republics surfaced with the breaking up of the USSR. As for the internal causes, they can be listed as Turkey's featuring her exportation after 1980, and thus starting to require new markets; increase in the energy raw material requirement; the emergence of giving importance to regional alliances due to the new conjuncture in the world; facing the relative states which she feels relatively stronger and which she could spread her culture with the feeling of loneliness; the wish to get powerful against the EU by getting backed by the Turkic republics; and planning to relieving the foreign policy of Greek-indexed dominance. (Oran, 1996: 354)

The Post Cold War conjuncture had been an era in which Turkey was pulled into the problems of the Middle East. The USA fixed her attention over the Middle East due to rich

petroleum reserves, and developed a policy towards enabling the flow of this petroleum to the West with a fixed price. The precarious and insecure climate emerged after the Persian Gulf War combined with the Kurdish and reactionary issues, and Turkey, who assumed that the danger would come from the North and the West, this time started to emphasize that the threat came from the South. Therefore, the regional security concerns had determined the Middle East relations of Turkey during 1990s. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 551)

In fact, while on the one hand Turkey's importance was being increased, on the other hand it was being decreased. According to Oran, "This weighted increase was not something created in which Turkey also contributed; it was relative and rather caused by negative factors". Iran and Iraq could not gain stability after the war between themselves; Iraq was defeated in the Gulf; and Syria was left without a protector and her effectiveness was reduced. Communism disappeared, a unipolar system was established, but Turkey's importance had increased due to the double-containment policy of Iran and Iraq by the USA. The possibility of the Welfare Party's coming into power procured the increase of the importance of Turkey from the point of the West. However, on the other hand, there were some factors that reduce the significance of Turkey in the Post Cold War conjuncture. First of all, peace was established in the region after the Cold War and the flow of petroleum was secured by the USA. This was decreasing the significance of Turkey from the point of the West. In addition to this, Turkey's external debt had kept snowballing, the economy had strained with each passing day due to the Kurdish issue and it had been difficult to present the matter as a terrorism issue due to casualties from both sides. (Oran, 1996: 359-61)

In 1985, the USSR had made great changes in her Middle East policy since she was dealing with great problems in herself after Mikhail Gorbachev came into power. Gorbachev introduced the New Thinking against the dogmas of Leonid Brejnev era and stood up for solving the issues in the region in cooperation with the USA. This policy, from the point of the Middle East, meant the lessening of the political, military and economic support to the radical Arab states and entering into connection with Israel. (Süer, 2004: 148)

While new dimensions were added to the Turkey-USA relations in the Post Cold War era, there had not been any change in the essence of the relations. Strategic and political cooperation had continued. The historical issues had remained the same in this era - among these, issues such as the Kurdish issue, economic and military aid issue, the Cyprus matter, the developments in Northern Iraq and Draft Armenian resolution could be listed - .

In this new era, there were some factors that would increase the cooperation between the two countries. During this period new cooperation areas such as Europe-the Balkans, Caucasia-Central Asia and the Middle East had emerged, and these had been of capital significance in the relations. So much so that, even the forces could be joined in critical issues such as the Cyprus matter and the Kurdish issue. After USA's ascent as the only hegemon power from the cold war, Turkey tried to realize her national aims by remaining close to the USA. Also, as the influence of the USA increased over the countries surrounding Turkey, she did not have to search for new attempts and quests. The USA drew attention on democracy and human rights since she started to give more place to the concept of human rights in her foreign policy. None of the governments in Turkey had made a fundamental change in the USA relations except for the Welfare-True Path coalition government's reactionary attempts. (Uzgel, 2008: 243-44)

There was a possibility for NATO, which had been established against the Warsav Pact and the USSR threat, to lose its pervious significance after the Cold War. This brought out the possibility of Turkey's, who had an important place in the southeastern defense against the USSR, losing her importance from the point of the NATO and the West in case the threat disappeared. (Yavuz, 2005: 402) Therefore, Turkey would want to remind her geostrategic significance to the West by taking an active role in the Persian Gulf War.

On the other hand, there were other issues awaiting Turkey in the Post Cold War era. PKK terrorism had increased dramatically. We may add to this issue the problems such as the unsolved issues of the Aegean, Cyprus and Western Thrace Turks between Turkey and Greece; the efforts of Armenia to impose the so-called Armenian Genocide ideation onto the USA and the West; the hornet's nest, the Nagorno-Karabakh issue between Armenia

and Azerbeijan as a friend to Turkey; and the Serbian and Croatian assaults towards the Muslim and Turkish minorities in the Balkans, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (*ibid*: 402)

Turkey started waterholding for Atatürk Dam, the greatest dam of the GAP project which was introduced to the Turkish and World opinion as the greatest project of the 20th century. Syria and Iraq reacted to this. (*ibid*: 404) While Syria started to support PKK against the GAP Project, Iraq propagated against Turkey in the Arab League.

Turkey's relations with the countries in the region after the Cold War were determined with respect to terrorism and water issues, and to the precautions to be taken against a possible Kurdish state to be established in Northern Iraq after the Persian Gulf War – which will be mentioned later. While the protection of Iraq's territorial integrity became the top priority foreign policy aim for Turkey, cutting the umbilical cord of the PKK by the Middle East countries, particularly Iran and Syria was targeted in the relations.

Syria was in a state becoming a party in such a way that she could not remain unresponsive to the issues in the region. During the Arab-Israel war in 1967, Israel had occupied the Golan Heights and had ensured that the Israeli population became equal to the Arab population by settling 12.500 Jews in the area in 1981. Also, Israel had formed a security zone in Lebanon, where a Christian majority lived; Syria had sent a military force comprising of 30.000 soldiers and captured 60% of Lebanon. The first condition of a Israel-Syria peace, for Syria, was the redelivery of Golan Heights. Also, Syria did not want to give up her influence on Lebanon. (Öztürk, 1997: 54)

Syria was affected more from the collapse of the USSR since she was busy with internal and external problems in the 1980s. As it was mentioned before, there was a great opposition under the leadership of the Muslim Brethren and the foundations of the regime in Syria started to be questioned due to the unsuccessful attempt for a coup by Al-Assad's brother Rifat. (Altunışık, 2002: 264-6) And the arise of serious concerns due the health problems of the President Hafez Al-Assad, atop of all, can be presented as a cause for the domestic disturbance in Syria. (Öztürk, 1997: 54) On the other hand, Syria economy had

entered into crisis in the 1980s. Syria, in contrast with other Gulf countries had supported Iran instead of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf countries had continued to support Iraq after war and therefore Syria's petroleum revenues had decreased, and the support from the Gulf countries had stopped completely between 1988 and 1990. Hafez Al-Assad had made some reforms in order to overcome the 1986-87 dire strait; tried to improve the role of private sector in the economy; started to support exportation instead of import-substitution policies; and supported the establishment of great companies by allowing private enterprise in agriculture sector via the Agriculture Law adopted in 1986. In this period, Syria's force in Lebanon had got into a scrape after Israel's occupation. The Syrian Army in Lebanon had been defeated and a great proportion of the Air Forces had been lost. Syria's power in the region had weakened having a fall out with the Gulf countries due to her support for Iran in the Iran-Iraq war; and after her relations with the USSR had got worse, Syria had had the feeling of loneliness. (Altunışık, 2002: 264-6)

Syria, feeling lonely, had softened her foreign policy. Syria attended the Middle East Peace conference convened in Madrid in 1991, and started the direct talks with Israel. (Öztürk, 1997: 54) Syria lost an important resource for weapons and loans with the collapse of the USSR and encountered difficulties in obtaining replacements. (*ibid*: 53) While Syria had been able to maintain her security without a problem with the help of the military and economical aids from the USSR, she started to enter into new alliances and relations when she could not get the desired response from the Russian Federation after the collapse of the USSR. For this reason, Syria gradually increased the weapons trade with North Korea and China. (*ibid*: 67) Also, Syria supporting the USA and Saudi Arabia during the Persian Gulf War, entered into good relations with Iran, which could be respected as an alliance. Iran's and Syria's governments' comprising of Shiite personalities eased the affiliation of the two countries. We can name this relation between Syria and Iran as a nuclear cooperation. The reason for this is the pursuit for an ally against the USA-Israel-Turkey coalition, and Jordan and Iraq which acted together in the Persian Gulf War. (*ibid*: 58)

With Gorbachev being the President, the USSR started to argue that Russian interest was important in the Soviet-Syria relations and to adopt a policy of neutrality. For this, she issued a call for finding a political resolution that would protect the rights of Palestine and

the security of Israel. In addition to this, the USSR did not want to sell developed assault technology to Syria, because Syria had not had the solvency, and this would be a great burden for the USSR economy. (Süer, 2004: 148-9)

In the foreign policy of Syria after the collapse of the USSR, a dramatic change was observed at the expense of losing prestige in the eyes of Arabs. Syria's reproaching Iraq invasion of Kuwait; joining the coalition under the leadership of the USA against Iraq; following a more flexible approach for Israeli peace; assigning the commanders in the security and intelligence institutions, who felt a foul with the West, to passive duties were the most obvious examples of the policy change. We can argue that Syria went into the effort of renewing the image from the point of the USA and the West. (Öztürk, 1997: 68) Syria's regime had been the fastest one to recognize that she could not be able to receive previous aids due to the change in the USSR's condition, and the increase in the USA's influence in the Middle East would parallel the USSR's fall. (Altunışık, 2002: 264)

Syria, seeking a place in the new conjuncture shaped by the USA, the single super-power after the collapse of the USSR, embarked on a quest for dialogue with the USA, and tried to improve relations with Egypt and Gulf countries, whom she had criticized severely and had tried to isolate from the region. These policies were policies made by the protection instinct of Syria. And these policies, without doubt, had protected her during the Persian Gulf Crisis. (Süer, 2004: 149)

After the Cold War, the security shields of the super-powers had disappeared; the manoeuvre areas of the regional powers had expanded; the perception of the region by other regional actors had changed (Davutoğlu, 2001: 326) and new incident had started to occur in the Middle East. The Persian Gulf War, started by the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, and this returning into the Iraq War, the Middle East Peace Talks between Israel and Palestine, the Cyprus Matter, Turkish-Greek tensions, terrorist assaults of PKK towards Turkey and of radical Islamic terrorist organizations', such as Hezbollah, towards Israel and the US troops in the Middle East were the major developments in the region. Also, towards the end of the Cold War, while the USSR was in the process of collapse, the Jews in the USSR had started to immigrate to Israel. As for Israel, she started to settle

these immigrant Jews to in the West Bank and Gazza Strip, which were under occupation. The US President of the time George Bush reacted to this situation; but, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared that they would not give uo this policy. (Yavuz, 2005: 403-4)

In order to perceive the conjuncture in the Middle East in the Post Cold War era, the attitude of the USA and Europe towards the region should be considered. The unipolar structure emerged in the Post Cold War world, enabled the EU countries to act more freely. Despite Iran was on the opposing side with the USA, European-Iran relations had continued. Arab countries saw Europe as a balancing factor against the USA-Israel coalition. The pro-Israel policy of the USA prevents her from filling the vacuum in the region left by the USSR. According to Davutoğlu, it is a possibility that European states, particularly Germany and France, filled this vacuum. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 350-1) As for the USA, she had adopted the policy of having the upper hand in the region and balancing the intra-regional powers during the Cold War; and continued these policies after the Cold War. The intra-bloc differentiations, which occurred in the region freed from the USSR threat in the Post Cold War conjuncture, had started to be problems for the USA. Therefore the USA had to define more clearly the ally and enemy elements, and started the initiatives for forming alliances that regulate the intra-regional balances. This policy of the USA, had spring to life, due to the structure of the Middle East prone to the parameters of the balance of power, and an ever-changing diplomatic blocking process had started. (*ibid*: 342-4)

4.1.2. The Persian Gulf War and effects on Turkey, Syria and the Middle East

In the mid 1991, the Iraq Leader Saddam Hussein, started disturbance in the Middle East to shake off the deadlock he had come after the Iran-Iraq war. Saddam Hussein argued that the Gulf countries had caused economic loss of Iraq by lowering the oil prices between 1981 and 1990, and Kuwait had made use of the petroleum in the Rumaila Oil Field belonging to Iraq; and had declared that she was entitled on Kuwait territory, and had used Kuwait's stopping the support during the Iran-Iraq war as a cause. (Ertaş, 2006: 68)

Upon the rejection of these allegations, in 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait arguing that Kuwait had been a state of Iraq historically and had drilled Iraq oil illegally. (Sander, 2007: 569) With the invasion and accretion of Kuwait, the balance of power both in the Persian Gulf and generally in the Middle East had been deranged in favor of Iraq, and this had jeopardized the security of petroleum and the economical interests of the USA and the West in the region. (Arı, 2007: 562)

A number of reasons should be searched behind Iraq's attempt to accrete Kuwait. First of all, Iraq saw Kuwait as an artificial state, established by the UK on her territory and therefore, Iraq sought the reunion of these two countries. This had been tried for many times in the history but could not succeed. Saddam thought that the present order was suitable for realizing this aim. Another reason was that the Bubiyan Island, belonging to Kuwait, was quite suitable for building a petroleum terminal, and Iraq's wish to get through the oil fields in the territorial waters and the continental shelf areas of Bubiyan and Al Warba Islands. In addition, Iraq aimed at combining these islands and thus obtaining more shoreline in the Gulf and controlling the entrance and exit of the ships to Umm Qasr Port, making use of the islands' proximity to the port. In fact, the main aim of the Baghdad government was to obtain the oil resources of Kuwait and to dominate the Gulf oil. Thusly, Iraq could make her weight to be felt in the world oil prices. (*ibid*: 564-7) Iraq thought that it was the right time to realize this aim. Because, she thought that the majority of Arab states would act together with her against the imperialist USA who was the lead supporter of Israel, the arch enemy of Arabs (Sander, 2007: 572), and relied on the support she had gained after the Iran-Iraq War, and the fact that the USSR would not allow any possible interference. (Arı, 2007: 567) However, it is obvious that Saddam had made a political estimation mistake. Begin with, the USSR was not in her previous powerful condition, and neither was she ready to stop the UN nor the USA, preparing for war. (Sander, 2007: 572) Thusly, the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev declared, in a speech made in 29 October that military action was not right for the Gulf Crisis; however voted in favor the decision of using military force adopted by the UN in 29 November. (Arı, 2007: 567-8) In addition, the Iraqi troops had been tired out in the Iran-Iraq war, their will for war had been low, and they had been trained with respect to the conventional infantry battles. (Sander,

2007: 571) As for Arabs, they caused Saddam a great frustration by opposing the Saddam government. (Arı, 2007: 568)

Invasion of Kuwait not only threatened the region, but also the control of the oil resources and thus the whole international system. The USA, without delay, had formed an alliance with the participation of the NATO and various Arab states and had started to make military pile in the region. (Sander, 2007: 570) The United Nations Security Council had appeared like in full cooperation during Kuwait Invasion.

The Resolution 660 envisaging that Iraq immediately and definitively left Kuwait and the Resolution 661 envisaging economic sanctions had been adopted with full cooperation in 2 August 1990. According to this decision, Iraq and Kuwait, accreted by Iraq, would be laid an embargo. Turkey declared on 7 August, one day after the decision, that she had closed the Yumurtalık pipeline and stopped trade with Iraq. (Arı, 2007: 568) This decision, in a period in which the USA sough ally and Saudi Arabia abstained from being the first country to close the pipeline, was of great importance for Washington. (Uzgel, 2008: 255)

The greatest convenience Turkey provided for the USA was opening the İncirlik Air Base in 17 January 1991. The USA had immediately started to bomb Iraq with the fighter aircrafts landing in this base. The aircrafts either had taken off from this base for bombing or they had taken off from the bases around the Indian Ocean and landed in İncirlik after bombing. (*ibid*: 255) At this point, it is interesting that Turkey was one of the states that had presented the greatest reaction against Iraq. Surely, this situation was the result of the Middle East policies of the President of Turkey of that time Turgut Özal, which will be mentioned later. Turkey had sustained great damage from the Persian Gulf War.

When the embargoes placed, and diplomatic initiatives had not given any results, the UN Security Council took the Resolution 678. According to this decision (Yılmaz *et al.,* 2003: 63);

"The UN will take all the necessary precaution to restore peace and security against the acts of Iraq who defies doing her own part despite all the UN efforts. In this respect the collective security system, explained in chapter VII of the UN agreement, will be put in place. Therefore if Iraq did not implement

the resolution by January 15, 1991, Member States were authorised to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660".

In 1991 January, it had become definite that the international force would use force to displace Saddam Hussein and his forces from Kuwait; on 12 January. The USA Senate approved the Persian Gulf War Resolution; and on 16 January 1991 the war began. (*ibid*: 63)

At the beginning of the war, the coalition forces organized a missile strike, and Iraq responded by launching missiles to Saudi Arabia and Israel. On 16 January, the coalition forces under the command of an American General started the first phase of the Operation Desert Storm, mostly an air operation, which would continue until 24 February. (Arı, 2007: 570) On 23 February, the ground war intended to rescue Kuwait from invasion started and Iraq was defeated in four days. (Sander, 2007: 570)

With the damage done to the military force and economy of Iraq, the allies had weakened the central authority, but could not overthrow the Saddam government. There had been uprisings in the Northern regions where Kurds lived and in the regions where Shiites lived, but Saddam had suppressed these riots fiercely. The USA President George Bush had given speeches encouraging the uprising of the Iraqi people, but he had left the Kurds alone against Saddam. Neither the USA nor the European countries had wanted the Shiites in the southern parts of Iraq to get powerful. Since it was possible for them to get into contact with Iran and this would be against Israel's interests. Thus, the Shiite people were left alone and either they had fallen victim to Saddam's terror or had been obliged to live as refugees. In addition, the Saddam government had continued the suppression and aggression policy against Turcomans. The uncertainty in Northern Iraq, and the conflicts between the regional leaders had expanded the manoeuvre area of the USA in the region. The USA, aiming at dividing the region into smallest parts possible, had wanted to prevent a single state to hold the power. (Yılmaz *et al.,* 2003: 65-73)

The Kurdish communities in Northern Iraq thought that the conjuncture in the Middle East would provide them the opportunity to establish their own state. However, the conflict of interest attitudes of Barzani and Talabani were delaying the necessary steps to be taken.

The USA also remained incapable in this situation, since she avoided upsetting her ally, Turkey, and this condition of indefiniteness was relieving for the USA. Also, a potential Kurdish state to be established in Iraq was contradicted by Syria and Iran led by Turkey and this complex status of Iraq also relieves them. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 442-4)

After the Persian Gulf War, the situation in the Middle East changed. The fundamentalist movements grew stronger in all the Middle East and North Africa. The ideal of Arab Union, which were in the programs of all political parties, was wounded; Arabs' taking part on opposing sides during the Persian Gulf War, and making war to each other pursuing the Western interest, the common enemy, in addition to their own interest caused the Arab Union ideation to disappear. In addition to this, the West started to be perceived as the common enemy, and the radical movements, nationalist or religious, started to use this ideation. With the provocation of Iran and with the abolishing of Arab Union, Islamic fundamentalist summoning for unity started to act more freely. Also, there was still the possibility that Iraq to be dragged into conflicts and divisions between clans, sects and local rebels. There was not any common and complete commitment to the nation-state in the region. The civic society was fully formed, and therefore it was hard to hold the state together. Another effect of the war on the Middle East was Iran's reclaiming the weight in the region due to Iraq's weakening caused by the embargo placed in 1991. Loss of power in one of the two most powerful states in the Gulf resulted in the other one's gaining power. Surely, in this situation, Iran's pursuing a policy that recognized and used the significance of her geographical position, after Rafsanjani elected president after Khoumeini's death, was also effective. Khomeini's neither East nor West ideation was changed into both the South and the North. The requirements of the South policy included leaving Iraq weak in the North, and pursuing good relation with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Turkey in order to keep extra-regional states off from the region.

As for the North policy, it was the reinforcing Iran's position in the Gulf by establishing good relations with the Central Asian and Caucasian republics who got their independence with the collapse of the USSR. Also, Iran aimed at establishing an Iran model fundamentalist regime in the region by founding the Great Tajikistan. We should add that, this region was an important market for Iran's 15 billion dollars exportation. However, Iran

came up against Turkey, because Turkey, too, saw herself as a bridging country in the region. Iran's main purpose, who has become a great power in the region after the Persian Gulf War and who adopted a more realistic foreign policy, was to reinforce the Islamic Revolution in Iran first, and then to export this regime to other regions. (Sander, 2007:273-6) Iran who advanced rapidly after the weakening of her rival after the Persian Gulf War started to place emphasis in these policies. In other words, it can be seen that a more convenient conjuncture for Iran to act more freely was prepared after undergoing a change in the policy after Khoumeini's death.

The most significant consequence of the Post Cold War conjuncture for the Middle East was the Middle East Peace Process. (cf. Erhan, 2008) The Middle East Peace Process was a process comprising of steps taken for increasing the power of the USA in the region, finding a permanent resolution between Israel and the Arab World, and ensuring a fair peace. (Erhan, 2008: 570) In the unipolar conjuncture emerged after the Cold War, it was not possible for the USA to bring the countries in the region under her own roof only by arguing that the USSR was a threat element for the region. As for the Palestine issue, it was an issue to be solved immediately for the USA, since it increased the influence of Iran on the region. Iran was a great threat to the USA in the region. The PLO had been on the wrong side in the Persian Gulf War and this caused a decrease in the trust for PLO and a partial decrease in the economic and political support. Under the circumstances, HAMAS-partisanship has been on the rise among the Palestinian youth. In this period, Israel has become opting for PLO against HAMAS, since Israel and the USA did not want to face the threat of an Islamic revolution in Egypt, an Islamic government to take power in Jordan, an Islamic revolt in Lebanon and an Islamic coup d'état in Syria. Therefore, they thought that a Middle East peace that would prevent the religious formations was necessary. In addition to this, election of the Rabin government in 1992, who found Palestinian Autonomy favorable, who stopped the Jewish settlements in the occupied areas, and who gave up the constraints on the Palestinians, was of great importance. The conjuncture emerged after the Persian Gulf War was able to solve the Palestinian problem by emphasizing that Israel should abide the Resolution 242 and 338 which envisaged that Israel retreat from the territories she occupied. (Arı, 2007: 668-71) On 30 October 1991, the peace conference convened in Madrid, and the trifurcate Middle East Peace Process begun. (Süer, 2004: 153)

The Persian Gulf War was of great significance for Turkey. Turkey, in this period, made concessions from the Cold War policy of not interfering the war and conflicts concerning the Middle East and the Arab World, and headed towards a policy of pursuing a more active role in the Arab World. (Sayari, 1997: 45) While the West was worried of the security of the oil due to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, Turkey was concerned about the balances in the region to change to the detriment of herself. Before the war, Turkey was at odds with Iraq due to the water issue, the protocol signed in 1987 could not become a tripartite one. It was though that Iraq wanted to solve this issue by force. The policy Turkey pursued was for preventing any changes in the region against her interests. (Arı, 2007: 583-4) Security Council Resolution 661, adopted on 6 August, prescribing a complete economic embargo on Iraq, which posed some shuffling questions for Turkey, granted the political and economic constraints which have already been explained. In fact, the government has not announced that the crucial Yumurtalık pipeline would be closed, and all other commercial links with Iraq and occupied Kuwait would be suspended until 8 August. (Hale, 1992: 683-4) Also, it should be mentioned that the President of the time Turgut Özal had taken this decision of his own, without consulting anybody, and annoyed the opposition and some members of the government. The Özal policy should be evaluated from several aspects; his aim was to expand Turkey's political role and influence in regional affairs, gaining leverage with Washington regarding bilateral defense and trade issues and with Brussels regarding its goal of becoming a full member of EU. Also, Turkey wanted to increase its trade and business opportunities in the Middle East, particularly in the Gulf. (Sayari, 1997: 46) The ideation of reclaiming Mosul and Kirkuk by making use of the disturbance in the region should be added to Özal's aims. (Uzgel, 2008: 256)

The USA saw that the embargoes against Saddam without the support of Turkey would not serve the purpose. Therefore, Turkey's closing the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline was of great significance. However this policy had been a great economic loss for Turkey. Allowing for the loss of exports to Iraq and Kuwait, and also of invisible exports and pipeline royalties, the direct costs to Turkish balance of payments probably ran at the rate of around $2.0 billion to $2.5 billion per year. (Hale, 1992: 684) The unemployment in the Southeastern Anatolia Region increased due to the stopping of the transit revenues from

the pipeline, Iraq stopped paying her debts to Turkey, and the construction business stopped. (Uzgel, 2008: 258) In addition to that, there was no significant rise in Turkey's exports to Middle East. Also the Turkey's search for a new role in the region produced a few economical gain for Turkey in terms of its relations with the Arab states, and new economic initiatives by Ankara -such as a $21 billion Manavgat Project to transport surplus water from the Seyhan and Ceyhan Rivers to Arab states and Israel through a so called Peace Pipeline - never got off the ground. (Sayari, 1997: 46) As for the USA, she welcomed Turkey's demands of Özal for military modernization, abolishing the constraints on textile importation and mitigation of the debts in exchange for Turkey's support in the Persian Gulf War, and increased the amount of aid between 1991 and 1992, and as a result the Turkish Defense Fund, amounting 4.2 billion dollars was established with the contributions from the Arab Emirates, the USA and Kuwait. (Uzgel, 2008, 258)

However, the economic embargo was not enough to stop Saddam. Upon this, Turkey's membership in the NATO again increased both for herself and for the allies. The issues of opening the İncirlik Air Base for American troops and dispatching troops to the Gulf posed problems for Turkey. The President of the time Turgut Özal had a split in opinion with the members of the government and the opposition. Under these circumstances, it became difficult to dispatch troops to the region. Because, under article 92 of constitution, the national assembly must authorize any declaration of war, as well as the dispatch of Turkish troops abroad or the reception of foreign troops on Turkish soil, except when these are necessary to fulfill international treaty obligations. If the parliament not in session, the president may declare war on his own, but only if Turkey is first attacked by an outside power. In the meantime, the opposition movement in the government led by Mesut Yılmaz resigned one by one criticizing the Persian Gulf War Policy of Turgut Özal. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the time Ali Bozer complained about Turgut Özal's eliminating him in the conversation with the USA President Bush and resigned on 11 October 1991. The Chief of the General Staff, General Necip Torumtay submitted his resignation on 3 December 1991 due to Özal's Persian Gulf War policies. This situation caused shock effects one after another in the country for sure. Thus Turgut Özal's policy of dispatching troops to the region was prevented. Upon these problems, Turkey revealed the trump card by waiting till the last moment to open the İncirlik Air Base to the USA Air Forces. As late

as January, when the UN-imposed deadline was expiring, Prime Minister Akbulut stated that no decision had been taken on the use of Turkish bases. However, two days later, parliament renewed its war powers vote to the government, and it was made clear that this would include allowing the use of İncirlik and other bases against Iraq. On January, with the opening of the air war, the first allied air raids from İncirlik were duly launched. (Hale, 1992: 684-7)

Just after the retreat of Saddam, Turgut Özal was in the opinion that the result was a success for Turkey. According to Özal, Turkey had reinforced her strategic significance, had given the signs of that she can reassure a more stable conjuncture, democracy and welfare in the Middle East, and then again did all of these without being stricken by Iraq. However, Turkey was faced with the reality that all of these were a dream, and came up against a Kurdish tragedy. Saddam's brutal suppressions of Kurdish rebellion faced the Turks with humanitarian problem of unprecedented dimensions. The vast exodus of refugees towards the Turkish and Iranian frontiers began. After a while, it was reported that around 500.000 were massed along the frontier with Turkey. By the middle of April, it was becoming accepted that the only solution would be to move the refugees back to Northern Iraq. However, Kurdish people did not only need shelter and food, also their security against the Iraqi troops should be provided. For Turkey, this meant a retreat from the policy of not allowing any kind break up that would enable a Kurdish formation in the country which was the key point for Iraq. For this reason, after a series of interviews by Özal, the allied forces started the Operation Bring Comfort with 17.000 soldiers in and around Iraq at the end of April. The purpose of this operation was to create a secured area in which the Kurdish refugees might return. Operation Bring Comfort served the purpose and the Kurdish refugees returned to Iraq. However, there had been stupendous result of the new order emerged after Saddam's defeat that astonished Turkish politicians. Kurdish in the Northern Iraq started taking steps towards a new Kurdish political structuring under the control of Baghdad and under the shelter of the West. This was unacceptable for Turkey. Turkey, due to her political tradition, refused an independent Kurdish state near her borders. Because, Turkey was facing a Kurdish problem inside, and such a structuring might endanger her security. However, Turkey accepted the Kurdish existence unwillingly with the Operation Bring Comfort. (Sayari, 1997: 46) After the Operation Bring Comfort

the Operation Poised Hammer comprising of 2000 personnel with 800 from Turkey started. The aim of this operation was to prevent Saddam to apply any pressure on Kurds. Its mandate was duly renewed by the Turkish parliament at the end of September, and in two six monthly installments in December 1991 and June 1992. (Hale, 1992: 687-8) After January 1997 the Poised Hammer left its place to the Operation Northern Watch. Its mandate also renewed in six months periods and Turkey participated in this operation too. However the aim of this operation was not helping Kurds, but to control the conformity of Iraq to the UN Resolutions. The troops in this operation, just as in Poised Hammer, took off from the İncirlik Air Base and realized reconnaissance flights on Iraq. (Arı, 2007: 588)

Saddam's retreat from Northern Iraq after the Gulf War influenced Turkey's policies on the Kurdish minority. PKK who had continued a guerilla war on Turkey for establishing a state independent from Turkey, making use of the authority vacuum in Northern Iraq, started to build centers near the Turkish border and the Post Gulf War developments heightened the ethnic consciousness among Turkey's Kurdish citizens, especially those who lived in the country's Southeastern regions. After this power that PKK gained, untill today, the most important matter of Turkey both in domestic and foreign policy has been the Kurdish issue. (Sayari, 1997: 47) PKK, taking advantage of Saddam's retreat from Northern Iraq in 1991, started to smuggle weapons from the region and attacked the Samanlı Gendarmerie Station on 4 August and killed 9 Turkish soldiers. In retaliation, the Turkish army and air forces launched a large-scale raid against alleged PKK units in Northern Iraq, which caused some 20-30 civilian casualties. This was reacted against in the Western Europe. In 1991 autumn, Saddam increased the pressure on Kurds after failing an agreement between Kurds and Baghdad, and this situation placed Turkey, Kurds and the allies in a dilemma. (Hale, 1992: 689)

Also, we should add that, Turgut Özal's policies caused disappointment. The significance of Turkey from the point of the Gulf countries and the Middle East was understood by the West once again; however, this was not enough for more improvement in the relations between Turkey and the West. Turkey, playing a more active role in the Middle East, increased the concerns in the Arab world on whether or not a new Turkish dominance would be in the region. (Sayari, 1997: 46) Turkey, on the contrary to the expectation of

Turgut Özal, was not invited to the Madrid Summit for the Middle East Peace Process. As the expected construction opportunities in the reconstruction of Kuwait were not provided, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia forgot the name of Turkey in the declaration of appreciation they issued. (Uzgel, 2008: 258)

Together with Turkey opening the İncirlik Air Base to the USA, reactions from the Arab world arose. But, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt got close to Turkey after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. However, after the opening of İncirlik, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Jordan and Algeria reproached Turkey in their official declarations, and as for Syria, she mentioned her reaction in a more muffedly manner. (Yavuz, 2005: 408) Turkey's closing the pipeline and opening the İncirlik Air Base caused Turkey's image in the 1950s, of carrying out operations in the Middle East with the support of the Western Powers, to emerge in the Arab World again. Therefore, the Arab World, despite reacting against the threat Iraq caused, felt discomfort from this situation. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 412)

Syria took place in the pro-American Western-Arab coalition during the Persian Gulf War, was not content with pursuing an anti-Iraq policy (Yavuz, 2005: 406), she accumulated her armies on the Iraq border and fought the Iraqi troops entering Saudi Arabia, conforming with the resolutions of the Arab summit held in Cairo under the leadership of Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia on 10-11 August 1990. After the retreat of Iraq from Kuwait, she entered Kuwait with the allied forces. It should be added that, Syria was one of the countries, such as Turkey, who placed an embargo on Iraq and refused the demands of Iraq concerning the opening of the pipeline crossing over the Syrian territory. (Süer, 2004: 150) The Damascus Declaration issued on 6 March 1991, with the participation of Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries was of great significance. With this declaration while Syria guaranteed to protect the securities of Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, these countries guaranteed to provide an aid of 2 billion dollars. (Altunışık, 2002: 267-8)

The USA's emergence as the sole superpower after the Cold War was threatening the previous Soviet polarity countries. These countries were undergoing policy changes one by one in order to find their place in the emerging New World Order. Syria, as a Soviet bloc

country, was in a struggle for normalizing the relations with the USA, whom she had turned her back previously. However, in the eye of the USA, Syria was still a country that threatens the international system due to her support in terrorism. The Gulf War prevented Syria from getting harm in this New Order. (Süer, 2004: 149-50)

In fact, the developments in the region were effective on the policy change of Syria, as taking sides with the West in the Persian Gulf War. First, probably the most important reason was the cease of the USSR support to Syria. With Mikhail Gorbachev taking power in 1985, there had been amendments in the USSR foreign policy; for instance, The Red Army was retreated from Afghanistan. So that, Syria understood that it should change its reliance on military force in settling the Arab-Israeli conflict and should seek a balance of interests toward a political settlement in the Middle East. Second, Iraq had won the 1988 Iran-Iraq war and this disturbed Hafez Al-Assad. Because, Syria had supported Iran during the war and Syria was afraid of Saddam's supporting the anti-Syria groups, not forgetting what Syria had done. Also, he was afraid of Saddam to draw Jordan deeper into Baghdad's orbit through economic incentives. Third, Syrian economy was about to come a deadlock. Generally, the greatest burden on Syrian economy was the amount of the military expenses. Syria's military expenses were such high in order to have equal conditions with her long-standing rival, Israel (Oktav, 2008: 82) and with this policy it can be thought that Syria tried to balance, although limitedly, the USA-Israel association. (Öztürk, 1997: 58) In addition to this, with the close relations to be developed with the USA, Syria thought that she could reduce the compromises she would give during the restoration of relations with Israel. Thusly, with her policy during the Persian Gulf War, it was seen that Israel, with the suggestions of the USA, remained silent to the attempts of Syria to increase her influence on Lebanon. (Ertaş, 2006: 74) After the Lebanon civil war, the Taif Agreement was signed in 1989, therefore the fact that there was a privileged relation between Lebanon and Syria was accepted. However, a group gathered around General Aoun was opposing this agreement. Syria attacked the Presidency Palace in which General Aoun was present on 13 October 1990. Although the Air Strike part of this assault was against the Red Line agreement, signed between Israel and Syria and which limited the military movements of Syria in Lebanon; Israel remained silent to this attack due to Syria's taking sided with the USA and Israel in the Gulf Crisis. (Altunışık, 2002: 268-9)

It should also be mentioned that, with the USA's growing powerful in the Middle East, the balances in the Middle East were changed in favor of Israel. If Syria was to make a reasonable peace with Israel, she would use the resources she allocated to cope with Israel to become prominent in the Arab World and she would be affected from the new situation in the Middle East at the minimum. (Ertaş, 2006: 74) In case of a peace, Syria had the idea that she would reduce the burden on her economy by not falling afoul with the USA and making peace with Israel, as it will be mentioned later; and she would implement her policies in this way. Syria's support is significant for the USA. Thusly, Syria's attitude during the Gulf Crisis, was gone down well with the USA and caused the relation with Washington to improve even if just a bit. Many American diplomats, particularly the Secretary of State James Baker visited Syria, and on 23 November 1999 in Geneva, the interview between the USA President George Bush and the Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad was carried out. (Altunışık, 2002: 267) However, this did not prevent the USA to declare Syria as a terrorist state. Still, the Gulf War ensured that Syria not to be affected from the pressure the USA applied on the countries of the region. One thing not to be forgotten here is that, in fact, Syria and Iraq was two countries evaluated in the same category by the USA. Therefore, Syria's security concerns regarding the USA were not superfluous. So we should evaluate Syria's participation in the allied forces in terms of this security concern, a step taken to reduce the pressure on her. Syria, after the policy during the Gulf War, received 700 million dollars loan from Europe and Japan and an amount over 2 billion dollars as aid from the Gulf countries. Also, the price of the oil raised 20 dollars from 18 during the war, and Syria turned this into an advantage. After the war, Syria became important in the region for the USA; thusly she participated in the Arab-Israel peace talks and reinforced her position. Syrian economy entered into a betterment process due to the aids. (*ibid*: 268-70)

Syria's pursuing a pro-American policy caused the Arab League to suffer a great harm that would render it unable to recuperate for a long time. (Öztürk, 1997: 58) During the Gulf War, Syria's policy caused her to lose prestige in the Middle East and in the Arab League. Also, the Arab citizens whom Syria comprised a great part of, criticized Al-Assad for taking sided with allied forces and this situation lowered the prestige of Al-Assad

government. Pursuing closeness with the USA and the West in a period of economical dire strait caused both the reduction of Arab support to Syria and the increase of discomfort from Al-Assad government. (*ibid*: 76) However, this was a temporary process. The public, after the War, understood that Hafez Al-Assad's decisions were the right ones in those circumstances. (Süer, 2004: 150) Syria received 8 billion dollars aid as the reward of her policies during the Persian Gulf War and made a relative progress by enabling 8.7% increase in oil production between 1991 and 1992. (Yazgan, 2007: 53)

As for the USA, she had been the precise and determining power in the region after the Gulf War. The greatest reaction to this situation came from the EU under the leadership of France and Germany but it was not enough. In USA's being such powerful in the Middle East in her history, the place of Turkey's cooperation was an undeniable fact. The USA's Middle East policies were based on the control of oil, delivering it to the world markets, Israel's subsistence, reducing the influence of radical Islam, and containment of Iran and Iraq as a new policy. The USA started to give weight on containing Iraq and Iran after the Gulf War. (Uzgel, 2008: 254) As a consequence of this policy, the relations between the USA, the Baghdad government and Shiite and Kurdish groups, who wanted to fill the authority vacuum emerged after the regions' situated south of the 33rd latitude and the north of the 36th latitude getting out of Baghdad's control, continued undulant. (Arı, 2007: 585) Poised Hammer was the most important aspect of this policy. Containment of Iraq had importance from the point of Turkey, since Iraq displayed hostile acts against Turkey, in the water issue. The policies Turkey pursued against Iraq after the Gulf War (entering into connection with Barzani and Talabani, closing the pipeline, opening her bases for the bombing of Iraq) could cause Iraq to take a harsh stance against Turkey, and in case the American pressure ended, to act against Turkey. (Uzgel, 2008: 270-2) Also it should be added that, the policies of the USA towards founding a Kurdish state in the region became extensive and continuous after 1991, this issue was accepted by the President -Özal- after the war and Özal himself paved the way for this structuring with the Poised Hammer. (*ibid*: 259)

Just after the establishment of the Poised Hammer, on 17 May 1992, elections were held in Northern Iraq to found a government and a parliament. In these elections, since none of the

parties constitute absolute majority, it was decided that the parliament was formed from the KDP led by Massoud Barzani as the speaker and the government was formed from the PUK led by Jalal Talabani as prime minister. Only two years after the elections, Talabani forces took the power in Arbil, started to remove KDP forces from the city and thus resolving the structure emerged after the elections. (Arı, 2007: 590-1)

Kurdish leaders declared, with respect to the structuring emerged after the elections, that they did not pursue an ideal of independent Kurdistan and guaranteed that an independent Kurdistan state would not be established. However, establishing a parliament in Northern Iraq, and then forming a government gave the signals that this was an attempt towards independence. (*ibid*: 591)

There is one single issue that Turkey and Syria, who come across each other in many issues such as water, terrorism and Hatay, meet on common ground is the prevention of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. In the conjuncture emerged after the Gulf War, steps were taken towards an independent Kurdish state in the region, with the support from the USA. Turkey and Syria, who had always been experiencing troubles with each other, act in complete harmony with respect to the protection of Iraq's territorial integrity, and for this the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Kurtcebe Alptemuçin would start a 7 days visit to Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. (Yavuz, 2005: 410)

4.2. Turkey-Israel Relations In The First Half Of 1990's and Their Effect On Syria Relations

In 1990's the Turkey-Syria relations should be evaluated with regard to the water issue, terrorism issue, relations with Israel and the Middle East Peace Process. Both countries tried to ensure their security from different perspectives, due to mutual security concerns. Also, the developments in Northern Iraq caused these two countries to play safe in mutual relations. Therefore, Turkey-Syria relations in 1990s followed a fluctuating course.

In the Post Cold War atmosphere, cooperation with Israel gained an important place in Turkey's foreign policy due to redefinition of regional security. Turkey and Israel took

same sides in the course of the Gulf War, but PLO supported Iraq and lost the financial and international support of the Gulf countries. Thus, the PLO obstacle before Turkey, who pursued a balance policy, was removed and Turkey found the convenient environment to affiliate with Israel. (Yılmaz, 2001: 43) In fact, Turkey had'nt thought of sever the relations with Israel even in the years of pro-Arab policy; since, Israel was a member of the NATO and Turkey wanted to get help from the Jewish Lobby in the USA (Altunışık, 2000: 59) against the Rum and Greek Lobbies. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 568) Turkey signed the Natural Gas Agreement with Iran, and this formed the basis for the anti-Turkey propaganda of Armenian and Rum Lobbies exclaiming "You -the USA- support the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline, but they make agreements with Iran". Therefore, Turkey believed that the Jewish Lobby could change the balance, concerning the Baku Ceyhan Pipeline, in favor of Turkey. (Yılmaz, 2001: 51) Turkey expected that she could apply pressure to the USA to change their policy in case of an incongruity in the Kurdish issue, and guarantee that the USA would remain silent to Turkey's policies concerning the Kurdish issue, with the help of the Jewish Lobby. (Olson, 2005: 59) We can give the example that Jewish Lobby's enabling the resolution in favor of Turkey against the Armenian Lobby in 1980s. In 1980s Armenians increased their propagandas for making the USA to accept 24 April as the Genocide Day, Turkey contacted the Jewish lobby, during Özal's government, and in the end the Jewish lobby prevented this resolution to be adopted. The importance of the Jewish Lobby for Turkey became evident in 1990s. In this period, the Jewish Lobby ensured that the USA gives 10 Super Cobra Helicopters and 3 Perry Class frigates to Turkey, of which the USA abstained from giving due to the propagandas of Armenian and Rum Lobbies, and this improved the relations with the Jewish Lobby. (Yılmaz, 2001: 61-2)

The Arab-Israel Peace Process started with the 1991 Madrid Conference helped Turkey in pursuing this policy; since, Turkey took the opportunity to remove the reasons for the balance policy she had pursued since 1960s. Thus, while Turkey improved relations with Israel, the risk of Arab embargo decreased. (*ibid*: 43-4) There are other factors that enabled the improvement in the relations. First of all, Israel and Turkey were of great importance for the New World Order policy of the USA, and the affiliation of the two countries was responded positively by the USA. As for Israel and Turkey, they decided to improve relations in order to take part in the Middle East Peace Process with the fear that they had

lost their strategic significance from the point of the USA. The groups, which opposed the rise of the Welfare Party and other group that felt troubled with the economic relations with Arab countries, embarked a quest for a country similar to Turkey and believed that affiliation with Israel would prevent any adventures in foreign policy. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 568) For Turkey, the center of affiliation with Israel was formed with the role of military and civic bureaucracy. These groups saw the affiliation with Israel as a requirement for the continuation of laicism. (Bacık, 2001: 49) Also, Turkey's relations with the neighbors in the Middle East had been limited due to the Kurdish issue, water issue and the disturbance the regime in Iran gave Turkey. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 568) The GAP project, started in 1977, caused Turkey to be at odds with Iraq. And there was tension with Syria, in post-1980 relations, due to her sheltering Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader. (Altunışık, 2000: 61) Therefore, Turkey needed an ally in the region and needed Israel's weapons plants for her battle against PKK. (Olson, 2005: 58) Also the agreements signed by Greece, Syria, Cyprus and Armenia, who were foes, and Russia's support in multi-containment policies forced Turkey to pursue affiliation with Israel. (Yılmaz, 2001: 47) In addition to this, the pro-Arab policy which Turkey had pursued for long years resulted in disappointment. In the 1960s the reason for this policy to be pursued was gaining the support of Arab States on the Cyprus Matter; however, any support could not be ensured. (Altunışık, 2000: 60) Another factor that caused Turkey to revise the Arab policies was the negative attitude PLO, Syria and Algeria had taken against the suppression policy of Bulgaria on the Turkish minority, just not to offend Bulgaria. (Yılmaz, 2001: 54) The only advantage obtained from the Arab policies was the developed economic relations. However, these economic relations were subject to special conditions. The oil economy in the 1970s eased the development of economic relations, but the relations remained limited to these countries only. The economic relations reaching the highest level during the Iran-Iraq War receded with the decrease in oil revenues in the mid-1980s. (Altunışık, 2000: 60) In addition, the West and the USA were not providing weapons aids to Turkey on account of the human rights violations and causing various problems. As for Israel, she was not interested much in human right violations and seemed that she would not be affected from any criticism to come. (Olson, 2005: 58)

There are some other developments that influenced the affiliation of Turkey and Israel. The threats such as ballistic missiles danger, terrorism, and drugs, weapons and nuclear materials trafficking, which disturbed both countries, were getting widespread in the Post Cold War Era. Therefore the armies had to deal with forces using complex methods, and this wore out the countries socially and politically. Thus the armies had to deal with new situations such as peacekeeping operations, the limitations and controls of the disarmament agreements, border and coast guard duties, search and rescue operations, drug and prohibited goods trafficking enforcement and rehabilitation of the destruction caused by war. These transformations occurring around these two countries caused a transformation in their threat perception too. (Özcan, 2002: 243-6) Israel was worried due to the chemical destruction weapons and nuclear weapons of Iran and aimed at minimizing the effects of weapons of great destruction and long range missiles by cooperating with Turkey. Armament of Iran disturbed the USA with respect to the order in the Gulf. Iran being a rival to Turkey, with her policies towards the Central Asia was also against the interests of the USA and Israel. Also, as Iran sponsored the fundamentalist Islamic movements, she is a threat to both Israel's existence and Turkey's *laic* structuring. (Yılmaz, 2001: 47-9) With the end of the Cold War, Turkey was not expecting any threats from the North anymore. However, the threat of the missile systems, Greece, Iran and Syria had or planned to have, was emerging. Against this threat Turkey attempted to develop air defense systems, to obtain new systems or to produce them, and to buy AWACS aircrafts for command, control or early warning. In 1992 separatism and in 1997 reactionism became the most important national security aims for Turkey. As a result of establishing new security policies suitable for the new threats, Israel was seen as a natural ally for Turkey. (Özcan, 2002: 243-6)

When the Turkey-Israel cooperation was to be investigated from Turkey side, probably the most important reason was to force Syria to stop sponsoring PKK. Turkey needed the deterrence of Israel in order to pursue a harsh politic against Syria in Hatay and water issues, in addition to the PKK issue. Also, Turkey thought of affiliation with Israel as a resolve against the possibility of Syria's acting more freely after a possible Israel-Syria peace. (Yılmaz, 2001: 45-7)

In the first quarter of 1990s, the internal factors also played an important role in the improvement of Turkey-Israel relations. The army had an undeniable role in this new alliance emerging in 1990s. However this cooperation received a great support in the political arena of that time. DSP leaded by Bülent Ecevit, who was one under the influence of the pro-Arab policies in the 1970, criticized the role played by the USA and Israel, but he supported the Israel cooperation in 1990s. The MHP, led by Alparslan Türkeş ignored the anti-zionist elements, its traditional ideology, and took sides with this cooperation. The pro-Fethullah of the Islamic nationalist religious leader Fethullah Gülen covertly supported this cooperation by not publishing criticisms in their media. The only criticizing approach came from the RP led by Necmettin Erbakan. (Altunışık, 2000: 68-9) However, RP could not find the expected support from the Arab countries during its own government and despite the party was against Israel, it could not avoid signing alliance agreements. The main reason for this harmony regarding Israel was the recognition, as an undeniable fact, the need for Israel's support to achieve Turkey's aims in the Post Cold War Era, by the Turkish society. We can categorize the attitude towards Israel since the foundation in the Middle East in different ways. The reason for this is the difference of Israel in her neighbors' eyes. One type of these attitudes is the attitude concerning the Islamic prejudice that Arabs could not overcome. This attitude WAs against Israel. The second type depends on an observation of the current situation and aims at developing or protecting the national interest with respect to this situation. Third, there is an attitude aiming at getting along with Israel. For Israel is a country with strong economy and army and is at a key position for being close to the USA. Thusly, as a result of the developments in the Middle East after the 1991 Madrid Conference, the common attitude was like the third one. The first type of attitude was taken by Iran mostly. (Aras, 2000: 152) When the developments in Turkey were considered, it is possible to say that Turkey belonged to the last group. Israel had felt herself alone in the Middle East since 1948 and therefore had always cared the relations with Turkey as an important country of the region in terms of her area, population and military force. However until the nineties, since Turkey's policies in the Middle East had been limited, it could not meet the needs of this country. The security concerned of these two countries in the post Gulf War atmosphere were coincided on common points and this led these countries towards military cooperation. The Middle East Peace Process enabled

Turkey to pursue relations with Israel and with Arab World independently. (Özcan, 2002: 213-4)

There are several reasons for Israel to cooperate with Turkey. The Israeli Merhav Group had been mentoring the Turkish government in the Turkmenistan-Turkey Pipeline Project. This situation increased the importance of Israel for Turkey. The Turkmen government had granted the construction of the pipeline to the PSG consortium comprising of Becthel and General Electric companies of the USA, and these wanted to be partners with a great Turkish company. In the 3 billion dollars project Turkey-the USA and Israel partnership, along with other transit countries, appeared. In addition to this, it was foreseen that Israel's natural gas consumption would increase. Therefore, the Turkmen gas was important for Israel. The cooperation opportunities between Turkey and Israel with respect to realizing the Turkmen Gas under the Trans-Caspian project and many other projects were present. Energy was of crucial importance in the improvement of Turkey-Israel relations. (Yılmaz, 2001: 51-3)

The GAP and surrounding regions were adjacent to the natural gas and oil pipelines coming from Azerbaijan and other possible pipelines from Central Asia, and Turkey was aware of this. Through this project natural gas and oil would be easily transported via the Mediterranean or Syria. Therefore, weakening the geopolitics activity of Syria and ensuring that Syria stopped sponsoring PKK and Syria's allowing the water, oil and gas pipelines passing through her territory were for Israel's interest. Stopping the PKK movement was important for Israel in order to use the water card together with Turkey against the oil card of Arabs. Also, the GAP project was an important potential for American and Israeli investors. Israel cared about stopping the sabotages of PKK or any other leftist organization and wanted to show Turkey that she was willing to help. In the meantime, Israel, parallel to the USA policy, supported the nationalist Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq; since weakening of Iraq in the region might cause Arabs to weaken also. (Olson, 2005: 61-2) Israel expected Turkey to play an active role in the talks concerning infrastructure construction such as electricity, water, transportation in the Middle East Peace Talks and saw Turkey as the key country especially in the water issue. Israel wanted to make use of good relations between Turkey and Palestine in this process. In addition to

all of these, Turkey's vast territory was important for Israeli Air Forces to perform drills and Israel, having advanced technology in military and defense, saw Turkey as a giant market for defense industry. (Yılmaz, 2001: 54-7) Israel's seeing Turkey as a country suitable for investment with her 70 millions of population, developed economy and vast amount of water, can be shown as a reason for her to enter into cooperation with Turkey. (Olson, 2005: 62-4)

Israel had other interests from this cooperation. Any alliance with Turkey would help Israel to adapt the Middle East's political, social, intellectual and artistic culture. She could reduce the reactions that Arab states presented against her, and thus would ease her political and economic integration with West Bank and Gaza Strip. By diminishing the activity of Syria and Iraq, who felt themselves as contained by the Turkey-Israel alliance, it would be possible for the two countries to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel wanted to enter into relations with Central Asian countries especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, transcending the Middle East borders in order to increase her influence in global strategies to make her presence felt more, and wanted to make use of her alliance with Turkey that away. (*ibid*: 62-4)

We can argue that the threat perception of Israel played an important role in her entering into alliance with Turkey. With the missile strike on Iran by Iraq in 1988 and with the Revolt started in December 1987, Israel had got out of her fear of a total war from the neighbors, but the danger that the civilians being targets of missile attacks from the surrounding countries emerged, and this had been realized by Iraq's use of Scud missiles in the Gulf War. The aim of Israel's military doctrine after the Gulf War was to deter any large-scale attack from Arab countries. If this could not be realized, enrolling of reserve soldiers and early warning of attacks in order Israel forces to be prepared comprise the second step of the doctrine. The third step of the doctrine was to inflict absolute defeat without doubt. Iraq's using missiles in the Gulf war created the idea that Israel was defenseless against the missile threat, and caused fear that Israel's deterrence depending on conventional weapons would wear off. Israel's nuclear power, in fact increased her deterrence, but the unavailability of this nuclear power in limited battles and low intensity conflicts constrained the effectiveness of Israel's nuclear ability. Also, the Arab states were

increasing their ballistic missile stocks and obtaining cheaper Scud series missiles. This situation utterly disturbed Israel. Israel conceived the ideation that regional alliances should be formed in order to deter the ballistic missile threats. Israel felt the need of affiliating with Turkey due to ballistic missiles' becoming widespread in the region, the increase in their ranges and hit abilities, and their ability to carry chemical and nuclear war heads. (Özcan, 2002: 237-41)

Israel, for the first time in her history, initiated a strategic affiliation with a member of the OIC. The military alliance with Turkey was one of the most important results of the new strategic doctrine of Israel, the Security Revolution. In the nineties both countries shared the same security concerns and entered into a cooperation concentrating on military issues. Good relations with Jordan caused the feeling of isolation Israel felt in the Middle East to abate. This decreased the security and survival concerns. (*ibid*: 213-5)

When evaluating Israel-Turkey relations, it is not possible to skirt the place of the USA in the relations. Turkey had worked up a military-concentrated relation with the USA during the Cold War through the Truman Doctrine; however, in the new era the USA's moderate approach to Greece and Syria caused Turkey to embark on new quests. In addition, the USA imposed restrictions on the use of the defense systems she gave to Turkey. Israel, compared to the previous era, came across with the USA more; some advanced in science and technology renders Israel as a rival to the USA in some areas. Defense industry was the arena for the two countries and Turkey opted in favor of Israel. In addition to all these, Turkey-Israel cooperation was important for the double-containment policy by the USA. Also, the USA tried to balance the effectiveness of Iran, who was seen as a potential nuclear power, with Turkey. (Yılmaz, 2001: 59-60)

Turkey recognized the Palestine state right after the establishment but took her time in opening mutual representative offices. Turkey recognized Palestine state in 1988 before Arab states. We can infer that Turkey, while improving relations with Israel, did not pursue a policy against Arab states. (*ibid*: 36) At the beginning of 1990s, we can argue that Turkey took steps towards improving Israel relations. Carrying the relations onto embassy level and re-opening the consulate general in Jerusalem was brought into agenda and

consequently the relations both with Israel and Palestine were carried onto embassy level on 31 December 1991. In Turkey's carrying the Israel relations onto embassy level, there were the effects of the USSR and other Eastern Europe states' improving relations with Israel; the attempts of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, PRC, and even Kazakhstan to improve Israel relations; and Israel's willingness to make peace with Arab states. Turkey's simultaneous carrying the Palestine and Israel relations onto embassy level can be evaluated within the balance policy. It is indisputable that the Arab-Israel Peace started in Madrid on 30 October 1991 and the possible Middle East Peace had an influence on carrying the Palestine relations onto a higher level; since by this way the security concerned of Turkey would diminish, her commercial and political relations with the region would develop, and thus the level of welfare would be increased in Turkey. (Yavuz, 2005: 407-8) However, as it will be mentioned in the following chapters, Turkey would give weight on Israel's side by increasing military, political and economic cooperation in her balance policy due to some issues with the Arab world, and would not ignore the importance of the Jewish Lobby in the USA. In addition, the said endeavors brought results and the development in bilateral relations was recorder in trade the most. The volume of trade with Israel had increased by 62% between 1992 and 1994. The two countries started negotiations over double taxation, investment incentives and free trade agreements to prepare the legal framework for improving the economic relations, and an enormous increase was observed in the number of Israeli tourist visiting Turkey. (Altunışık, 2000: 61)

Despite this rapid improvement in economic relations, there were still a limitation in Turkey-Israel relations. In a declaration issued by the General Secretary of the Turkish General Staff, it was mentioned that the Turkish-Israeli cooperation had never included a military aspect, and Turkey denied any political and military cooperation. Turkey's, as a Muslim country, being attentive to the balance in the relations with Arab World and Israel was given as a justification for this. (*ibid*: 62)

Abdülkadir Ateş, Turkish Tourism Minister, made the first high-profile visit to Israel between 1 and 4 July 1992. After this visit the Tourism Cooperation Agreement was signed. (Yılmaz, 2001: 38) Again in July 1992, Israel President Chaim Herzog visited

Turkey within the events organized in for the 500th anniversary of the settlement of the Jews, expelled from Spain, in the Ottoman territory, and met with President Turgut Özal and the Prime Minister of the DYP and the SHP coalition, Süleyman Demirel. After the meetings, Israel President declared that Turkey had an important place in the region and would play a significant role in the Middle East Peace Talks. Iran reacted against this event. (Yavuz, 2005: 409)

After this visit, between 13 and 15 November 1992 Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin paid an official visit to Israel. As a result of this visit, the decision of improving the trade volume between two countries was taken and the Memorandum on Mutual Understanding and Cooperation Principles and the Culture, Science and Education Agreement were signed. Also, the decision for restarting the mutual attaché presence was taken, which had been cancelled in 1981. (*ibid*: 409)

Depite Turkey carried diplomatic relations onto a higher level; she refrained from improving relations with Israel. Turkey tried to develop Israel relations by protecting the balance in the relations with Arab countries. Therefore, Turkey, on all occasions, needed to emphasize that she saw the improvement of Israel relations parallel to the Peace Process. (Yılmaz, 2001: 38) We may give a development in 1993 which disturbed the relations as an example. Israel had launched a strike to South Lebanon, and as a reaction the planned visit to Israel by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin was cancelled. (Altunışık, 2000: 62)

The vacuum of power emerged after the Gulf War caused PKK to get stronger. The USA had been planning to found a Kurdish State in the region, and this caused Turkey to worry about her territorial integrity. Turkey got close to the Middle East and Syria, who was in favor of the territorial integrity of Iraq, due to Iraq's gaining power. On 12 February 1991, Turkish Foreign Affairs Minsiter Kurtcebe Alptemoçin started a seven days visit covering Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He paid visits to Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Sharaa and discussed the three principle issues. These were the condition of Iraq, the joint use of the regional waters and border security. For Iraq's condition, both parties indicated that the future regime of Iraq should be

determined by the Iraqi people and they opted for the territorial integrity of Iraq. Two countries decided that the official talks be held more often. In the border security issue, Syria soothed Turkey and declared that Syria's stability was closely dependent to Turkey's stability. As for the water issue, any resolution could not be reached. Syria emphasized the sharing of waters according to a quota, but Turkey insisted on a shared use via joint projects. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 554-5)

While Syria and Turkey declared a common ground for Northern Iraq's conditions, there were news about a new state would be established in Northern Iraq. In the meantime, Talabani paid some visits in Washington and this suggested the thought that the news could be of American origin. President Turgut Özal contacted the Kurdish leaders in Northern Iraq in order to diminish the effectiveness of PKK in the region. Again, just like the one in the Gulf War, Özal demanded a talk with Barzani and Talabani on 20 February 1991, without consulting the General Staff, and Talabani, a representative of Barzani and Undersecretary of Minister of Foreign Affairs Tugay Özçeri made an interview in Ankara. Iraq army on one side quelled the Shiite revolt, and on the other side was trying to quell the Kurdish rebellion. Thus, the Kurdish refugees fleeing from Northern Iraq pressed in upon Turkish border. Due to the pressures Turkey had to open her borders. An authority of vacuum left by Barzani emerged in Northern Iraq. As Iraq feared that Turkey would settle in this region, she tried to settle PKK in the area. Turgut Özal made a personal talk with Talabani to diminish the effectiveness of PKK. When this did not yield any results, three operations were done into Northern Iraq on 5 August, 11 and 25 October. Russia, Germany, Greece and Iraq protested Turkey. KDP and PUK understood that it would not be possible to found a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq without the permission of Turkey. KDP and PUK thought that they needed Turkey's support against PKK which had gained Saddam's support. (*ibid*: 255-6)

In April 1992, a commission comprising of high level Turkish authorities including the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin and Minister of Internal Affairs İsmet Sezgin, visited Damascus made official talks on a new security protocol. At the end of the talks, Turkey and Syria agreed on cooperating against terrorism and preventing border crossing of the terrorist from one country to the other. (Altunışık, 2000: 62) During the talks,

Turkish Minister of Internal Affairs presented the evidence that prove Öcalan's presence in Damascus and presence of PKK camps in Bekaa Valley, with the confessions of 25 Syrian PKK terrorists, and demanded Syria to fulfill the international agreements Syria had signed. On the contrary, Syrian authorities denied Öcalan's presence in Syria and declared that the control of Syria on Bekaa was limited to establish the peace between the groups and they kept to the 1987 protocol, and some infiltrations might occur, since the contol of an 800 km border was difficult. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 556)

Upon return, İsmet Sezgin declared that Syria would stop sponsoring PKK and the PKK bases in the Bekaa Valley would be closed. (Altunışık, 2000: 62) Thusly, after this protocol Syria closed the Dev-Sol camps immediately and Mahzun Korkmaz camp of PKK in autumn of the same year. (Yavuz, 2005: 411-2)

On 3 Ausgust 1992 Minister of Foreign Affairs Hikmet Çetin paid an official visit to Damascus and visited President Hafez Al-Assad and Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Sharaa; and mentioned Turkey's suspicion that the water issue is related with the PKK issue by declaring that Turkey would fulfill the promises, with all responsibilities, on Euphrates River if Syria adhered the agreement she had signed in April. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 556)

Following this, in September 1992, Syria, Iraq and Turkey convened in Damascus for the transboundary waters. In this meeting the climatic conditions, hydraulic conditions of Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and other information on the dams constructed on them were discussed; but the decision that parties would be given their rights on the two rivers in a manner pleasing each party could not be taken due to Turkish commission's demand for not determining an agreement date without consulting to the government. (*ibid*: 556)

In November 1992, Hikmet Çetin indicated that Syria used the terrorism card against the water issue, and Syria could not solve the water issue without Turkey, but Turkey was able to solve the terrorism issue without Syria; and convoked Syria to play safe. Upon similar declarations from the Prime Minister Demirel, Syria declared that the water should be shared according to international law, and indicated that Turkey's declarations caused

doubts in Syria and Arab World about the aims and projects of Turkey, and about their timings. In December, though, Syria blamed Turkey for deforcing her rights, being reluctant about improving the relations, and being uncompromising. Syria's arguments about Hatay issue had risen again as the relations went worse. (*ibid*: 557)

While Turkey had defended the territorial integrity of Iraq since the beginning of the Gulf War, she remained silent to the establishment of a parliament and a government in Northern Iraq in May 1992; she behaved as a part of the USA's projects to found a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq, and on the other hand tried to protect the territorial integrity of Iraq. On 4 November 1992, Eşref Bitlis, Commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces, took the guarantee that PKK would not be let to cross over Turkey in exchange for the retreat of Turkish troops from the region, by negotiating with the Kurdish administration. On 14 November 1992, Turkish, Iranian and Syrian Ministers of Foreign Affairs convened and declared that they would not allow the foundation of a Kurdish State in the region. Upon this, the Kurdish Parliament sent a letter to these three countries guaranteeing that they would not interfere with the internal affairs of these countries. (*ibid*: 557-8)

Since 1992, Turkey had been convening meeting with Iran and Syria on regional issues and Northern Iraq. The main reason for these meetings was the Kurdish national assembly elections in May 1992. Syria and Turkey were on common grounds for protecting the integrity of Iraq in these meetings. (Altunışık, 2000: 62) Despite the tense relations with Syria, Turkey tried not to disrupt the relations with Syria, since she expected support with respect to Northern Iraq. Turkish Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel and Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad declared jointly that they were against any incidents that would harm the civilians in Iraq by the USA, after Demirel's official visit to Damascus. (Yavuz, 2005: 412)

Syria-Israel relations should be evaluated in terms of the Middle East Peace Talks. We may argue that the USA implemented a new Middle East policy including regional security, control of weapons, Arab-Israel Peace, and economic development and political changes, after the Gulf War. Bush argued that Israel and Arab World faced a common foe after the Gulf War. This new policy included the peace depending on peace in exchange of

land principle of the Resolutions 242 and 338, giving Palestinians their legal rights, and providing Israel's security by ensuring all Arab States to recognize Israel. The Peace Conference convened in Madrid on 30 October 1991. In the process, on one hand the Israel-Palestine talks would be held, on the other hand Israel would meet with Arab States; and later on issues such as the control of the region, the refugee issue and water sharing would be solved via talks. (Süer, 2004: 150)

Syria left the Pan-Arabism and anti-Israel struggle policy and placed emphasis on the peace talks with Israel in the new atmosphere emerged in the region after the Gulf War. Economic dire straits had an important role in this attitude. Hafez Al-Assad remarked that the peace with Israel was a strategic choice. Al-Assad gave the green light to the talks in order to reclaim the Golan Heights occupied by Israel in 1967, to continue her influence on Lebanon, not to get biased in the region and to get into good relations with the USA. The USA paid attention to Israel-Syria peace talks within the Arab-Israel peace process for the sake of the continuance of the newly emerged geopolitical structure in the Middle East, the open markets, the regional security order that the USA tried to build and for the normalization process. Thus, the USA acted as a negotiator in the Syria-Israel peace talk process. For the USA, Syria was among the countries sponsoring terrorism, however, President Clinton made official interviews with Al-Assad in Geneva and Damasus in 1994 during the talks; and Secretary of State Warren Christopher paid over 20 official visits to Damascus. Some groups in Israel did not see the Syrian Peace an urgent one, therefore the pressure of the USA had an important place for Israel in Syria talks. (Altunışık, 2002: 271-2)

Syria-Israel talks started in Washington on 3 November 1991. However, there was dissensus between the parties on the resolution of the issues. Syria demanded an extensive peace and opted for carrying on the talks considering this demand. But Israel thought that Arabs would get stronger in such a situation. While Syria demanded a pact of non-agression in which Israel retreated from all the territory she had occupied, Israel demanded a peace in which diplomatic and economic relations would be started and the borders would be open for the people of the two countries. As for Syria, she opted for restoring the relations slowly after the internalization of peace idea, since these relations would

rummage the relations. The purpose of the security precautions for both sides was to prevent a sudden strike or at least minimize the damage. Israel demanded that Syria's land to be divided into four regions, these regions to be cleaned from weapons gradually, and the region near the border to be completely cleaned from weapons. As for Syria, she offered a five to seven kilometer security strip on both sides of the 4 June border. Israel wanted to place an early warning system on the highest point of the Golan Heigths, but Syria denied this offer declaring that this meant that Israel would not recognize Syria's sovereignity on the Golan Heights. Both sides were on common grounds on the control of the security precautions by an international force. However, while Syria demanded that the USA fulfilled this duty; Israel did not want the USA to take on this task fearing that the USA would withdraw her support on Israel for the sake of being neutral. (Süer, 2004: 152-7)

Golan Heights issue (Arı, 2007: 691) was the most important issue between Syria and Israel, one that Syria would not step back. As a result of the Cease Fire Agreement in 1974, Syria reclaimed 100 square kilometers of land from the occupied zone. Golan Heights is of great strategic significance for both Israel and Syria. For Israel, Golan Heights is important for the defense of Sea of Galilee and Hula Valley. If attacked, Israel would be able to penetrate towards Syria through Golan Heights. The Mount Hermon Summit on Golan Heights provides a good point of observation for Syrian territory. For Syria, Golan Heights are a natural obstacle against Israel's attacks, and occupation of Golan Heights by Isreal is a great threat for Syria, since they are only 35 kms away from Damascus. Also, in case the Golan Heights were given to Syria, the question where the 15.000 Israelite would go was a great problem. Golan Heights contains the water resources providing water for Israel; and among these the Bani River carries 20% of the water flowing into the Sea of Galilee from the Jordan River. These resources were occupied by Israel with the 1967 battles. If Golan was to be lost, Israel would lose a resource providing 30% of the water, but for Syria reclaiming Golan Heights was an important aim. We may add to these that reclamation of Golan Heights was a matter of honour for Hafez Al-Assad. While Syria demanded Israel to retreat completely from all the territories she had occupied, Israel denied doing so. (Süer, 2004: 158-62)

Syria-Israel biliateral talks started in Washington on 3 November 1991. Syria was represented by an old diplomat Muwaffak Al-Allaf, and Israel by Yossi Ben-Aharon, one of the builders of Yitzhak Shamir government's policies. In the first talks, there was an atmosphere of mutual distrust. Israel started to pursue peace for peace politics with the Shamir governments, and wanted to take precautions that would ensure trust between two parties. But in March 1992 this time, although, Syria declared that she had understood Israel's concerns on security and recognized Israel's existence, Shamir made past evaluations; and the distance between two parties could not be overcome. (*ibid*: 163-4)

Turkey was following this process with great attention. As it will be mentioned later, Turkey had concerns about Israel-Syria peace. While Turkey did not have any concerns about the talks in 1991, in which the talks started, later she started to worry about the future of the talks after Yitzhak Rabin came to power instead of Yitzhak Shamir in 1992; since Rabin declared that they were ready to retreat from Golan Heights by making a great change in Israel's policy contrarily to Shamir. (Sever, 2001: 88)

1993 was very important for Turkey. After the death of Turkish President Turgut Özal, Sülayman Demirel was elected president, and Tansu Çiller became Prime Minister. In this period armed struggle against PKK emerged as the basic struggle method. The General Staff, also, accepted that there was a low intensity battle in the Southeastern part of the country. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 558) Turkey's security concerns were increasing due to the uncertain environment in Northern Iraq and the idea that Turkey had lost her importance for the West. Turkey was surrounded with problems; by Syria and Iraq due to the issue of sharing Euphrates and Tigris Rivers' waters; by Iran due to her fundamentalist regime taking aim at laic Turkey; by the Caucasia due to the unstable atmosphere; and by Greece due to her support in PKK. (Yavuz, 2005: 415)

In 1993, Syria did not participate in the meeting made by Iraq and Turkey, about the waters of Euphrates, claiming that an agreement about the sharing of Euphrates' water had not been reached. However, a security protocol named Joint Memorandum was signed between Turkey and Syria in November 1993. With this document, Syria recognized PKK as a terrorist organization for the first time. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 558)

In the meeting assembled on 5 February 1994, Syria demanded a meeting from Turkey about the water issue by declaring that Öcalan was not in Syria's border, they would not allow PKK camps, and there were not any PKK camps in Lebanon. But, Turkey rejected this demand, declaring that Turkey would not make any agreement with Syria, unless the terrorism problem was solved. (*ibid*: 558)

In the meeting made in Paris on 23 July 1994, the idea of founding a Kurdish state by resolving the problems between KDP and PUK within the USA's containment policy came to light completely. In the agreement signed, there was not any article that referred to the concerns of Turkey or the Turcoman and Arab population living in Northern Iraq. Upon this Syria Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Sharaa, Iran Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Akbar Velayati and Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mümtaz Soysal convened a meeting in Damascus on 23 August 1994 and declared that they were against the establishment of a Kurdish state. Turkey showed her seriousness by closing the Habur border gate to foreign NGO representative and parliamentarians. After all, the Paris agreement had not lasted to long. Turkey's initiating the cross border Operation Steel in 1995 in order to prevent PKK's Norhern Iraq support drew the reactions of the EU and the USA, but Turkey in July of the same year initiated a new operation. (*ibid*: 558-9)

In addition to this, relations with Israel continued to be improved, since any common ground with Syria on the water issue could not be guaranteed and Syria's sponsoring PKK continued. In 1993, Shimon Peres, too, participated in the funeral service of President Turgut Özal on 21 April 1993 and this started the first official talks with Tansu Çiller government. Hikmet Çetin became the first Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs to visit Israel, with his visit on 14 November 1993, and signed a number of agreements. (Yavuz, 2005: 415) Israeli Prime Minister Ezer Weizman paid a visit to Turkey in January 1994, and declared that Israel wanted to improve better relations with Syria and wished Turkey be an arbitrager in this issue. (Altunışık, 2000: 63) This visit was important both in terms of being the first official foreign visit of the President of Israel, and being the first visit to Turkey. (Yavuz, 2005: 416) Just after this visit, on 10-12 April 1994, Israel Misnister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres paid a visit to Turkey. The talks were made with respect to

improving the Turkish-Israel relations on a regional scale and making economic cooperation. During Peres' visit, Hikmet Çetin brought into question the offer to market the Manavgat water to Israel. As for Peres, he emphasized the importance of Turkey's more active role in the Middle East Peace Talks for Israel and the need for the establishment of an institution in the Middle East like the OSCE. After this meeting, Israel Minister of Economics and Planning Shimon Sheetrit visited Turkey with a delegation of 70 businessmen, at the end of the talks, decisions towards creating opportunities for joint investments and cooperation in Central Asia were taken. (*ibid*: 416) As it can be seen, Turkey had got affiliated with Israel more, unless the problems with Syria remained unsolved, since Turkey pursued making use of Israel to force Syria to stop sponsoring PKK. As for Israel, as it was mentioned above, she planned to make use of her good relations with Turkey in developing relations with Central Asia.

Tansu Çiller paid a visit to Israel in November 1994; this visit was the first visit to Israel from Turkey on Prime Ministery level. During this visit Tansu Çiller, knowing that Israel would react, organized an unofficial visit to the Palestine Orient House Representative in Jerusalem, and this caused a minor crisis. After all, at the end of the visit Tansu Çiller signed a number of agreements. The most important one of these agreements, without doubt, was the giving out Israel by contract the modernization of F-4 warcrafts. (Altunışık, 2000: 63) By this agreement, the signals of future military cooperation were given.

Also, the basis for the future strategic partnership was laid with these agreements. Tansu Çiller was known with her harsh attitude against PKK terrorism, and it is a fact that she cared the security dimension of Israel relations more. Thusly, she offered Israel cooperation in intelligecence and against terrorism in general, even offered cooperation against Islamic terrorism, and mentioned Israel as the promised land. (Yavuz, 2005: 416) Also, during this visit, the signing a FTA was agreed upon, which included all sectors. However, this agreement was not signed immediately, it was signed in March 1996, and entered into force on 1 May 1997. The reason for this was the opposition of the small but effective textile industry in Israel, which was at on the verge of a crisis. (Altunışık, 2000: 67)

After the FTAs, the Agreement on Trade, Economical, Industrial and Scientific Cooperation Agreement and Mutual Incentive of the Enterprises Agreement were signed. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 573) Also, in March 1996, the Double Taxation Prevention Treaty was signed and entered into force on 27 May 1997. (Altunışık, 2000: 67-8) With these agreements, steps were taken in order to improve the economic relations and the foundations of long-lasting relations. Until the end of 1994, the alliance with Israel had been considered important due to Turkey's political and military elites, the concern that the threat came from the South the most, Kurdish issue and Islamic threat perception. While Syria was blamed for sponsoring PKK, Iran was blamed about her fundamentalist threat. As for Iraq, she was held responsible for the possible foundation of a Kurdish state and the settlement of PKK militants. (*ibid*: 63) Syria, reacted against the alliance between Turkey and Israel; and Çiller's mention of Israel as the promisedland received criticisms from the Arab and Muslim world. The positive atmosphere in the Middle East Peace Talks had got an important role in this much affiliation of Turkey and Israel. Turkey could act more freely in her relations with Isreal, as Israel advanced in the Peace Process with Palestine. (Yavuz, 2005: 417)

Despite Syria's announcement of PKK as a terrorist organization, PKK convened its third conference in Syria between 5 and 15 March 1994. PKK, with the decisions taken in this conference, made all the plans to collapse Turkey. In 1994, Turkey was facing an economic crisis. The plans made in this conference including the destrcution of the public factories and facilities owned by the state, and organizing attack in big cities and thus diminishing the tourism revenues had the possibility of dealing a major blow to the economy. Also, decisions such as spreading the struggle on wider areas, opening new camps in Armenia and forcing Turkey to open the Armenian border, contacting the countries that could apply pressure on Turkey, supporting other legal and illegal organizations in Turkey, and developing propaganda activities through radio and televisions broadcasting on a satellite hired from European countries were taken in this conference. (*ibid*: 418-9) As it is seen PKK went into great efforts of dragging Turkey into a domestic turmoil by increasing its activities and supporting legal and illegal organizations. The convening of this conference in Syria was like an evidence of Syria's sponsoring PKK against all odds.

In 1995 summer, PKK started to launch assaults towards Hatay region by infiltrating the Syrian border. Thus, it was seen that Syria had not taken the necessary precautions despite all security protocols. Upon this, Turkey suspended the Security and Cooperation Talks, which had to be done every 3 months. Syria issued a call for restarting the talks but Turkey attached conditions such as the extradition of Öcalan, ending the PKK activities in Lebanon and the Syria-Lebanon-Turkey Security cooperation. Turkey, also, rejected to participate in the agreement meetings about water issue. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 559) In 1993, Greece, too, participated in the Joint Defense Doctrine signed by the Greek Cypriot State and Syria in 1993. According to this doctrine in case of Turkey's attack Syria, Greece and Greek Cypriot State would cooperate in defense issues. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 117) Also, with this agreement, if Syria and Turkey engaged in a combat, Greek warcrafts could use the Syrian airspace. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 559) This agreement, signed by two foes, was very important from the point of Turkey, and increased the security concerns of Turkey. On one side the Syria threat that could emerge with a possible Israel-Syria peace within the Middle East Peace Process, on the other hand the Syria-Greece alliance forced Turkey to affiliate more with the Israel long-lasting enemy of Syria. Turkey's rejecting the debate demand of Syria in 1995 caused Syria to carry the water issue into the agenda of the Arab States in December 1995. Syria, gained the support of eight countries including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and a diplomatic note was sent to Turkey. In this note, it was indicated that Syria sustained damage from the dam construction activities on Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and the water let to Syria was polluted and Turkey was warned toward restarting bilateral talks. Just after this diplomatic note, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Quatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain met in Damascus and issued the Damascus Declaration. With thish Declaration, the Birecik Dam on the Euphrates was criticied and the equal sharing of Euphrates water was envisaged. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Deniz Baykal declared that any increase in Euphrates water would not be possible as long as Syria sponsored PKK. (*ibid*: 559) By this way, Turkey started to pursue *water against terrorism policy*, while Syria used the *terrorism against water* card. During this period, it was clearly indicated that if Syria wanted cooperation in water issue, she should stop sponsoring PKK.

It was mentioned above that, Syria and Greece made an agreement in 1995 envisaging the use of Syrian air bases by Greece in case Syria and Turkey engaged in combat. This made Turkey to feel more contained. In 1996, the tension between Turkey and Syria increased, and in June 1996 the news that a Syrian army of 40.000 soldiers were marching towards the border were spread. The Deputy Prime Minister Nahit Menteşe held a press conference and made the statement "If Syrians cross the line they will get the whacking". (Altunışık, 2000: 64) As it is seen the parties had got quite harsh against each other. All of these were the harbinger of a future conflict.

The continuance of the water issue with Syria, bringing of the transboundary water issue to the table more and more by Israel and the USA in the Middle East Peace Process, the threat of Syria's heading towards Turkey after a possible Israel-Syria peace forced Turkey to get more affiliated with Israel and to follow a harsher attitude towards Syria to stop PKK terrorism. (Yavuz, 2005: 442) Turkey thought that the USA remained silent against Syria to get positive results in Israel-Syria talks. Also, the Euphrates water issue would turn into a matter of negotiation as a result of the USA's pressure on Turkey in the Israel-Syria talks. In addition, since PKK was not in the list of the terrorist organizations mentioned in the talks, the support to PKK could continue while the Palestinian terrorist groups were removed from Syria. In summary, Israil-Syria talks, for Turkish authorities gave the impression that the issues in the region would be ignored. (Altunışık, 2000: 64)

1995 passed in economic problems for Turkey. Turkey was experiencing a great economic loss due to PKK, and the wounds of the 1994 crisis could not be dressed easily for this reason. There were problems with Europe due to human rights issues. The EU countries reacted against Turkey due to the arrests of the DEP deputies while leaving the assembly and this situation drew a portrait out of democracy for an EU candidate country. In this period, the reactionist movements proceeded to attack and the military resolutions performed against PKK, including the Cross Border Operation to Northern Iraq, remained inconclusive. The government did not last long, and Turkey was short of Ministers of Foreing Affairs. The Armed Forces became prominent as the only decision maker in this period, and this was criticized by the EU states on the account of the fact that it was against democracy. Tansu Çiller and the new partner of the government Deniz Baykal, from the

SHP, due to the change of chairperson, decided to hold an early election in December, after the Treaty on Customs Union with the EU. (Yavuz, 2005: 420)

While the studies on forming the new government after the 24 December 1995 elections were on their course, Turkey was experiencing problems in foreign policy due to PKK. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 550) The Motherland-True Path coalition government did not last long, and had to cope with many problems. With the Kardak crisis between Greece and Turkey, the two countries came within the ace of war, the crisis was resolved by courtesy of the Secretary General and President Clinton. (Yavuz, 2005: 423)

During this short-time government, Turkey sent a harsh diplomatic note to Syria for the extradition of Abdullah Öcalan, on 23 January 1996. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 559) In the meantime, on 23 February 1996, a MTCA was signed between Turkey represented by Deputy Chief of Staff Çevik Bir and General Director of Israel Ministry of Defense David Ivry. The agreement was made public two months after it was signed. (Altunışık, 2000: 66) In April, Israeli pilots visited Turkey for training. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 559) The government came under heavy criticism by the Arab and the Middle East countries externally, while it faced criticisms from the Welfare Party and some Islamic media internally. The publicized parts of the MTCA comprised of the cooperation areas such as training, information exchange on training, participation in other parties training drills and port visits. (Altunışık, 2000: 66) According to another comment, this agreement was signed as a retaliation to the 1995 agreement between Syria and Greece, envisaging Greece's use of Syria air bases in case of a war between Syria and Turkey. After the news in the press regarding that Israel military troops and intelligence would be trained in Turkey, the ideation that Turkey aimed at controlling the PKK camps in all three neighbors and to watch Iran's nuclear missile systems emerged. Thusly, at the end of December 1996, Cemil Bayık, commander ARGK and the right arm of Abdullah Öcalan, called out this idea and argued that one of the reasons for Turkey's cooperation with Israel was to destroy PKK in an interview with journalist Sheri Lazer. (Olson, 2005: 30) The highest disputed issue of this agreement was the right of the parties to perform training flights in each others airspaces. The government and the general staff argued that this agreement was in favor of Turkey's security, and also Turkish pilots would have the chance to be trained

with the electronic war technology from Israel with this agreement. The authorities also argued that the agreement is completely same with the MTCA's signed with other countries, and this would cause long-term effects for Turkey, Israel and other regions. Thusly they succeeded in convincing the criticizing parties in this way. (Altunışık, 2000: 66)

The MTCA attracted reactions from an important part of the Arab World, particularly Syria. This agreement became an instrument of counter propaganda in the Arab public opinion and neighbors of Turkey, and the effectiveness of Turkey in the Middle East was tried to be diminished. Many Middle East countries, particularly Egypt, Syria and Iran, criticized the agreement. Syria conducted lobbying activities in the Arab World through this cooperation and rallied them as supporters, since Arabs, too, thought that this cooperation would affect the peace in the region. In the Arab summit convened in Cairo in 1996, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Arab states warned Syria for her sponsoring PKK. However, Syria used Israel-Turkey cooperation as a trump card in this summit. Syrian Minister of Defense General Mustafa Tlass argued that this MTCA was against Syria and added on to his words that the biggest problem before Arabs was the Turkey-Israel affiliation. Egypt sent the Minister of Foreign Affairs Amr Mousa to Turkey to evaluate the MTCAs, but Amr Mousa was not satisfied with the content of the MTCAs. Egypt, also, mentioned her disturbance of the agreements on all occasions. These kinds of criticisms were also directed to Israel by Greece and Armenia. The USA welcomed this cooperation. The British Journal Economist wrote that Turkey was in pursuit of a new friend after the EU's exclusion, and called the cooperation as *alliance*. (Yılmaz, 2001: 66-74)

Groups trying to survive in the Arab World needed a common enemy in order to protect the domestic integrity of this domain. The formation of an anti-Iranian Arab bloc during Iran-Iraq war, their antagonizing Israel with anti-zionist ideas, emergence of an anti-Turkey understanding after the Turkey-Israel agreement were all examples of this psychology. A sole anti-Israel attitude, as it had also been purued by the Islamic opposition, was corroborative of the Arab nationalism thesis that argued that the main problem in the Middle East was not a Muslim problem but an Arab problem; since Turkey, despite being an Islam country, took sides with Israel. The nationalism in the Middle East

process was of a controllable one; however, this situation created potential tension areas in the region. According to Davutoğlu, the convening of the Arab Summit in Cairo in 1996 against Israel due to the harsh politics of Israel President Netanyahu; against Turkey for Turkey-Israel cooperation; and against Iran for her attempts to create a sphere of influence in the Gulf Region reinforced the impression that this summit was a reactional one. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 363-8)

Within Turkey, this cooperation was seriously criticized by the Islamic groups. On the other hand, there was a group expressing that the relations with Arabs had always been frustration, and supporting the cooperation with Israel; and another group that stated a silent diplomacy should be pursued between Turkey and Israel, for Turkey should avoid making the Arab states suspicious. As for Israel, there were groups arguing that Turkey had problems with Greece over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus, and problems with Syria over PKK, and these problems would affect Israel, although Israel had nothing to do with these issues; and also groups asserting that this cooperation dragged Israel into Kurdish issue. They thought that this agreement would do no good for Israel and moreover wheretted Israel-Syria relations. (Yılmaz, 2001: 72-7)

Another aspect of the military cooperation was the joint manoeuvres. In April 1996, Turkish and Israeli warcrafts performed joint refueling manoeuvres in the air. These manoeuvres continued to be performed with the participation of the USA under the name of Reliant Mermaidin the Mediterranean in 1997, in the Aegean and the Marmara in 1999 and in 2001. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 572)

This affiliation turned into a multi-faceted relation, not only an agreement including the security concerns, but also a relation improving in diplomatic and economic areas and envisaging cooperation in defense industry. As a proof, the Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement and FTA signed after the MTCA could be given. The General Staff also indicated that this agreement was only a framework agreement. In January 1997, the sea manoeuvre Reliant Mermaid, performed with the participation of the USA, revealed that this cooperation was comprehensive. (Özcan, 2002: 216-20)

On the face of all these developments, Syria ensured the pressure on Turkey by bringing into agenda the water issue in the Arab Union meeting. Turkey-Israel alliance created the convenient atmosphere for Syria to gain Arab states' support regarding the water issue. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 560)

In 1992 elections, Yitzhak Rabin declared that the priority would be given to the Palestine issue, but when it was comprehended that Hafez Al-Assad was serious, he thought that it was more preferable to discuss with an authoritarian President instead of a diffused Palestine policy, and feared Syria's undermining the peace talks with Palestine. Israel realized that a retreat was inevitable for peace. Rabin left the peace for peace policy and started to think about a peace process including retreat. In this respect, he gave the signals to Syria that Israel could partially retreat. However, Al-Assad demanded Israel to fulfill the retreat condition before the peace was made. However, Syria was suspicious of Israel's retreat, since with this retreat a link between secure borders and recognized borders was coupled, and this showed Israel's intention to retreat to a border that she would determine. Lastly, Rabin presented the the amount of retreat determines the amount of peace formula with the slogan of Not Retreat from Golan, but Retreat in Golan. Al-Assad, on the other hand, emphasizes the formula all out peace for all out retreat. (Süer, 2004: 164-6)

The locked talks were started on 27 April 1993 again. Syria started to support the complete retreat for complete peace, and while the all out expression included all the territory occupied in 1967, the expression complete was more acceptable, since it included only Golan; therefore the locked talks started again on 27 April 1993. However, Rabin rejected this condition. Upon this, Syria started to sponsor Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon. And this caused the talks to lock. (*ibid*: 166-8)

On 3 August 1993, the USA Secretary of State Christopher was told that he should inform Al-Assad that if Israel's conditions were to be accepted, Israel would retreat from Golan. (*ibid*: 168) Christopher demanded Al-Assad to be in full diplomatic relation with Israel in exchange for Israel's retreat from Golan, and not to sponsor Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad in Lebanon. Israel envisaged a partial retreat from Golan and a five years period in which Syria's condition would be evaluated and offered an international force to be deployed for

the security in the region. It is obvious that this offer aimed at ruling out any possible opposition from Syria duing the Oslo Process. Israel, also, thought that a peace with Syria would be effective in providing a peace agreement with Lebanon. As for Al-Assad, he insisted on the formula complete retreat for complete peace. (Arı, 2007: 691)

Rabin was not pleased with this reply and the attention was drawn to Palestine. Syria-Israel peace talks stopped; on the other hand Israel signed the Oslo Agreement with Palestine. Syria felt disturbed by PLO's independent action and Al-Assad took one step back after this agreement. While Israel was busy with the implementation of the Oslo Agreement and the secret talks with Jordan after the Oslo Agreement, and she wanted to punish Al-Assad for his denial of Israel's offer, she wanted the USA to keep Syria waiting for a couple of months. In 1994, Israel returned to her policy of giving weight to Syria, after Rabin's visit to Washington. Rabin, while expressing the importance of Syria in the region, continued his insistence on the security measures. On the other hand, the Jordan-Israel war ended on 25 July 1994, and although Al-Assad was angry with this, he abstained from entering a quarrel with an Arab state. (Süer, 2004: 168-71)

On 29 July 1994, the talks were started between ambassadors. Syria and Israel determined the theme of peace talks as determined by normalizing the relations, security measures, retreating and the phases of implementation. However, any positive results could not be obtained from the talks between ambassadors. The issue was agreed to be discussed by the soldiers. The Chiefs of General Staff of both sides, Ehud Barak and Hikmat Al-Shibaabi, at the end of the talk made in May 1995, determined reducing the possibility of a sudden strike, preventing the possible conflicts along the border, reducing the possibility of a comprehensive attack as the aims; and mutual acceptance and implementation of security measures, and the implementation of these measures in a respectful manner to each parties' sovereignity and territorial integrity as principles. The aims were built on Israel's expectations, and the principles on the concerns of Syria. However, in this phase the role of the international force, the early warning systems and the regions in which the disarmament would be implemented started to be discussed. Syria rejected the project Israel offered under the name of Shtauber arguing that the borders in the project was not the 4 July 1967 borders, the early warning system was to be built on Golan, the regions to

be disarmed were expanded, and Syria's armed forces were interloped. Also, Syria offered that the region to be disarmed would be a region form Quneitra to Safed instead of from Damascus to Safed. This was a sign of Syria abandoning the reciprocity principle. Israeli opposition leader Netanyahu's leaking this document and Israel's demand of an observatory on Mount Hermon caused these positive developments to remain inconclusive and, there had not been any development until the assassination of Rabin on 4 November 1995. (*ibid*: 171-3)

Peres, becoming Prime Minister with the death of Rabin, in contrast to Rabin, did not opted for extending the implementation of the agreement over time. Also, he wanted the main issues to be discussed at the same time, without ignoring the the security issues. Rabin had a Great Middle East ideal depending mostly on the economic development. Golan Heights should be a Free Trade Zone, and the economic developments between two countries would enable the real security between them. (*ibid*: 173-4) The first round of the Syria-Israel peace talks was done in Maryland on 27 December 1995; and the second round in Wye Conference on 3 January 1996. (Arı, 2007: 692) In the talks, parties focused on normalizing the relations, economic partnership and the scope of the peace. Al-Assad stated that the relations culd be softened even if just a bit before the retreat. The peace, now, included only Syria and Lebanon. (Süer, 2004: 174)

At that period the elections were near and Israel government preferred to procrastinate and leave the peace talks after the elections, since they did not want to lose the elections. (Arı, 2007: 692)

The second round of the talks started in Wye on 24 January 1996. In these talks, the security issues were discussed mainly. Syria thought the talks were proceeding positively, but Peres did the other way so. Upon Syria's not reproaching the suicide attacks during the talks, the talks locked on 4 March 1996. (Süer, 2004: 174-5) Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was one of the builders of peace, was killed by a Jewish member of radical right wing on 4 November 1995. This event proved that how far the anti-peace groups dared to go. (Arı, 2007: 704)

At the end of the elections held, Benjamin Netanyahu was elected Prime Minister on 29 May 1996. Netanyahu offered that the talks should start from the beginning, since there was not any agreement binding their government. He summarized the policy he would follow in the talks as peace for peace and security building peace. Also, Israel's externalizing Lebanon from the talks became a reason that was repelling for Syria. Netanyahu imposed three conditions. These were security, reciprocity and democracy, human rights. (Süer, 2004: 175-6) Netanyahu indicated that Golan and Southern Lebanon were of great significance for Israel's security, and therefore they did not want to retreat from Golan. As for Syria, she demanded that the talks continued from the position of March 1996. Upon the denial of mutual claims the Syria-Israel talks locked. (Arı, 2007: 692)

A change in Turkey's relations with the parties of the Peace Talks between 1991 and 1995 drew attention. Turkey-Israel relations were improving whereas Turkey-Syria relations were detoriating each day passed. This change became more evident in the talks between 1996 and 1998. (Sever, 2001: 88)

Syria felt herself stalemated with the emergence of a strategic cooperation between Israel and Turkey through the MTCA in February 1996 and immediately after through this, the Defense Cooperation Agreement signed in August. Syria thought that this kind of cooperation would affect the regional balances and Syria's place in the region. Syria developed relations with the EU as a balancing measure against this cooperation, and the USA and Israel. In 1995, Syria, too, participated in the Barcelona Conference which aims at reinforcing the Mediterranean policy of the EU and to establish the Mediterranean Free Trade Zone in 2010. In 1997, negotiations between Syria and the EU, which might result in an Association Agreement, started. Also, the EuroMed agreement, which envisaged free trade between Syria and the Mediterranean States for certain goos, was signed, Syria started to receive aids from the EU and the European Development Bank. On the other hand, Syria tried to enhance her relations with Iraq, which had been distrupted since the Gulf War; and in the meantime tried to get in touch with the Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq, considering the weakness of the Iraq regime. In addition, Syria placed emphasis on increasing her influence on Lebanon, and resorted to improve the good relations with

Egypt and Gulf countries established during the Damascus Declaration. Syria reinforced her good relations with Iran, continuing since the 1980s. She tried to establish relations with Russia to improve her military capabilities, and Hafez Al-Assad visited Moscow in 1999, for the first time since 1990s; however the Syria-Russia relations had always been full with limitations due to the USA's sensitivity. Syria cared about the USA's opinions since she did not want to completely break off the relations with the USA. (Altunışık, 2002: 273-6)

The timing of the MTCAs signed was interesting. It was mentioned before that Turkey had concerns about Israel-Syria Peace Talks. It can be said that this was an act of precaution and tactic for the Israel-Syria Peace Talks restarted in December 1995 with great expectations as well as a remedy for the PKK chagrin, a search for alternative to the West in weapons purchase, and an expectation of support from the Jewish lobby in the USA. (Sever, 2001: 90)

Also, it can ve said that it was thought that the agreement could be used by Israel, if necessary, as a trump card in the talks. After Turkey's signing the agreement in February, Israel got engaged decisively into the peace talks with Palestine and Syria. Turkey remained silent to suspension of the peace talks due to the attacks of HAMAS to Israeli cities in March 1996 just a few days after the signing of the agreement. In addition, Turkey contended only with declaring that an Israeli military operation would trump the Middle East Peace Process when Israel and Hezbollah came across in Lebanon in April. (*ibid*: 92)

After these developments between Israel, Syria and Palestine, a permanent peace would affect Turkey substantially. Turkey's attitude towards the Middle East Peace Process should be evaluated from two perspectives. Turkey was a sound supported of the Middle East Peace. This support resulted from Turkey's expecting the regional stability, her idea that peace would revive the regional economy and the idea that peace would create new opportunities for investments and trade. Also, through a possible peace, Turkey would be freed from being mixed up in the affair in an Israel-Arab conflict, and trying to achieve balance in politic and diplomatic relations with Arab states and Israel; since this situation had caused Turkey to be criticized more and more by the Arab states. (Sayari, 1997: 50)

Also, the Islamic movements, and terrorist organizations, emerged in the unstable atmosphere in the region, caused security concerns for Turkey. In addition the anti-semitist acts and discourse of the radical Islamic parties in the country were based on the Arab-Israel conflict. A possible peace would prevent anti-semitism from being a matter of domestic policy. (Yılmaz, 2001: 129-30) Therefore, Turkey participated in many endevours that would enable peace, especially regarding the water issue, control of armament and economy. (Sayari, 1997: 50) However, Turkey, supporting the Middle East peace, approached Israel-Syria peace with suspicion; since Syria would head for Turkey after making peace with Israel, would bring water issue into agenda more, would increase the support she gave to PKK, and through the agreemet Syria signed with Greece, Turkey would experience more problems with Greece in the Aegean Sea. (Öztürk, 1997: 56) Also, Turkey had the concern that Israel might take sides with Syria with regard to water issue, and Iraq, too, could join this alliance. (*ibid*: 60) Turkey, in reply to these developments, harshened her policy towards the countries sponsoring PKK, particularly Syria, and on the other hand continued to get more affiliated with Israel. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 559)

4.3. Welfare-Path Government and Turkey-Israel and Turkey-Syria Relations

On 6 June 1996 the Motherland-True Path government resigned and the government formation duty was given to Necmettin Erbakan leader of the RP. At the end of the negotiations the Welfare-Path government comprising of the RP and the DYP was formed after receiving vote of confidence with 278 votes in favour against 256 counter vote and 1 abstanign vote on 8 July 1996. In this government alternating Prime Ministry formula would be implemented and the first turn would be Erbakan's. By this way, for the first time in the history of Republic, a party leader on behalf of *Political Islam*, which included the idea of shariah, came to power through normal procedure, according to the hoyles of democracy. Necmettin Erbakan, Prime Minister of the Welfare-Path government, upon acceding the rank brought controversial matters such as turban – headscarf - and building a mosque in Taksim Square into agenda, the RP member Major of Istanbul Recep Tayyip Erdoğan put into words that "Democracy is not a destination but a means", Sincan Major of Ankara Province organized an activity containint shariah themes with the Iran ambassador of Ankara and used the words "We will inoculate shariah with injection if

necessary". (Kongar, 2005: 274-5) With this event, fundamentalism became an important issue in the relations between Iran and Turkey. While Turkish government declared the ambassador as persona non grata, Iran expelled Turkish ambassador. The belief that Iran supported the fundamentalist movements in Turkey increased in Turkish public opinion. (Altunışık, 2000: 64-5) All these declerations raised question marks in minds that the Welfare-Path government was inclined to abolish democracy and found a shariah state. Also, some scandals about some sects attested to the fact that Islam had been used as a means of economic, financial, social and individual exploitation through sects in the 74th establishment anniversary of the Republic. (Kongar, 2005: 275-6)

The Welfare-Path government was seen as an opportunity to straighten the relations with the Arab World. This idea was laid aside with Tansu Çiller being the Minister of Foreing Affairs of the new government. However, the Secretary of State Abdullah Gül assigned by Necmettin Erbakan undertook many duties of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State T. Rıza Güneri undertook relations with Iran and Sudan, Secretary of State Ahmet Cemil Tunç undertook the relations with Iraq and the Middle East. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 560)

RP, the partner of the Welfare-Path party, placed the idea of rescuing Turkey from the West's exploitation order and make her close with Islam countries, which had cultural and historical ties with Turkey, to the basis of Turkey's foreign policy. Also it had ideals having a voice in international political organizations after contacting them. (*ibid*: 560) Erbakan, before taking the office, declared that they aimed at forming a M-7 similar to the G-7 comprising of the seven richest countries in the world and establishing an Islamic NATO similar to NATO. It is known that Erbakan was also connected with the Sunnite and radical organization known as Muslim Brethren, which disturbed Syria and Egypt. (Yavuz, 2005: 423-4) Thusly, his official talks with Seyf al-Islam Al-Banna, an important name in Muslim Brethren on 29 July 1996 and shortly after with Rashid Al-Ghannushi, leader of the En-Nahda movement drew reactions from Egypt and Tunusia (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 560), and therefore Erbakan's M-7 project was not welcomed in Egypt which he visited during his Egypt-Libya-Tunusia visit. (Yavuz, 2005: 424)

In the foreign policy aims of the Welfare-Path government, the Poised Hammer was not mentioned in order to dispel the concerns about making radical changes in relations with the West; and it was declared that the Customs Union responsibilities would be fulfilled as much as the EU side fulfilled. Also, the guarantee that any changes would not commited in the relations with Israel by declaring the agreements would be abided by; and it was emphasized that the constitutional fight against PKK would be continued by protecting the unitary structure and adhering to the conditions determined in the constitutions. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 560-1) With these declarations, the Welfare-Path government took precautions for the criticism to rise in public opinion; since if the RP, criticized by the public opinion for its pro-shariah ideals, turned its back to the West completely, it could get more reaction from the military. Prime Minister Erbakan paid his first official visit to KKTC due to the 22nd anniversary of Cyprus Operation, and immediately after, started an official Trip in Asia including Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. During this visit, the Ministry of Foreing Affairs was excluded. Also, during the bilateral talks, except for the one with Iran President Rafsanjani, Erbakan declared that the MIT could have been under the influence of CIA and MOSSAD, and this drew serious reaction in Turkey. (*ibid*: 561)

In the meantime, Minister of Justice Şevket Kazan and Minister of Education Mehmet Sağlam visited Baghdad and offered a terror summit between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, but Iraq stated that she would not sit at the table with Syria. Iraq, also, demanded that the Poised Hammer's mandate not to be renewed, trade with Iraq to be started and especially the border trade to be brought into force again. There were no solution could be provided from those talks. But Kazan's declaration, after returning Turkey, that in Iraq the penalties were abated after reciting the Quran contributed the wearing out process of RP. (*ibid*: 561)

Erbakan's visit, despite the reaction from the opposition and DYP, the other partner of the government, to Egypt, Libya and Nigeria in October, revealed the drawbacks of the multifocal foreign policy, and caused the dissensus in the government to come into light more and more. Erbakan's visit started with Egypt. However, the fact that Egypt did not attach such importance to this visit as Turkey emanated when Egypt requested from Turkey to delay their arrival in Cairo due to the Prime Minister's change of program.

President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak did not accept the M-7 project. Also, while any positive results could not be obtained at the end of the visit, there had been diplomatic scandals such as Turkish deputies not being accepted from the protocol gate in the Presidency, and the absence of Turkish Flag during welcoming and farewell ceremonies. Erbakan visited Libya after Egypt. Kaddafi issued statements favoring the Kurdish state and against Atatürk in the press conference held in his tent with Erbakan present at his side. Erbakan's confining himself to only declaring that there was not a Kurdish issue in Turkey but a terrorism issue, and this was a plan that the Westerners implement to divide Turkey instead of giving a harsh reaction caused great consternation. Erbakan withdrew from the talks with Kaddafi, lasting 7 hours, with the reason that Kaddafi did not accept the expression that "PKK is a terrorist organization and we deny the terrorist acts of this organization". Also, any positive results about the receivables of Turksih constructors could not be provided. In Turkey, Tansu Çiller, the partner of the government, reacted harshly against Kaddafi, and upon Çiller's decision, Tripoli ambassador of Turkey Ateş Balkan was summoned to Ankara to hold consultations. Erbakan's Nigeria visit after Libya ended without any problems. However, due to the events in the Libya visit, and not getting the expected support from Egypt, RP started to wear of in domestic policy, and also the African initiative could not provide new contributions. (*ibid*: 561-3)

There had not been any change in armed struggle against PKK during Welfare-Path government. Baghdad, making use of the problems between KDP and PUK, and by making agreement with KDP, launched and operation into Northern Iraq against PUK on 31 August 1996. While Turkey found this favorable, the USA started the Ankara process in which Turkey found her place. However, in these talks, due to Turkey's demand from Barzani to get close with Baghdad; and the USA's demand that the cooperation between the KDP and PUK against Saddam to continue, it became obvious that there were dissensus between the parties. The USA, in the second round, received guarantee from KDP and PUK that they would struggle agains PKK, in order to resolve Turkey's concerns. Also, the USA ensured Turkey to accept the *temporary regime* in the region. With this policy, Turkey seemed that she took a step back from the policy of protecting Iraq's territorial integrity, she had pursued for many years. However, in the same period, betterment in Iraq relations was present. (*ibid*: 563) Turkey gave the impression to the

USA that she would remain unresponsive to the new events emerging in the region, and at the same time she would reveal that she had not given up the Iraq's territorial integrity policy by afiliating with Iraq more. Turkey had worries that the USA and Israel would support Kurdish nationalism. Israel had supported Kurdish nationalism during 1960s and 1970s, since Iraq's loss of power was in favor of Israel. (Altunışık, 2000: 63) Also, one should add that; Barzani and the Kurdish group led by him were important for Israel. In the 1950, an important proportion of the Kurdish Jews had been settled in Israel with the Operations Ezra and Nehemiah. The Kurdish Jews comprising of 180.000 people according to the 1998 population census, were of great significance for Israel. (Yavuz, 2005: 430) However this concern did not affect the affiliation of Turkey and Israel.

In May 1996 Benjamin Netanyahu took the office in Israel. Netanyahu was known of his closeness to radical Jews. (*ibid*: 424) Netanyahu stated that the peace talks would continue in his first declaration, but presented negative approach in terms of retreat from Golan, East Jerusalam and West Bank, and stopping the Jewish settlements; and declared that Palestine should be dependent on Israel in her foreign relations, the status of Jerusalem would never be made a matter of debate and they would not retreat from Golan unless Syria gave absolute guarantees. And this attitude raised the idea in the Arab World that the peace process was in danger. As for the USA, she exerted that she woul not give up the policy of *supporting Israel, no matter who takes the office*. (Arı, 2007: 705) There were some countries that thought that Israel's this attitude arose from her good relations with Turkey. (Yavuz, 2005: 424)

On Turkey's side, the suspicions were present about the discussion of the water, terrorism and security issues between Syria and Israel at the same time during the Israel-Syria Peace Talks sponsored by the USA. In addition to these, suggestions regarding Turkey's waters to be a matter of bargain worried Turkey. At the same time, Turkey wanted to include PKK in the terrorist groups list in the talks between 1995 and 1996. Despite the USA declared PKK as a terrorist organization, Turkey was worried about the USA's ignoring Syria's PKK support and even removing Syria from the terrorist states list just for the sake of the talks. (Sever, 2001: 88-90) Syria's pariticipation in the Peace Talks was emphasized in numerous visits by the USA Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Syria, and even the

fact that Syria's support might be ignored until the Israel-Syria peace was made had wide press coverage. However, neither the USA nor Israel accepted the expressions appeared on the media. Israel had given Turkey the guarantee that Syria's support to PKK would not be ignored. Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Onur Öymen declared, during a visit to Israel, that if the peace agreement was signed before Syria had stopped her sponsoring PKK, this would lead to Syria's further support to terrorist groups. Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Eli Dayan replied that Israel would not sign such an agreement before Syria stopped sponsoring the terrorist groups. But, on the other hand, these agreements were described as cooperation agreements on topics such as communication; the message that PKK is a domestic issue of Turkey was given. (*ibid*: 91)

Discussion of the water issue also concerned Turkey. According to this concern, in exchange for the water loss in Golan Heights there would be a search for extra water for Syria. Syria demanded Israel and the USA to apply pressure on Turkey for letting more water. Turkey gave the answer that the waters of Euphrates would not be made a matter of debate. Israel gave the answer that this issue was not in her agenda and can be solved via bilateral talks between Syria and Turkey, upon Onur Öymen's statements that Turkey did not want a debate on sharing of water, in 1996. (*ibid*: 92)

In Welfare-Path government period, there had not been a change in the policy that envisaged reducing the relations with Arab World and improving the relations with Israel. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 564) Despite Necmettin Erbakan's anti-semitic discourse before his Prime Ministry and his opposition to the 23 February 1996 MTCA with the statement "We will unrip it and throw it", he signed the Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement in August 1996. (Yavuz, 2005: 424) However, it should be added that he wanted the decree about the approval of this agreement to be kept secret while he was laying the decree before the cabinet. (Yılmaz, 2001: 41) This agreement was the second step of the military cooperation between two countries. (Özcan, 2002: 222) According to the agreement, works would be started in information transfer about defense matters and in the area of exchange of technicians for training, and this principle was fulfilled. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 572) Turkish Army declared a challenging modernization program, amounting 150 billion dollars, to obtain high quality hardware and technology; but the

European states acted reluctantly in aiding Turkey due to human rights and detoriated relations with Greece. In 1995, Turkey appealed to the European states for the modernization of F-4 warcrafts, but Europe did not accept this. Israel had domestic technology and weapons and she was in a position to give these to Turkey without considering human rights or other political issues. (Altunışık, 2000: 66) Until 1996, the modernization of 54 Turkish F-4 warcrafts had started in the IAI. 632.500.000 $ were paid to Israel by Turkey for this project. Turkey was satisfied with the F-4 modernization and contracted the modernization of 48 Turkish F-5 warcrafts to Israel in 1998. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 572)

Another step of the cooperation was the *Strategic Dialogue Forum* planned to be held in six months periods. These meeting would be held with the participation senior military officials and regional security issues would be discussed. (Özcan, 2002: 229) These meetings were considered as an intimidation against Iran and Syria, two countries with whom Israel and Turkey had several problems. In this period, Israeli President Netanyahu was pursuing a harsher policy against Syria, and this attitude relieved Turkey. (Yavuz, 2005: 424)

The cooperation between two countries also included the classified information exchange. On some references, it was written that Turkey allowed Israel to make electronic intelligence flights over the Syria, Iraq and Iran borders of Turkey in order to gather intelligence about these countries. However, news of this kind was refuted by official sources. In May 1997, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told, during an interview, that intelligence exchange has been made between two countires about terrorism related issues. He also added to his expressions that PKK was a terrorsist organization, and if any information related to the terrorism against a friend and allied nation was to be obtained they immediately transferred this information, and they would increase this exchange with Turkey. (Özcan, 2002: 227-9)

The Israel policy of Welfare Party was welcomed by the Israeli government, and Prime Minister Netanyahu told that the relations with Turkey had improved more during Erbakan government, in an interview. Erbakan's pro-Israel policies continued against the decisions

taken by the Arab Union. Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to build new Jewish settlements between East Jerusalem and West Bank enraged many Arab states, particularly Palestine, Syria and Iran, and the decision to suspend the process of normalization of relations with Israel was taken in the Arab summit convened in Cairo in 1997. As for Turkey, while on one hand she tried to convince Israel to take a step back, on the other hand she declared that the Arab Union's decisions did not bind Turkey. (Yılmaz, 2001: 41-2) As it can be seen, Erbakan, despite his pro-Arab policies, could not escape taking pro-Israel steps.

The course of Turkey-Israel relations was defined as robust security cooperation and political relations instead of an alliance in an interview with Israeli Minister of Defense Yitzhak Mordichai in April 1997; Mordiachi emphasized that the alliance was not against a third country, however he declared that if Iraq, Iran or Syria was to attack Turkey they would find a combined force before them. But, Syria, despite these declarations would allow for PKK's 4th conference to be held in Damascus between 1 and 5 May, and would make a kind of retaliation. Upon the decisions taken in this conference, PKK started suicide attacks in Sivas, Tunceli and Hatay in 1996. (Yavuz, 2005: 425-6)

This cooperation between Turkey and Israel caused both parties to be criticized. Armeni and Greece criticized Israel due to this cooperation with Turkey. As for Turkey, she was heavily criticized by the member states in the OIC held in Teheran at the end of 1997; even President Süleyman Demirel left the conference one day earlier due to harsh criticisms. (Aras, 2000: 155)

PKK gave weight to its political wing in 1997, and promoted 18 European organizations, 10 of which were in Germany, including centers like Vienna, Copenhagen, Oslo, Helsinki, Stockholm, Madrid and Rome. Thus, PKK was brought into agenda in the European Parliament. The deputies of the closed DEP party who were in Europe convened the 7th General Assembly of the Kurdish Parliament in Exile in Brussels, and decided to return Northern Iraq and support PKK from there. Europe's allowing for the convening of these congresses caused PKK to recover and improve morale. (Yavuz, 2005: 428)

Israeli government declared, on 18 February 1997, that she would build 6.500 residences in Har Homa near Jerusalem, and this troubled the atmosphere again. Despite all preventions, Netanyahu started the constructions on 18 March. On March 21, the USA prevented the Security Council to decree a resolution towards Israel stopping the contructions. (Arı, 2007: 711) Also, the attempts of Netanyahu to build Jewish settlements between East Jerusalem and West Bank were reproached by Arab and Muslim states, particularly Palestine, Syria and Iran. (Yavuz, 2005: 428) The Arab Union convened in Cairo on 31 March 1997 and with the declaration issued, they indicated that they decided to suspense the relations with Israel and the ban applied to Israel to continue, since the peace was hindered with Israel's construction activities in Har Homa. (Arı, 2007: 712) As for Turkey, she pursued a complete balance policy by trying to convince Israel to take a step back, and on the other hand by manifesting that the Arab Union's decisions did not bind Turkey. (Yavuz, 2005: 428)

At the beginnings of 1997, Turkey resorted to increase the cooperation with Israel in order to force Syria to expel Öcalan and to receive more help in her struggle against PKK. Chief of Staff İsmail Hakkı Karadayı declared that he did not need to meet with Erbakan before his official visit to Israel, and this incident showed that the relations with Israel had been determined not by the government but by the Generals. Karadayı, before his departure, stated to the press that he would demand the military agreements to be tightened. Karadayı wanted Israel to help them to purchase 4 Sea Hawk helicopters from the USA, and Israel wanted to sell the USA origin Popeye missiles to Turkey. These transactions were realized later. The USA wanted to make Turkey and other Middle East countries dependent to Israeli technology. Karadayı, in a declaration made after the visit, stated that one of the the common basic problems of Turkey and Israel was the *international terrorism*. This statement caused significant effect on Syria and Iran. (Olson, 2005: 35-7) Turkish Armed Forces, by this joint weapons purchase and manufacturing initiatives, had got the opportunity to access an important alternative source regarding high technology weapons supply. Thus, Turkey reached such a position that she could evade the political reasons such as avoiding the derangement of the balance between Greece and Turkey or weapons embargoes. (Özcan, 2002: 223)

After Chief of Staff İsmail Hakkı Karadayı's visit to Israel in February 1997, Israeli Chief of Staff Shakak paid a visit to Turkey in October 1997. After these visits, two joint working groups were established under the names of Defense Industry Working Group and Political-Military Defense Group, and these groups started to organize meetings in six months periods in Turkey and Israel. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 572)

In 1997 Turkish Army started to put forth overtly its opinions about Syria and Iran. The General Staff started give briefings to the Turkish elite comprision of academicians, journalists and representatives of several NGOs. In these briefings, it was stated that the obliteration of separatism sponsored by Syria and Iran and domestic threats such as Islamic fundamentalism had reached up to first place in the national military strategic concept. Ankara's threat perception from the Middle East, particularly Iran and Syria caused the security issue to be brought into agenda in Israel relations. Turkey believed that the cooperation with Israel would have a deterrent effect on Syria and Iran. (Altunışık, 2000: 65) To these problems, also, Syria's pursuit of purchasing ballistic missiles was added, which were manufactured by the technology and manpower of North Korea and China, as Syria could not construct her own weapons industry, like Iraq and Iran, after the Cold War. Turkey had got disturbed from this situation, and claimed that there were long range ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, mostly chemical, in some Middle East countires, particulary Iran and Syria, and these claims were supported by NATO also. As for Syria, she, as if she wanted to confirm these allegations, tested the Scud C missile, with a range of 600 kms in 1996. The test of this missile, which was capable of carrying a 500 kgs normal warhead or biologic or chemical warheads, drew great reaction from Israel. (Yavuz, 2005: 425) After the Gulf War the new problem for Israel was the emergence of new generation threats, named beyond-the-horizon threat, such as Iran's continuing her nuclear program and Iraq's missile strikes during the Gulf War, instead of an all-out war. Syria's resorting to purchase land-to-land ballistic missiles with the intent of an assault was such as to increase Israel's beyond-the-horizon threats. (Özcan, 2002: 246-8)

Turkish Minister of Defense Tayan, paying a visit to Israel stated that Syria, Iran and Iraq were common threats and joint military manoeuvres should be made. (Yavuz, 2005: 425) Tayan stated that the agreements between Israel and Turkey were against Iran and Syria,

on all occasions during his visit. Tayan blamed Iran and Syria with stock and manufacture ballistic missiles; blamed Syria for sponsoring terrorism and Iran for supporting PKK and HAMAS. Tayan's another purpose in the talks was to carry more the Kurdish issue into the agenda of international platform through Israel. (Olson, 2005: 37-8) After this, as a result of the talks between Deputy Chief of Staff General Çevik Bir, the USA authorities and Israil Deputy Minister of Defense David Ivry, decision were taken regarding issues such as determining the concrete steps to be taken against Syria and Iran; these three countries' being in a cooperation against any problems to be caused by this two countries mentioned, constructing emergency depots in Turkey to be used when needed, developing common codes in communications, and effective intelligence exchange. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 564) Iran immediately reacted against Tayan's declaration about the missiles. Iran and Syria commented that "Despite the Prime Minister Erbakan's endeavors to pursue an independent policy, some generals wanted to hand over the country to Washington or Tel Aviv." (Olson, 2005: 38) With these decisions made public, Syria, Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Arab Union expressed their concerns about this triple alliance and the joint-manoeuvres in the Mediterranean; Ankara ambassador of Palestine Fuad Yassin declared that they would accept this alliance was not against a third country, until it was proved the opposite. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 564) During 1997, Syria and Iran's aim was to build an alliance that would withstand the alliance of Ankara and Jerusalem. (Olson, 2005: 38) In fact, after the Gulf War, there were expectations that Syria and Iran would be at odd, since Syria sat at the table with Israel within the Middle East Peace Talks, and participating in the Gulf War. However, Iran wanted to recover from loneliness in the region and to have a voice in the Arab region policy. Syria, on the other hand, aimed at strengthening her hand in the Israel and the USA negotiations and protecting her interests in Lebanon. Therefore the relations between these two countries continued in the nineties. (Altunışık, 2002: 275)

Syria, Iran and Arab states was not content with these reactions. Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Akbar Welayati visited Cairo in pursuit of an alliance against Turkey and Israel, despite the problematic relations with Egypt. Syria sent a diplomatic commission to Iraq for the first time after 18 years. Syrian Vice-President Abdul Khalim Khaddam organized an official trip covering Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. With his declarations during this trip, he indicated that the Turkish-Israeli

alliance threatened the Arab World and a resolute attitude should be taken against this. Syrian Minister of Foreign Minister Farouk Al-Sharaa made similar statements in his Moscow visit. (Yavuz, 2005: 429)

Turkey's Middle East policy had been progressing within the concept of a balance policy. However, the experiences during the February 28 Process in Turkey had been affective on Turkey's foreign policy. Firstly, Turkey was receiving a reactionary threat from Iran and a terrorism threat from Syria, and also Northern Iraq was standing before Turkey as a huge problem. The February 28 Process being experienced in Turkey at that time, growing reactionary threat and PKK's increasing attacks and its political settlement might have played a role in turning the scale of Turkey's balance policy in favor of Israel. Turkey's main purpose being to get rid of terrorism and reactionary movements as a threat from Turkey's domestic policy had caused the Israel-Turkey joint security approach. Thusly, as it will be mentioned later, Turkey's this closeness with Israel would play a crucial role in Syria's retreat in 1998 crisis. On 31 January 1997, many speakers gave speeches that praised the Khomeini regime and that manifested the wish to abolish the laic system in an event named Jerusalem Night in Sincan: Crunch Time organized by the Major of Sincan County of Ankara, who was a member of RP, with the participation of the Ankara ambassador of Iran. Upon the publishing of these speeches in the media Turkey showed a strong reaction and the army troops held demonstrations, Civic and Military authorities gave harsh responses. In 1997, while the allegations of corruption, murders for the sharing of million dollars of unearned income and bribe which caused in shooting of citizen in the middle of the streets, the hot war against PKK in the Sourtheastern Anatolia, and the existence of the gangs of mafia and politician league prevailed, the threat of reactionary movements was added to these. The efforts and strength of RP to destroy democracy for the sake of Political Islam were inherited from the DP of 1950's who accelerated the opening of İmam Hatip schools, used the political power of the Nurcu sect for its own sake, and who turned the Azan, the call to prayer into Arabic from Turkish. In the NSC's meeting, dated 28 February 1998, a dialogue on a regime issue was experienced between the Turkish Armed Forces members and the government for the first time, and with the suggestions from the military wing the articles such as reactionism and 8-year compulsory primary education were brought to the agenda of the country. The resolutions of the NSC

were also approved by President Süleyman Demirel. The 28 February resolutions can be evaluated as a warning and guidance based on warning, against the government. Some thought these resolutions as a *covert military intervention* since they were suggested by the military wing of the NSC. According to Kongar, when the developments after the meeting were to be evaluated, it was obvious that the Turkish Armed Forces had interfered to the process with the support from the President. (Kongar, 2005: 280-4)

Welfare-Path government resorted to an early election as a solution after the 28 February Process, due to great pressure from the public opinion. When the partners decided for an early election, Tansu Çiller demanded the office, since they had an agreement for alternating government. With Çiller's pressure, Erbakan had to, although he did want not to, resign from Prime Ministry. (*ibid*: 290)

4.4. Anasol-D Government and Turkey-Syria Relations

In the mid 1997 the new Anasol-D government was founded led by Mesut Yılmaz, the Chairman of ANAP, and this new government planned to restore the detoriated relations with the Arab world after the affiliation with Israel, by turning towards the Arab world. (Yavuz, 2005: 430-1) Anasol-D government made the improving of the relations with the countries in the region, the basis of its foreign policy. Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit declared that Turkey would get stronger in the international conjuncture and against the West by pursuing this policy. In this context, the government had reached an agreement with Greece in Madrid, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Primakov had been invited to Turkey and Turkey planned to affiliate with Armenia if any affitmative reply came from Azerbaijan and also to come into contact with Syria and Iran if any positive signals were received. However the mutual approach was important for the relations to improve. The most compelling countries that forced Turkey in this good neighborship were Iran and Syria. The diplomatic relations with Iran was officially in a suspended state and the Syria relations were at their tenstest level due to her support in PKK. (Kohen, 28 August 1997)

Upon the news that the command echelons of the Turkish Armed Forces were disturbed in fear that the relations with Israel would be kept in the background, Minister of Foreign

Affairs İsmail Cem declared, during his visit to Israel, that the government had no intentions to distrupt relations with Israel. (Yavuz, 2005: 430-1)

The significance of the Jewish lobbies for Turkey has been emphasized before. After the resignation of Erbakan government, these lobbies issued statements in favor of this new government. The Washington Institute declared that Erbakan government had stripped the public from being a society governed by democracy and laicisim principles, had got into contact with rogue states, and had behaved against the Turkish Laws; so the USA government should support Mesut Yılmaz government. (Bacık, 2001: 52)

The Defense Industry Agreement, which was the second step of Turkey-Israel cooperation, had been signed during an Islamic government led by anti-zionist Erbakan. Turkish military authorities not only contented with improving the present relation with Israel but also they wanted to improve these relations even further since RP's taking office. According to Bacık, Turkish authorities might have wanted to remind RP its limitations by demanding that Israel and Turkey get affiliated. According to Turkish public opinion the agreements signed did not appertain to the government, but they were a military option used against RP. The relations with Israel gained a symbolic meaning in the post-28 February period. (*ibid*: 53)

However, alongside with all these affiliation and declarations, Turkey and Israel had fallen afoul with regards to the Kurdish policy. While Turkey was against an independent Kurdish state, for Israel this did not matter. Even, a Kurdish state backed by the USA would be in favor of Israel. (*ibid*: 55) Israel was against a Kurdish state, since she knew that Turkey was against it and she wanted to continue good relations with Turkey; however, Israel found a Kurdish autonomy best for her interest. (Yavuz, 2005: 431)

As it is seen, Turkey, the USA and Israel appeared as allies, but they faced problems among them. For the USA, and her most important ally in the region, Israel, the foundation of a Kurdish state was best for their interests. On the other hand, they did not want to upset Turkey, since the Kurdish issue was the most important issue within Turkey, and a possible establishment of a Kurdish state would pose a threat to Turkey's domestic policy and also

Turkey opposed this establishment; because Turkey, with her historical relations and being a Muslim country, had the feature of a bridge between them and the Arab world. Due to Turkey's this strategic significance, they asserted the Kurdish autonomy, generating a formula that would both less disturb Turkey, and that would be more suitable with their interest. Rather this formula was also against Turkey's interests. In this case, Turkey's relations with Israel and the USA were on rickety grounds. However, due to Turkey's problems with her neighbors, PKK and water issue with Syria and the reactionism issue with Iran, were important factors in Turkey's affiliation with Israel. Israel's not attaching importance to human rights issues, as the Europe did from military perspective and her aids to Turkey, made Turkey's affiliation with Israel inevitable.

But Ankara was anxious about Israel and Saudi Arabia's policies, together with the USA, which supported Kurdish nationalism. According to Ankara, although these countries did not play an active role in supporting Kurdish nationalism, they were pleased with the present status quo in the region. But, a Kurdish structuring close to Israel was unacceptable for Iran and Syria too. (Bacık, 2001: 55) As it can be seen, these three countries who were having problems constantly, were against a Kurdish structuring in Northern Iraq, although they had different reasons.

Despite Israel's Northern Iraq policy, the improvement in Turkey-Israel relations had continued in 1997. In their first week of government, Mesut Yılmaz government adopted the FTA which had been kept in the commission during Erbakan government. In 28th July 1997, the chairman of the EU Commission and the Undersecretary of Foreign Trade Reyhan Atmaca declared that this agreement would enable Israel to export her good to Central Asia and to increase her trade volume with Canada. Upon Turkish Minister of Industry and Trade Yalım Erez's declaration that the ammunitions stocks were short and it was necessary to replace the ammunition, Israel declared that she would supply the bombs to replace the ammunition which had been lost during an explosion in Kırıkkale Munition Factory in July. The demand for replacing this shortage of ammunition was related to PKK. Israel paid attention to Turkey's calling, since she accepted PKK as a terrorist organization. At the same time with these developments, Mesut Yılmaz assigned Cefi Kamhi, a member of a well known Jewish Family, as the chairman of the Foreign Affairs

Commission, in contemplation that he would improve relations with the American Jewish community. (Olson, 2005: 39) On 13 Agusut 1997, Turkey informed Israel that she rounded of the customs with Israel; in October 1997, Israel Chief of Staff Ammon Lippin-Shakak paid an official visit to Turkey; on 18 December 1997, an important Jewish lobby institution of the USA, the ADL gave Mesut Yılmaz the Prominent Statesman awards; on 22 December 1997 the third Strategic Dialogue meeting was held between Israel and Turkey. (Yavuz, 2005: 431)

After his visit to New York between 17 and 21 December, Mesut Yılmaz and Israel authorities met with Israeli authorities to confer about joint manufacturing of Arrow anti-missile system to respond Syria and Iran's alarming levels of missile production. The parties decided to manufacture a missile with a 500 kms range. Turkish-Israeli relations developed further in 1997 with the cooperation in manufacturing Arrow missiles and the agreement with Israel to modernize more F-5 warcrafts. (Olson, 2005: 43-4) It had been revelaed, as of August 1997, that the main purpose of Turkey and Israel cooperation with the MTCA was to force Syria to deport Abdullah Öcalan and close the PKK camps in Lebanon and Syria. (*ibid*: 41)

In the meetings of the Arab League, dated 16 September 1997, the participants criticized the Turkish-Israeli relations, since these jeopardized the interest of Arabs and brought pluralist policies and hostility in the region. In December 1997, in the meeting convened in Teharan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya and even Palestine blamed Turkey for participating in the regional security policies introduced by the USA and Israel. Al-Baa'th, the Syrian Baa'th Party media organ, wrote that this relationship between Turkey and Israel a step in Turkey's anti-Arab policies and added that Turkey did not have the right to jeopardize the security of the region for the sake of the world zionizm. (Bacık, 2001: 56)

EU's discountenance to Turkey-Israel cooperation is something to be mentioned. Israel went into effort to sell her own goods to EU countries through Turkey's relation with the Customs Union. Therefore, Israel and Turkey appealed to Brussels to realize this aim, but this demand was rejected on 21 August 1998, with the justification that Turkey would be incorporated into the Pan-European cumulation system and Israel into the Mediterranean

cumulation system, and it was early for cooperation between parties. According to Dursunoğlu, these expressions may be understood as a diplomatic message that reveals that the EU casted separate positions for Turkey and Israel, and the current way of relations was not seen appropriate. (Dursunoğlu, 2005: 170)

When the Turkish-Israeli relations after 1996 are investigated, it is seen that especially Israel had the thought that the threats that became widespread and regional could only be solved by regional security regulations. In September 1998, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in an interview prior to Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz's visit to Israel, declared that the aim of the cooperation between two countries was to develop the peace and stability in the region; they were surrounded by radical regimes who were developing missiles with non-conventional ballistic warheads and who would launch them; they wanted to make Turkish-Israeli cooperation a regional security system in the Middle East and he planned to discuss the details of this plan with Mesut Yılmaz. (Özcan, 2002: 254) Netanyahu preferred the peacemaking of the USA over Turkey in the Middle East Peace Talks. Israel wanted Turkey to be included as the sole Muslim country with the status of Peace Observer into the military observer council which would be established to control the Hebron Agreement signed between Palestine and Israel. Israeli Undersecretary of Ministry of Defence David Ivry repeated the same thought. Israel demanded Turkey's support in administering the adaptation of Palestine to the Oslo Agreement. Palestine, on the other hand, did not want the USA's peacemaking with the thought that the USA pursued a pro-Israel policy. Palestine demanded Turkey's peacemaking when the Hebron discussions had stopped up; however with the resolution of the problem between two parties, any intervention was not done by Turkey. (Yılmaz, 2001: 131-3)

In 1997, PKK had got weak due to Turkish Security Forces' affective precautions, and had tried to provocate Pontic, Laz, Georgian movements in the Black Sea region, while trying to seize the Alawite citizens in the Central Anatolia region. PKK was moving its actions, started in the Mediterranean Region to further West. (Yavuz, 2005: 432) Upon these actions of PKK, on 15 August 1997, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, in a statement he made to Sabah newspaper, complained about the support of the neighbors to PKK and continued

his words as “Syria is now officially an enemy. Syria has been hosting PKK for years…” (Kohen, 28 August 1997)

In the beginning of 1998, the Reliable Mermaid search and rescue manoeuvre was conducted in the international waters of the Mediterranean with the participation of the USA battleships. (Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 572) Upon the continuance of Syria’s sponsoring PKK, it is that Turkey replied by developing the relations with Israel further. Iran and Syria named this alliance as Evil Alliance by arguing that Turkey tried to build a new axis of power in the Middle East by enabling Israel to integrate with the Middle East, Caucasia and Central Asia. (Olson, 2005: 43) The manoeuvres mentioned before was important since it included the USA. With these manoeuvres, the affiliation of the USA with Turkey was revealed and this increased Syria’s concerns.

A short time after the manoeuvres, retired ambassador Şükrü Elekdağ declared that the cooperation with Israel had made a great contribution to Turkey’s military capabilities. He added to his words that the main element of Turkey-Israel affiliation was security; Turkish Air Forces had gained manoeuvre experience in the region, since they could fly to Israel and facilitate Israeli airports; the cooperation in intelligence was useful for the struggle against PKK and Turkey strengthened her hand in the Mediterranean regarding the air and naval control. (Özcan, 2002: 226)

On the other hand, Syria’s support to PKK had increasingly continued. The 5th conference of PKK terrorist organization was held in Syria between 15 and 25 March. (Yavuz, 2005: 432) PKK had been shaken with the losses caused by the Turkish Armed Forces; its policy had worned out and had lifted its weight on getting politicized. PKK’s Marxist-Leninist identity was changing slowly, and it was gaining Islamic links. Meanwhile, there administrative staff of PKK was in conflict, both ideological and personal. Şemdin Sakık, the second name of PKK resorted to KDP after getting into conflict with Abdullah Öcalan. At that time, Turkey’s relations with KDP developed due to Iran’s entering into Northern Iraq. (Fırat and Kükçüoğlu, 2008: 564) In April 1998, Turkish Air Force caught up Şemdin Sakık alias No Fingers, the previous right arm of Abdullah Öcalan, in the Bat Operation into Northern Iraq. Şemdin Sakık, in his questioning made important confessions about

PKK; therefore PKK argued that Şemdin Sakık was in fact a Turkish agent. With the capture of Sakık, PKK planned to make new actions in 1998 summer to regain its shaken prestige. On 1 June 1998, an anti-Turkey protocol named Revolution Platform was signed in Europe with the participation of PKK, TKP/ML, TKP/KIVILCIM, TKP/KONFERANS, MLKP, DEV-SOL, DHP, TDP. (Yavuz, 2005: 432-3)

Turkey's affiliation with KDP, Turkish-Israeli good relations, and PKK's weaking with regard to military power caused Syria and Iraq to get affiliated as a reaction to Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey for the sake of improving the relations took the first step towards Syria and presented a document named Good Neighbority Forum to public opinion on 2 July. In this document it was indicated that the cooperation in economic, cultural and other areas would be improved in case Syria conforms to the principles of incommutability of borders, cooperation in counter terrorism, respect for human rights, non-interference in domestic affairs, non use of forcible means, peaceful resolutions of disputes, non allowance of the use of terrorist organizations in opposition, undoing of harmful activities against each other for not causing disputes and misunderstandings, resolving the differences amicably, and respect for independence and territorial integrity. However, Syria did not take any steps to restore the relations. Moreover, Syria Minister of Petroleum visited Baghdad in August 1998. Upon this meeting, the parties declared that they would reopen the Kirkuk-Banyas Port pipeline which had been closed during 1982 Iran-Iraq war. This decision was evaluated as an attempt for an alliance counter to Turkish-Israeli alliance, by Turkey. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 564-5)

In September 1998, upon insistence of the USA, KDP and PUK authorities met in Washington and issued a declaration. As it would be understood, the USA was persistent in establishing a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq and Turkey did not want to compromise her policy of defending Iraq's territorial integrity while PKK was on the agenda in Turkey. And this revealed the differences in the policies of Turkey and the USA. Upon this policy of Washington, Turkey who was expected to affiliate with Syria and Iraq sharpened her policy against Syria. (*ibid*: 565) The main reason for this might be Turkey's belief that she would destroy PKK with a big blow by deporting Abdullah Öcalan, and thus discuss this issue in a conjuncture without PKK; for Turkey was not keen on disturbing her alliance

with the USA even if the issue was the establishment of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. Therefore, Turkey seemed to give green light to the USA policies, although unwillingly, from time to time.

Despite Turkey's all good intentions and insistence for deporting Abdullah Öcalan, Syria continued to sponsor PKK. The PKK camps that had been based in Syria's borders until 1998, identified by Turkish Security and Intelligence units are as below (Yavuz, 2005: 434-5);

- Jableh Camp: situated on the Syria-Lebanon border. Trained TKP/B, EB, ÖY Alarızgari terrorist organizations together with Palestinian guerillas. There was also the Mahzun Korkmaz Military Academy in Jableh Valley. And also another camp named Martyr Ahmet Camp was situated 20 minutes away from this camp.
- 22 February Camp: It belonged to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. PKK also used this camp.
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine camp: this was another PKK camp. It was close to Jordan border and situated in 100 kilometers south of Damascus.
- Zabadani Camp: Another camp of PKK, situated near the Zabadani Village northwest of Damascus.
- Malula Camp: Belonged to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, this camp was used by PKK and DEV-YOL militants.
- Hamburiye Camp: Belonged to As-Sa'iqa organization, this camp near Damascus trained PKK members.
- Al-Hasakah Camp: Situated in Mount Al-Nusayria**,** this camp trained the Hizb al-Shuuyu al-Iraqi and PKK militants.
- Latakia: The terrorist were trained in Hamenin, Qardahah, Ras Al-Basit, North of Jableh
- Şemin Nida Camp: It was a camp that trained PKK militants, and which hosted PKK leaders.
- Al-Tel Village Camp: Another camp in Damascus.

- Palace Defense Camp: 3 kms from El-Mazze region on Damascus-Cermana Highway. In this camp, members of the terrorist organizations such ASALA and the Red Brigades, and also terrorists from Turkey were trained.

Mesut Yılmaz paid a visit to Israel on 7-8 September 1998. Yılmaz disaffirmed the declarions of Netanyahu that "there was an alliance regarding security in the region", and declared that there were eight agreements between Turkey and Israel and none of these were secret. Netanyahu made a call for establishing a joint regional security system with Turkey, Israel and Jordan in order to ensure that Jordan remained neutral in case Turkey and Syria engaged into a conflict. (Olson, 2005: 55)

Yılmaz replied the arguments mentioned in Syria's visit to Yasser Arafat on 8 September that the affiliation between Turkey and Israel threatened Syria and other Arabs were affected by this situation, and said that Turkey was not interested in Syria's opinions, and if one to mention the hostile activities in the region, the focus should be Syria who sponsored separatist terrorist organizations. (*ibid*: 56)

İsmail Cem and Mesut Yılmaz continuously emphasized that the cooperation between Turkey and Israil was not against any other country. However these declarations contradicted with the discourse that Syria was the focus of international terrorism and supported the PKK militants in Syria and Lebanon, the military and civilian authorities. (*ibid*: 57)

5. TURKEY – SYRIA RELATIONS IN THE PERIOD FROM THE 1998 ADANA AGREEMENT TO THE ELECTION OF BASHAR AL-ASAD AS PRESIDENT IN 2000

As it was mentioned above, Turkey-Syria relations in 1990s, had followed a continiuously tense course due to the water issue, and especially Syria's giving shelter to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and allowing PKK to build training camps in Syrian borders. Syria denied that she sheltered Abdullah Öcalan in Syrian territory, but Turkish government presented evidence against this and demanded that Syria stopped sponsoring PKK. Turkey wanted to destroy PKK completely in order to prevent the establishment of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq occupied during the Gulf War; and therefore sharpened her policy against Syria to stop the sponsoring of PKK. In addition, the possibility of Syria to get more powerful after the Syrian-Israeli peace and to sharpen her attitude against Turkey, forced Turkey to solve the terrorism issue which had been the basis of the tensions during 1990s. This process, as it will be mentioned later, brought Turkey and Syria on the verge of a crisis.

The 1998 crisis had been a milestone in Turkey-Syria relations. Syria's support to PKK was reproached by Turkey, as mentioned above, and Syria was warned repeatedly. However, upon Syria's continuance in sponsoring PKK Turkey and Syria came on the brink of war. The development of the events that carried these two countires on the verge of war, 1998 Adana Agreement and the restoration of the relations between two countries will be investigated in this chapter.

5.1. Hatay Dispute and The Reasons Of The Crisis

Syrian government had seen PKK as an instrument for unstabilizing Turkey, and had sponsored it for many years. She allowed PKK forces of training in Bekaa Valley; and condoned Abdullah Öcalan to take shelter in Damascus. (Arı, 2007: 648) Syrian government had started to support PKK in 1984. She armed PKK terrorist organization, trained it in the camps in her borders or condoned it to be trained, and used it as a means against Turkey. (Kodaman, 2007: 56-7) PKK had continuously suffered losses after

Turkey's decision to pursue a policy based on military solution in 1993, and gave its weight to politicization. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 564)

Between 1984 and 1988, Syria had led the anti-Turkish intelligence activities in cooperation with Greece. She had supported the terrorist activities in Turkey. In addition to all of these, Syria, together with Greece had been against Turkey in her struggle against PKK. In March 1992, Muhaberat, the Syrian intelligence, authorities had meetings with Greece intelligence authorities and PKK representatives. In this meeting, the details of the training and support operation to be held in Greece were determined. Also, again in this meeting, PKK's hastening the activities in Turkey; Syria's supporting the existence of PKK in Northern Iraq; and Greece's increasing the financial and weapons aid were decided. It was also determined that right after this meeting, in May, September and November 1992, the weapons and ammunition, including the Stringer missiles be transferred to Syrian Ports from Port Volos, Greece. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 116-7)

In 1993, Greek Cypriot Government and Syria signed a Joint Defense Doctrine Agreement. Later on, Greece participated in this agreement. According to the agreement, in case of Turkey's attack, Syria, Greece and Greek Cypriot Government would cooperate in defense issues. (*ibid*: 117) As it is seen, PKK and Syria cooperation was also contributed by Greece and Greek Cypriot government and these gave support to anti-Turkey terrorist activities. It was already declared that this agreement was against Turkey with the insight of common action against a Turkish attack. This agreement can also be seen as evidence to PKK support.

As it was mentioned before, in 1987 two protocols were signed between Syria and Turkey, by Prime Minister Turgut Özal. However, Syria did not adhere to these protocols; as she did not abide by the rule of communication, she also continued to support PKK terrorism, and provide shelter for the organization. The 17 April 1992 protocol had lowered the tension between two countries but could not be long lasting; because, as it was mentioned before, Syria not obeyed this protocol for a long time.

An increase was evident in PKK actions in 1995. In 1995, Turkey-Syria relations came onto a verge of crisis due to PKK one action. PKK Central Committee reserve member Nedim Ateş organized the attack and a great number of PKK militants assaulted the Çalıboğazı Outpost at the southern point of the Turkish-Syrian border. It was a battle royal and most of the Turksih artillery fires headed towards Syrian territory. Therefore, PKK gave a numerous casualties and there had been harsh conflicts between PKK and Syrian intelligence. Syria did not react against Turkish artillery barrage fire, but her attitude towards Ankara had got harsher. (Erciyes, 2004: 107-10)

In mid-1995 the relations between Syria and Turkey got tense again with the stories and reports published in the media, given by the TAF generally, on the events in PKK operations in Hatay. (Olson, 2005: 2) PKK chose Hatay as base, and went into effort of winning the people of the region over. There was a serious restlessness in Hatay in mid-1995.

But why was Hatay province selected? According to Olson this, of course, was not a coincidence. PKK wanted to incorporate the Alawite minority into its actions. The minority of Arab Alawites in Hatay region were numerous. PKK thought that provoking the Alawi Arabs agains Sunnite Turkish population would make Turkey and Syria relations worse. Thusly, PKK's infiltration efforts to Hatay stalled the relations between two countries completely. For Turkey, Damascus was behind the PKK efforts to establish a base in Hatay, and she had valid reasons for thinking like this. (*ibid*: 2-3) According to Turkey, one of the main purpose of the terrorist activities in Hatay region was to ensure the Turkish population flee from there at first, and then to make the Arab population a majority. Therefore, it occurred that Syria's aim was to smooth the process of accretion of Hatay to Syria. This alone revealed the relation between PKK and Syria. Syria, until then, had pursued a policy based and mediated on economy due to water and GAP issues; however, this time she started to pursue a policy directed towards Turkey's territory and sovereignty. (Öztürk, 1997: 50)

As mentioned before Hatay is a sensitive region for both countries. In the past, Syria and Hatay had confronted each other due to Hatay issue, Syria, being in turmoil, had behaved

moderate due to that time's conjuncture; however Hatay remained an issue covered, unforgotten, and mentioned from time to time. Still, in some Syrian maps, Hatay province is shown as a province of Syria. PKK's choosing Hatay as a base was almost the evidence that they received Syria's support.

Also, the thoughts that Syria wanted to realize the Great Syria Ideal by applying more terrorism pressure and thus would get more compromised from Turkey regarding the transboundary water issues, and by obtaining land – Hatay - from Turkey (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 117) became prominent in the public opinion. As it can be seen, Syria behaved as if she was promoting Turkey's idea that Syria wanted to weaken Turkey politically, militarily and diplomatically by sponsoring PKK and Kurdish nationalists.

Since Syria was listed among the countries sponsoring international terrorism, despite she was in a process of affiliation with the USA, she used the terrorism policy as a means. The United Nations Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses prepared by the International Law Commission of the UN in 23 years had been closed at the time Syria started giving open support to the terrorist organization. It was thought that Syria used this policy in order to turn the public opinion in her favor and to make herself heard in the world. (Öztürk, 1997: 50-1)

In fact, the problem was obvious; Damascus resorted to, as she always had done, provoking the terrorist groups in other countries and supporting them for solving the ongoing problems between two countries, and starter to support PKK overtly, which she had done covertly since 1984. But why did Turkey preferred October 1998 to give her harshest reaction?

Many factors played role in Ankara's choosing 1998 in the timing of the crisis. First of all, Ankara had got bored of policies of good intention. According to Altunışık, the allegations that the Kurdish issue had entered into the course of politicization might have disturbed Ankara. (Altunışık, 2002: 285) Turkey had got the chance to focus on destroying PKK in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq via the cooperation with Israel, particularly in military areas. In addition, the Merkava tanks and other electronic war equipment, and most of the modernized F-4 and F-15 warcrafts were used for destroying PKK. In case of a possible

Syria-Israel peace, Turkey would lost her chance to force Israel to attack PKK camps in Syria or to force Israel and the USA to apply pressure on Syria to stop sponsoring PKK or other nationalist Kurdish organizations in Northern Iraq; and Turkey knew this. Therefore, before Israel and Syria had come to an agreement, Turkey planned to start an assault against PKK in Syria with the support of Israel. Syria thought that the aim of the cooperation between Turkey and Israel was to make Israel and the USA to force Syria to accept their demands. When her support to PKK ended, having a say in Northern Iraq policy, benefiting from the Eastern Mediterranean as the ally of Iran, and taking equal share from Euphrates water by using PKK as a means became difficult for Syria. While Syria and Iran was supporting PKK, they were considering the huge costs of the struggle against PKK and the significance of the Kurdish issue, and holding the separatist terrorist organization as a trump card against Ankara. In both Iran and Syria, there were more controllable Kurdish problems, too. However, since these Kurdish issues were more controllable, they both thought that they would not be affected from the Kurdish issue inside Turkey. Despite all, both countries did not want Turkey to fight against Syria or to attack the PKK camps in their borders. The developments have shown that their plans went wrong, since when Turkey had got affiliated with Israel, the controllability of the Kurdish issue became difficult. (Olson, 2005: 65-7)

According to Olson, Turkey's choosing 1998 was affected by Turkey's unwillingness to attack to a great Arab country who was sitting at peacetalks with Israel. For Turkey, America's support for this peacetalks was significant, and there was a possibility of being at odd with the whole Arab world upon this kind of a manoeuvre. As it was mentioned before, the Israel-Syrian peace, which had got difficult with Netanyahu taking office in 1996, created the suitable atmosphere for Turkey to stalemate Syria. Also, this should be mentioned that there was a possibilty for an attack into Syria's border, not planned very well, to fail in destroying the PKK bases. This kind of a failure could have caused an environment in which PKK might show more brute and violent resistence in Turkey. Thusly, PKK was weaker than 1995, in 1998, in which Turkey stood up to Syria with threat of war. (*ibid*: 3) As it can be seen, neither the international conjuncture nor the social and military atmosphere was suitable for a conflict with Syria in 1995. Therefore, PKK actions were tried to be stopped, at least slowed down, by armed conflicts done by the Turkish Armed Forces.

When it came to 1998 summer, we can observe that PKK's weigh in the international opinion started to emerge. The Kurdish Parliament in Exile which represented the Kurds in Turkey was continually growing stronger. In mid-September, the Kurdish Parliament in Exile convened in the Italian Parliament Building in Rome. Turkey started to have worries that the organizations, subsidiarty organs, and the European Parliament would apply pressure not only regarding the human rights issues, but for according political right to Kurds. In addition, the power of Kurds in Europe was increasingly growing. It was getting difficulty to dominate the Kurdish nationalist parties by closing them or arresting their politicians. Since October 1998, Turkey had had the idea that the PKK support of Iran and Syria should be ceased by deporting PKK from Syria. Otherwise, there would be no chances left for Turkey to agree with the less-militarist Kurdish nationalist groups. Also, the cooperation between the Kurdish nationalist groups and Islamic parties had emerged. For instance, many Islamists of Kurdish origin reacted against the arrest of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Mayor of Istanbul. (*ibid*: 12-3) We can add to those domestic causes that, the rising tide of Kurdish separatism and the Islamic fundamentalism during the 1990s led to Turkish-Kurdish and secular-Islamist cleavage. Therefore, Ankara needed a crisis; a national cause around which the Turkish people would reunite so as to secure the secular and the unitarian structure of Turkey. (Oktav, 2003: 107)

According to Olson, the Susurluk Incident, which laid bare the corruption and bribe events in all of the state institutions including the Prime Minister and other dignitaries in the state, was influential on this undeclared war. In the Sususluk Incident[3], the attention had to be drawn to another point in order to suppress the reactions of the people. (Olson, 2005: 13) The corruption of mafia-intelligence-state in Turkey was revealed with this incident, and the country was watching, in a daze, the relations between mafia, state and intelligence. Of course the thought that it would be appropriate to divert the interest to another point was common in the government. This could also be counted as a factor in Turkey's harsh

[3] "On the night of 3 November 1996, there was a car accident close to Susurluk County. The driver who was old Vice Chief Constable named Hüseyin Kocadağ and a nationalist Abdullah Çatlı for whom Constable was hunting and whose code name was Mehmet Özbay and Sedat Bucak who was a deputy of DYP was injured. The accident was a proof that politicians took place in some murders and hijacks which were controlled by nationalist movement known as *check bond mafia*. With that accident it was understood that, some State officials used some illegal paths like murder to stop the ones who encouraged PKK and smuggling drug." cf. Kongar, 2005

attitude towards Syria. We can also add to this, the wish of Turkish Armed Forces to make an appearance due to Turkey's 75th establishment anniversary, and Mesut Yılmaz government's wish to increase their votes by calling an election in six months. (*ibid*: 16-7)

With the support of the USA, in September 1998, the Washington Protocol was signed between KDP leader Massoud Barzani and PUK leader Jalal Talabani. In this agreement, the two leaders accepted that there was a Kurdish structuring in Iraq Federation. These were the conditions in the agreement which Turkey had found the most unacceptable. Turkey appeared to give green light to this agreement from time to time. However, she did not want to compromise the policy of protecting Iraq's territorial integrity about the times when PKK terrorism was the first item on the agenda. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 565) For Turkey, this situation would cause the establishment of a Kurdish state ultimately, and encourage the Kurdish elements in Turkey. (Olson, 2005: 18) Turkey, excluded by Washington, was expected to react against the USA with Syria and Iran. However, Turkey sharpened her attitude towards Syria, pursuing a different policy. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 565)

According to Olson, if KDP and PUK solved the differences between them and act in concert, America could topple down Saddam with the help of Kurds. And this situation would result in Kurds in Northern Iraq posing a greater threat for Turkey. If the PKK in Syria was destroyed, this would decrease the influence of the PKK trump card Iran and Syria would play against Turkey in the Middle East and Caucasia and the PKK threat coming from Northern Iraq and even from Iran would diminish. (Olson, 2005: 18-9)

Turkey tried the diplomatic ways to force Syria to stop sponsoring PKK, but when she could not see any positive attempts at the end of the events, resorted to sharpen her attitude towards Syria and Arab states. (Erciyes, 2004: 123) On 23 January 1996, Turkey issued a diplomatic note to Syria to stop sponsoring PKK and to extradite the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and delivered this to the Syrian official authorities. (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 118) In this note, it was also indicated that Turkey might use her implied rights as of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and resort to defend herself. (Erciyes, 2004: 123) However, Syria had continued her support until 1998.

The diplomatic note issued to Syria was followed by a series of agreements with Israel. The military, defense and intelligence agreements with Israel were increasing and also Turkey signed agreements with Israel over civic equipment amounting approximately 850 million dollars and military epuipment amounting 1.5 billion dollars. (Olson, 2005: 19) These agreements changed the balance of power in the Middle East. Although, it was emphasized that these agreements were not threats against a third county, Syria felt herself surrounded from the North and South. (Erciyes, 2004: 123) Although both parties declared that the cooperation was not intended at a third country, it was clear that Turkey expected to accomplish several strategic objectives as a result of its increased military cooperation with ties between Syria and Greece, two neighbours with whom Ankara's relations were strained. Another objective is to find alternative sources for weapons systems and and military equipment in view of growing difficulties in obtaining sophisticated weapons from the United States due to the opposition from anti-Turkish ethnic lobbies and human rights groups. An additional reason for Turkey's decision to expand its military ties with Israel was to send a message to Syria about the increased security risks of pursuing adversarial policies. (Sayari, 1997: 44-55) The cooperation between Turkey and Israel served its purpose, and caused Syria to feel herself under pressure.

Turkey was in an effort of establishing a balance against PKK by getting into contact with KDP led by Barzani in Northern Iraq. Due to Jalal Talabani's standing close Iran and Syria, Turkey had got affiliated with Barzani. (Yılmaz *et al.*, 2003: 289) Due to Turkey's improving the relations with Israel, weakening PKK in terms of military power, and becoming a significant actor in the Northern Iraq policy via the relations with KDP, Syria and Iraq started to worry and to get close. Turkey had taken the first step towards Syria to end this closeness, and delivered a document to Syria presented to the Turkish public opinion with the name Good Neighbority Forum. Turkey listed ten principles in the Good Neighbority Forum, and declared that she would improve relations with Syria in case Syria accepted and implemented these principles. The document indicated that the cooperation in economic, cultural and other areas between two countries might be improved if the parties act faithful to the principles of of incommutability of borders, cooperation in counter terrorism, respect for human rights, non-interference in domestic affairs, nonuse of forcible

means, peaceful resolutions of disputes, nonallowance of the use of terrorist organizations in opposition, undoing of harmful activities against each other for not causing disputes and misunderstandings, resolving the differences amicably, and respect for independence and territorial integrity. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 565)

Syria did not take any steps to restore the relations. Moreover, Syria Minister of Petroleum visited Baghdad in August 1998. Upon this meeting, the parties declared that they would reopen the Kirkuk-Banyas Port pipeline which had been closed during 1982 Iran-Iraq war. This decision was evaluated as an attempt for an alliance counter to Turkish-Israeli alliance, by Turkey. (*ibid*: 565) This was an indicator that Turkey's attempts to improve the relations with Syria remained unreturned, and Syria would not be in an alliance with Turkey or would not act in concert with Turkey.

As it can be seen, Turkey had taken all kinds of diplomatic steps to improve Syria relations, but Syria did not find these efforts favourable, she rather increased the support to PKK.

5.2. Hatay Speech by General Ateş

PKK was increasing its actions with the support of Syria, and giving Turkey serious pecuniary loss and intangible damages. This situation was affecting negatively Turkey's stability. In fact some military success were obtained against PKK, but these successes were not enough, the military solutions only scratched the surface, since the foundations of the problem remained untouched, and Turkey continued to suffer. The Commander of the Land Forces General Atilla Ateş started a visit, with Commander of the Second Army General Aytaç Yalman, Land Forces Command Chief of Staff Operations Major General Behzat Balta and Commander of Sixth Corps Lieutenant General Çetin Saner to audit the Reyhanlı Border Regional Command first, and then the military troops in İskenderun. (Hürriyet, 1 October 1998) On 16 September 1998, in Reyhanlı town of Hatay Province, he made a speech admonitory to Syria to end PKK terrorism. In his speech he stated that: (CNN Türk, 7 August 2010)

"As the Turkish State we try to develop good relations with our neighbors. Despite our good intention, some neighbors, especially, I make no secret of neighbors like Syria construe our intention wrong. They dragged into the terrorism plague by supporting the bandit called Apo. Turkey has shown the required efforts for good relations. If Turkey does not find the expected response, she will have a right to take all precautions. We, now, are out of patience."

Turning of the issue, existing for over long years, into a crisis had been realized so rapidly and with these words, Turkey and Syria came on the brink of conflict. The crisis was inflamed in a short time and its quiting down was left to time. With this rebuke, Turkey had the following military option before her (Erciyes, 2004: 123-4);

"1. Occupying the line down to Aleppo and demanding the extradition of Öcalan and PKK,
2. Marching forward to Damascus, toppling down the Al-Assad regime and create a more democratic Syria,
3. Hitting the PKK headquarters in Syria via Air Operations and attacking PKK camps with limited land raids along the border,
4. Hitting PKK camps via air raids to Bekaa Valley."

The response would be according to Syria's reaction. Turkey had to play her cards right and had to solve this crisis in favor of Turkey. However, this should not be forgotten that Turkey is a peaceable country and the diplomatic, not military, means would be tried first. Thusly, Turkey's resolue attitude introduced a new way of solution to the world literature: Mailed Fist.

5.3. Strained Relations Between Turkey and Syria After The Speech By General Atilla Ateş

After the speech of General Atilla Ateş, threatening Syria, President Demiral supported Atilla Ateş with the following words (Hürriyet, 2 October 1998):

"I hereby declare again entire world that, we are running out of patience and we reserve the right to repay against Syria, who does not give up her hostile attitude despite all our warnings and peaceful efforts."

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence İsmet Sezgin expressed his support by saying "If we cannot solve this from diplomatic ways, the game will be played by the rules." (Hürriyet, 2 October 1998)

President made a speech in the way that "I warn not only Syria but the entire world. This will not have an end." This speech created confusion all over the world. The USA President Bill Clinton delivered a message to Hafez Al-Assad and warned him that in case Turkey's attack to Syria, all Peace Process would die out. (Yavuz, 2005: 437) The USA thought that if Syria and Turkey were engaged in close combat, this might draw the reaction of the Arab world and consequently stalemate the Middle East Peace Process. The USA took side with Turkey's forcing Syria via a multi-dimensional and long-termed pressure, not a uni-dimensional crisis, and continuing the dialogue option. Israeli President Netanyahu declared that Israel was not a party of the tension. And he continued his words as "We took some precautions in order to soothe Syria". Israeli Minister of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai said "Israel is interested in finding ways to repeat the talks, not causing problems with Syria" and emphasized that the military cooperation agreement signed between Turkey and Israel was not against any third country. However, on the other hand, after a series of secret talks between Turkish and Israeli authorities, a consensus was achieved that Syria was a threat risk in the region and parties could not remain silent to this situation. (Hürriyet, 5 October 1998) Israel, Turkey's ally against Syria, wanted Damascus to be defeated in a war with Turkey. Jerusalem also supported Ankara's wish to chasten Damascus. However, with all these aside, Israel did not want to risk, needlessly for Turkey, the good relations with the Eastern Mediterranean region over a war about Syria's PKK support, which by no means interested Israel, despite the agreements signed with Turkey. (Olson, 2005: 19)

Iraq declared that she took sides with Syria. Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iran invited Turkey to be moderate. Jordan had the concerns that under this rebuke of Turkey against Syria laid the water issue. Russia, on the other hand, thought to use PKK in delivering the Caspian oil to the international markets and in the Chechnya issue. Thus, the crisis became the tour de force of Turkey not only against the East but also to the West. (Mumcu and Kahramaner, 2004: 124)

For this operation intended to getting rid of the resource of the problem instead of struggling with the problem, to be successful each rank should do something about the problem and should act in concert. Really, Turkey acted band together with her

government, opposition, press and military. This attitude helped Turkey's standing up more resolute and powerful against Syria and winning through more rapidly.

With the increase of the warnings by the government, a military restlessness started along the southern border. Troops were moved to the strategic points on the 618 km Syrian border from Hatay to Cizre. In addition a series of military precautions were taken. (Hürriyet, 1 October 1998) Turkey experienced a policy change to finish off PKK, and turned to military pressure policy against Syria leaving the diplomatic ways aside with a resolution taken in the National Security Council. The warcrafts in the Diyarbakır and Malatya bases of the Turkish Air Forces were given the orange alert, which meant the transition to red alert. The flights over the Syrian border were increased. Precautions were started to be taken against any possibility of Greece's help efforts in case of any tensions in Eastern Mediterranean. (Hürriyet, 2 October 1998)

Syria had to take a step back before Turkey's this resolute attitude. Syria, who turned deaf to Turkey's dialogue calls, declared that she sided with the dialogue with Turkey. (Hürriyet, 3 October 1998) However, Syria was also storing up in the Sayhun, Ayn al-Arab, Ra's Al-Ayn, Al-Hasakah, İdil, Mürşitpına, Karkamış, Kamışlı villages 30-40 kms away from the border on the same line with Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay provinces of Turkey. Upon this action of Syria, Turkey deployed the 72 newly lapsed 150 km range ATACM guided missiles on suitable positions along the Syrian border. (Hürriyet, 3 October 1998)

Arab Union and Arab states started to apply pressure for the resolution of the Syria-Turkey issue by dialogue. Turkey delayed the visit of Hosni Mobarak, President of Egypt, who played the peacemaker in the region, by making up excuses. Upon this, Mobarak visited Syria on 4 October 1998 with a snap decision and warned Syria for her hostile attitude. He also made a request from Syria to stop sponsoring PKK. (Hürriyet, 5 October 1998)

Turkish President Süleyman Demiral emphasized Turkey's seriousness and warned the worıld again. (Çevikcan, 5 October 1998);

"I am not only warning, when I say the situation is serious, I warn the entire world. The General Staff has completed the schemes of manoeuvres. Turkey is resolute. If Syria does not extradite or deport Apo, we will go all lengths. The situation is serious. If you ask 'what is serious?' Turkey has suffered great pain until today. Turkey does not want to suffer any more. What can be said so loud and clear?"

"… A neighbor country cannot shelter bloody-minded gangs within her borders and infiltrates tem into Turkey. An attitude of this kind is beyond humanity, beyond Islam, beyond fraternity and beyond neighbority."

On 6 October 1998, President of Egypt Hosni Mobarak visitied Turkey with the intention of peacemaking, but no positive results could be achieved in the meetings. Turkish side pursued a resolute attitude for the extradition of Apo and the end of PKK support. Under these circumstances Mobarak's proposal package and dialogue offer including the proposals for the resolution of the problem between Turkey and Syria remained inconclusive. (Hürriyet, 7 October 1998)

At the same time, Iran and Labanon declared that the tension should be resolved, by talking Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad and other authorities in Damascus. Lebanon had sheltered the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and had trained PKK in Bekaa Valley before. Lebanon Minister of Foreign Affairs Fares Bweiz declared that "Kurdish partisans or PKK members had not been present in Lebanon at least for 18 months, after Lebanon and Syria had taken precautions" and indicated that he found Turkey unjust. (Hürriyet, 7 October 1998)

Turkish President Süleyman Demirel, who declared that his meeting with Hosni Mobarak had yielded no positive results, indicated that the people should remain calm and the required messages were delivered to Syria by saying "If I have to use the authority vested in me by the constitution, I will". (Çevikcan, 8 October 1998) Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz, too, used a similar expression and said "We are not striving for picking a war. But we are determined to protect Turkey's interests. If necessary we will resort to get permission from the assembly." (İstemi, 8 October 1998) Upon all these, Damascus conveyed their will for dialogue to the Turkish press through Abdullah Al-Ahmar, Secretary General of the Baa'thist party. (Yavuz, 2005: 440)

On 8 October 1998, Turkey explained Syria her reasons for infelicity in detail (Olson, 2005: 9-10):

"1) Syria has taken Öcalan and other high level PKK administratives under protection since 7 July 1979. 2) PKK organized its first congress in Syria between 15 and 26 July 1981. The second congress was convened on 20 August 1982 and they decided to cause armed disturbance in Hakkari and Siirt. Syrian military staff started to train PKK guerillas and Öcalan was settled in As-Sai'qa (Palestinian) Camp. 3) In January 1990, PKK decided to combine its operations with TİKKO, Dev-Sol and DKP. According to the Turks, the agreement was as such: Dev Sol would work like a pieceworker for PKK and organize the actions particularly in the cities. PKK also freed Dursun Karataş the leader of Dev-Sol from the jail and moved him to Biq'a Valley. Accorrding to rumours, Syria ordered PKK to start actions in Hatay in 1995, and in August in the same year PKK assaulted the Gazelşağu village and killed 8 villagers. 4) PKK was in cooperation with ASALA organization, THKO, TKEP, DHKP-C, TKP-ML and DevSol."

Syria rejected all accusations of Turkey indicating that Öcalan was in Syria and PKK guerillas were trained in Lebanon with a press statement. In addition to these, Syria provided all means for the foreign press to see with their own eyes the PKK camps, which Turkey argued in favour of their existence. Thus the foreign press would see that these camps were empty. Syria was on guard in case of an attack, but the efforts of President of Egypt Hosni Mobarak, Minister of Foreign Affairs Amr Musa and Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kharazi were not welcomed. (*ibid*: 10)

In the session of the Council of Ministers on 8 October 1998, it was decided that Turkey allowed for a 45 days period for Syria to deport Öcalan and to stop sponsoring terrorism, otherwise ended the diplomatic attempts and did what was necessary. In the session, it was also decided to start a diplomatic attack in the determined important countries, and to explain the support Syria had given to terrorism without hiding anything. (Hürriyet, 8 October 1998)

In the session, it was emphasized that many PKK confessors and especially Şemdin Sakık, who was the right arm of Öcalan, accepted that Syria had supported PKK. All ministers arrived at a concensus that the USA conducted countermovements in Sudan and Afghanistan on account of the fact that they supported terrorist organizations; counterterrorism was among NATO's duties, Turkey's reaction had caused a movement in Syria against Hafez Al-Assad's oppressive regime, and this situation would reinforce Syria's democracy and would contribute to the regional peace and economy. In the meantime, serious military readiness against Syria was on its course; military units were being moved to borderlines and camera and photoshotage along the border was stopped. (Hürriyet, 8 October 1998)

At those exact days, Turkish President Süleyman Demirel stated again, to Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kharazi, playing for peacemaker, that Turkey is bound and determined and made a harsh speech in the Syria summit convened at Çankaya Palace (Bila, 10 October 1998):

"Syria administration should stay at Damascus and catch the ones who administer the terror against Turkey and extradite them to us."
"…. My message goes without saying. This is a problem between two countries. If there is any other country who acts hostile against Turkey taking advantage of the situation, they will bear all the consequences."

Upon this decleration, two opinions emerged in the Syrian army regarding a possible conflict. It was argued that Syrian Chief of Staff Aslan, Minister of Defense Tlass and Deputy Chief of Staff Türkmani demanded PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to be deported and thus the tension to be ended. (Milliyet, 10 October 1998)

Syria was not idle, like Turkey, and was striving to announce the unjustice of Turkey's attitude to the entire world. 22 Arab states that issued a joint declaration in the UN on 10 October 1998 stated that they were in alliance with Syria against Turkey's threats. They invited Turkey to remain calm. In the declaration, it was indicated that President of Egypt Hosni Mobarak's attempts to reconcile between Syria and Turkey was supported and it was demanded that the problem between Syria and Israel solved through dialogue. The strongest reaction to the problem between Syria and Israel came from Libya. Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi said that "Libya would consider any attack to Syria by Turkey as done against herself". (Yavuz, 2005: 441-2) Also Gaddafi supported Mobarak's reconciliation attempts with the threat of closing down the Turkish companies in Libya and replacing them with Greek ones. According to Olson this would probably be responded with the summoning of the ambassador to Ankara, which was resorted to, when Gaddafi had allowed for a pro-PKK protest in Tripoli. (Olson, 2005: 9)

Iranian Minister of Defence Ali Shamkani declared that they would aid Syria in case she came under attack by Turkey. But his declaration was not supported by Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamal Kharazi, President Khatemi or the religious leader Ali Khamanei. Later on, Kharazi pursued a balance policy and warned two countries about simmering down. (*ibid*: 9)

The USA Secretary of Defense William Cohen, in his declaration, emphasized that PKK was a terrorist organization. He added to his words that this organization should not be allowed to operate on Syria's land. (Hürriyet, 11 October 1998) Also the Voice of America radio used the following expressions in its comment: "We reflect the policies of the American government. PKK trains its militanst in Bekaa. Öcalan maintained a part of his live in Damascus, capital city of Syria. PKK is supported by Iraq and Iran. According to American Laws, PKK is considered an international terrorist organization. America demands Syria to stop her support in PKK." (Hürriyet, 11 October 1998)

According to news item published in Hurriyet on its 12 October 1998 press, as the sharpest message to Damascus a manoeuvre lasting one week from 6 November, with the participation of 50 thousand soldiers was planned. Land, Air and Naval forces would participate in the manoeuvre and the manoeuvre would be observed by the top of the government. Also, real ammunition that would hit the ground zero on Syrian border would be used for the manoeuvre. (Demir, 12 October 1998)

According to another news item of the same newspaper, the old Commander of Turkish Air Forces retired General Muhsin Batur indicated that Turkey would not be able to continue the crisis management after that point, and said "If Syria does not surrender in a short time, the diplomacy ends, and the soldiership begins. This is the intervention of Turkey. If Syria continues to resist, the intervention should be conducted in 15 days." Batur, indicating that Turkey might not take response from Syria, spoke as below; (Demir, 12 October 1998)

"We may intervene, but a war might not break out. Syria might not dare to reply. Then the situation might turn into a cross-border operation as it did in Northern Iraq. In such a case, first the point targets are to be aimed by the Air Forces. Our shot effectiveness is high. The targets are known. After the Air Forces' shooting the point targets, the infiltraton through the border would be realized."

As it can be seen, Turkey increasingly sharpened her attitude and opinions, in the army, in favor of giving stronger reactions emerged. The die was cast already. Turkey announced her seriousness to the entire world and came to the point of showing her seriousness to Syria by intimidating her via military manoeuvres.

After the visit of Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamal Kharazi, playing for peacemaking, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Amr Musa paid a visit to Turkey and brought a moderation message from Damascus government. Musa brought the message "It is not worth fighting for Apo -Abdullah Öcalan-" from Damascus. Ankara replied to this message as "We want to see contrete steps are taken and to check these steps". Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem in the declaration he made in the airport, seeing of Amr Musa, said that "We met this message with interest. However our past experiences with Syria requires us to be attentive about Syria. From our point of view, implementation and continuance of implementation are important." (Hürriyet, 13 October 1998)

Turkey discussed in detail the messages brought by Iranian and Egyptian Ministers of Foreign Affairs, after Musa's visit, and summarized Damascus' attitude with three important evaluations (Ergan, 14 October 1998):

"1) Damascus has perceived Turkey's seriousness.

2) Syria is taking steps accordingly and these are detailed and concrete steps.

3) The arrests of persons, who are estimated to be PKK militants, have begun, and also Apo is not in Syria at the moment, and will not be allowed in after this time."

Turkey had a favourable opinion of Syria's step. However Turkish Minsiter of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem issued a declaration expressing "However our past experiences with Syria requires us to be attentive about Syria. From our point of view, implementation and continuance of implementation are important" and emphasized that Turkey would be alert against Syria, due to her past experiences with Syria, and the continuance of these steps would be followed closely. (Ergan, 14 October 1998) Chief of Staff General Hüseyin Kıvrıoğlu, on the other hand, was poised and harsh. He showed his reaction by the words "For many years, Syria has been continuing an undeclared war against Turkey. Turkey has

bided her time. But Turkey has no more patience for the continuance of this situation". (Hürriyet, 14 October 1998)

Messages supporting Ankara were received from Jordan. Prince Hassan, in an interview he gave to Hürriyet on 14 October 1998, expressed overtly his support to Turkey by saying "PKK issue is blatantly obvious. If the international community sees that PKK is not settled in Syria, the issue can be resolved. And we watched Italian Parliament's accepting PKK anxiously". (Yurtsever, 14 October 1998) In fact, Syria was expecting Jordan's this kind of reaction; since, two week before the beginning of the crisis, while Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz was in Jordan, Jordan declared overtly that they were in the same way with Israel and they planned to develop the economic ties with the Jewish State. (Olson, 2005: 8) Thusly, the ideas of establishing a triple-cooperation of Jordan-Israel-Turkey with the support of America, were intense and it was normalcy that Jordan issued declarations in favor of Turkey, who was in cooperation with Israel. The European Council organized conferences with the theme European Democracies Against Terrorism. The focus of the conferences was the PKK terrorism and the crisis between Turkey and Syria. In the conference participated by the 40 countries who were members the European Council, together with the USA, Israel and Canada, Turkey complained about Syria. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Consultant Bahattin Gürsöz, participating in the conference as Turkey's representative, indicated that Syria sponsored PKK terrorism and used this as a *threat* in her foreign policy against Turkey; and emphasized that 40 thousand people had lost their lives due to PKK's terrorist activities. (Hürriyet, 15 October 1998)

In the same days, Interpol notified that Apo had obtained a diplomatic passaport from Syria, and warned all countries that he could make enter from border gates. In the warning, Turkey's extradition demand was also reminded. According to a news item prepared by Metehan Demir of Hürriyet, a senior official said that "After Syria's arguments that she had not sheltered Öcalan, the existence of such an article in Interpol's warning revealed the Damascus link of Öcalan for Turkey's side". (Demir, 16 October 1998)

On the other hand, the struggle of the Turkish security forces against PKK was continuing. Halil Mahmutoğlu code named Derika was captured dead, who was the brother of Hamdo Mahmutoğlu code named Cekdar, the personal bodyguard of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan

for some time. A senior military official, name undisclosed, notified that 185 of the dead terrorists captured in the last six months in Bingöl, Tunceli, Muş and Northern Iraq were of Syrian origin. (Bakırcı, 14 October 1998)

President Demirel, in Mustafa Kemal University in Hatay, gave a speech after, receiving the honorary Phd degree, and warned Syria in plain Turkish. Demirel emphasizing that Turkish people wanted to leave in peace, spoke as such (Güzel, and Biçer, 20 October 1998):

"To assume an attitude towards the ones who pester Turkish people's serenity and to clear away that molestation is a duty of my state. Our state, thanks to God, is powerful enough to wipe any evil out that would disturb our nation. I find beneficial that these are known by everyone. We are peacable, not forceless."

While the negotiations with Syria were continuing, Syria's Enformation Minister Muhammed Salman explained that they would never back down from Hatay. He also added that Hatay was a national issue for Syria, so they would never step back. (Hürriyet, 20 September 1998)

5.4. 20 October 1998 Adana Agreement and Changing Relations

The sessions between Egyptian President Hosni Mobarak and Minister of Foreign Affairs Amr Musa and Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, in the name of the Iranian President, brought a successful conclusion; (Pehlivanoğlu, 2004: 122) and Turkish and Syrian committees met in Adana on 19 October 1998 and had discussed the matter for two days. In the end, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Uğur Ziyal for Turkey, and Syrian Political Secuirty Chairman Major General Adnan Badr Al-Hassan for Syria signed an agreement. The text of the Adana Agreement was disclosed on 20 October evening by Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem. (Yavuz, 2005: 447)

The matters that Syria guaranteed is as below in summary (*ibid*: 447):

"1. Öcalan is not in Syria now, and will certainly not be allowed in.
2. PKK camps are not in in activity and they will not be allowed to be active again. Many PKK members were arrested and were forwarded to the court system. There are lists of them and Syria has delivered these lists to Turkey.

3. Any activity originating from Syrian territory, that aim at disturbing the security and stability of Turkey will not be allowed in terms of reciprocity principle. PKK will not be allowed to obtain weapons, logistics, material and financial support and to make propaganda on Syrian land.
4. Syria accepted the fact that PKK is a terrorist organization. Syria has banned other terrorist organizations, PKK and all subsidiary institutions and all their activities on her land.
5. Syria will not allow PKK to build facilities for training and sheltering and to conduct commercial activities. Syria will not allow PKK members use her land for crossing over to a third country.
6. Syria will take all necessary precautions to prevent the PKK leader from entering Syrian land, and the border gates will be informed about this."

The parties decided to establish some mechanism in order the aforementioned measures to be implemented effectively and transparently. These mechanisms are as below (Erciyes, 2004: 127):

"1. An immediate and direct telephone line will be established between the high level security officers of the two countires, and this line will be opened for use immediately.
2. The parties will assign two emissaries to each other's diplomatic missions, and these emissaries will be presented to the countries' authorities by the Mission Chiefs.
3. Turkish side, in the context of counter-terrorism, offered Syria side the establishment of a system to check the security improving measures and the effectiveness of these. Syria side indicated that they will immediately present this offer to the approval of their office and will inform Turkey side about the results immediately.
4. Turkish and Syrian side deciced to discuss the issue of struggling with PKK terrorism in a triple-framework, provided taking the approval of Lebanon."

Along with these, red lines and other communication ways were established between Turkey and Syria. Five agreements, that would enable information exchange about terrorist organizations and terrorists, were signed. (Olson, 2005: 12)

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem said that they evaluated this development affirmative and added "It is expected that the same constructive approach continued in implementation. We will closely follow Syria's fulfilling and implementing these commitments." (Milliyet, 21 October 1998)

Adana agreement created significant reactions in the entire world press. Le Figaro published a news item indicating that Syria promised not to sponsor the separatist terrorist organization on her land, after a three weeks tension, under the title "Damascus gave in to Ankara's threats". In the article detailed information about the contents of the agreement was given. Liberation, with the title "Turkey-Syria deal over PKK", notified that the Turkish press had accepted the agreement a great success; and Syria press had preferred to remain silents. On the other hand, Le Soir, of Belgium, in the news article published with

the title “Diplomatic Victory for Ankara”, wrote “This is what Ankara wanted exactly” indicating that Syria had closed her doors to PKK. (Hürriyet, 23 October 1998)

In the same days, Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz declared that Abdullah Öcalan was in Russia. He added to his words that they had made attempts already in the presence of Russia. (Milliyet, 23 October 1998) Russia, in reply, declared that they did not know where Öcalan was, while avoiding describing PKK as a terrorist organization. (Başlamış, 23 October 1998)

The result obtained from the table Syrian and Turkish committees had sat for discussing terrorism was Ankara’s success. The government, the opposition, the military and the press had worked band together, been in a triple concert with the General Staff and Presidency, and the Syria policy had been supported by military resolution. As a result of this successful policy, Syria acknowleged, although covertly, on paper that she has supported PKK and promised that she would end this long lasting policy. Upon receiving support from the USA, Turkey had been convinced for a political solution. For the USA Turkey was of great significange for controlling Eurasia. Also, in order the USA to continue to be a hegemon power, she required NATO to be continued, Israel to be supported by Turkey in the Middle East Peace Process, and Northern Watch to fly from Turkey to control Saddam. In addition to this, not only Turkey’s but also any other country’s becoming powerful in the region was not something wanted for the USA. Therefore, the USA did not support any conflict between Turkey and Syria. Turkey had already been dependent to the USA economically, and would not revolt against the USA, unless her own interests were harmed. The USA used manipulated this situation well enough. If Syria had bought Turkey’s wolf ticket, it was shrouded in mystery whether or not Turkey could find any exit from the situation. (Mumcu and Kahramaner, 2004: 125)

Syria kept her promise on deporting Öcalan. Just before the Adana Agreement completed, Öcalan had left Syria for another place. As it was learned later, before requesting political asylum from Rome, Öcalan had spent a few weeks (in fact 33 days) in Russia; then he had stayed in Rome from 8 November until the beginning of February; and then had fallen into escape process that would last on 13 February when he was caught by Turkish Commandoes in Nairobi, Kenya. (Olson, 2005: 12)

However, the point to take into consideration here was this attitude of Syria government, submitting before Turkey, resulted from Turkey's reasonable demand. Turkiye did not demand land from Syria, did not pursue any interest against Syria, but only wanted Syria to stop sponsoring the separatist terrorist organization and to force Öcalan to escape into another country, where he could be captured easily, by deporting him from Syria; or to extradite Öcalan to Turkey. Syria, especially during Hafez Al-Assad period, had pursued the policy of sponsoring the separatist groups and terrorist organizations to wear out countries and had aided and abetted PKK as a follow-up of this policy. As it would be understood, Turkey did not enter into any hostility and hatred against Syria, and Syria accepted Turkey's reasonable demand.

But why did Syria give up the PKK card so easily, she had supported for years? According to Olson several factors might have influenced Syria's decisions. First of all, there was a possilibity that Turkey sent a super power comprising of 50.000 soldiers into Northern Syria. This situatation might have resulted with the occupation of some parts of Syria by Turkey. Thus, a new situation that influenced Syria's independence might have emerged, just like Israel's occupation of Golan Heights. Also, Syria's ally Iran was not in good shape to aid Syria in 1998; since she was facing a possible conflict against Taliban forces in Afghanistan. In addition to this, we can give Syria's being under more pressure, compared to the previous years, as a reason. The pressure coming from the USA, the Europe and Israel, which had been increasingly getting heavier, was enough for Damascus that the time for contributing in the Peace Process was close. Also, Turkey's affiliation with Israel was absolutely one of the reasons. (*ibid*: 20-2)

Turkey's expectation from the MTCA's signed with Israel was security. Turkey, making use of the temperate atmosphere created by the Arab-Israel Peace Talks, had gone in the process of affiliating more with Israel. The reason for this was the reactionary movements and terrorism issue which put Turkey's territorial integrity and laic regime in jeopardy. To prevent terrorism based on Kurdish nationalism and radical Islamic movements and to stop foreign support for these had become Turkey's primary policy. In this respect, as it was mentioned before, she resorted to cooperation with Israel against Syria, whose support in terrorism had been proved, it was announced by some press organs that two countries would exchange intelligence as well as military aid. (Yılmaz, 2001: 56-8) As it can be

seen, one of the most important reasons of Turkey-Israel cooperation, for Turkey, was to prevent Syria's support to PKK; Turkey was increasing the level of cooperation with Israel as Syria shut her ears to Turkey's warnings about sponsoring terrorism and did not take steps back. In my estimation, we can undertand this reasoning from the coincidence, to the same dates, of the signing of MTCA's between Turkey and Israel, and the sharp declerations made by the Chiefs of Staff with Syria's allowing PKK to convene conferences in her territory and the increase of PKK attack with the support of Syria. One of the most significant features of Israel-Turkey cooperation for Turkey was the cooperation against Syria, named as the nest of terrorism, and Iran, known with her support to reactionism. Thusly, although Israel insistedly declared that this cooperation was not against any third country, in Hafez Al-Assad's retreat the role of this constriction feeling was incontrovertibly great. While evaluating the 1988 crisis and the Adana Agreement a success against Syria, it is questionable that the policy against PKK was a real success or not. Ankara had been overpowering PKK militarily since 1993 and had been wearing out PKK. Therefore, PKK gave its weight on politicization. The most important part of Turkey's PKK policy had been preventing the politicization process of PKK which had gone parallel to its military weakening. However, Öcalan's departure from Syria and going to Greece, Russia and Italy had sped up the politicization process of PKK and brought this issue into the international politic agenda again. On the other hand, Turkey-Syria relations had started to improve slowly but steadiliy with the Adana Agreement. (Fırat and Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 567)

Turkey took the Adana Agreement signed with Syria with a pinch. However, after the signing of the agreement, important developments emerged. According to the news in Hurriyet on 23 October; (Demir, 23 October 1998)

"The signature Syria had put to the Adana Agreement brought its first result and Damacus, exporting Öcalan from her country, delivered a list of approximately 600 PKK members she had arrested to Ankara. It was noted that Syria, delivering the file including the names to Turkish authorities, said that 'Please investigate these names and convey the required information to us'. At the end of the session, it was learned that Turkey would claim extradition for a large part of the names in the list."

Prime Minister noted that the policy against Syria had given the fruits of Turkey's efforts, and asserted that he believed that Russia would prevent Abdullah Öcalan. (Hürriyet, 23 October 1998)

Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad had sent a message to Iranian President Mohamad Khatemi with the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Shaara, on 25 October. In his message he thanked Iran for the efforts she had made for overcoming the Turkish-Syrian crisis. In reply to this, Khatemi indicated his pleasure he felt about the end of the crisis between Syria and Turkey. (Hürriyet, 26 October 1998) Iran's playing for intermediary, who had supported PKK for years, and Syria's declaration of her pleasure she felt about this attitude revealed that the PKK trump cards of Iran and Syria had got weak. The support of both countries to PKK had caused Turkey to affiliate more with their common enemy Israel. And this was against the interests of both Iran and Syria. Thus, the common enemy Israel had taken along a power like Turkey in the Middle East. Therefore, they gave up the PKK cards, which had weakened already. Turkey believed that the PKK issue had been disappearing slowly. However, the past experiences with Syria were taken into consideration and it was thought that it was necessary to be on the safe side. In the NSC session convened on 27 October 1998, the matter of postponing the manoeuvre to be held between 7 and 9 November was discussed. (Şengün, 27 October 1998) The NSC adopted the view of giving a month's time to Syria for fulfilling her commitments and postponing the Resolution-98 Manoeuvre. In the session, also it was decided to duly renew the the mandate of OHAL - Emergency State - for 4 months. (Şengün, 28 October 1998)

As it will be mentioned later, when we look at the relations untill 2009 we can say that the 1998 Adana Agreement was merely a milestone in the relations of the two countries. The improvement in the relations, with the deportation of Abdullah Öcalan from Syria and the dsitruption of the support given to PKK during Hafez Al-Assad period, had entered into a new into a new course with Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's participating in the funeral service of Al-Assad, and with Bashar Al-Assad taking the office. The details of this issue will be discussed in the following chapter.

6. TURKEY – SYRIA RELATIONS IN THE PERIOD FROM 2000 BASHAR AL-ASSAD'S TAKING OFFICE TO THE ABOLITION OF VISAS IN 2009

Turkey and Syria relations that came to front of war with 1998 crisis, entered to a new period with sending of Abdullah Öcalan out of country. The relations between parts developed more in Beshar Assad's reign. The common attitude of the two countries' in Iraqi War deepened the relations and the relations became level of High Level Strategic Allience in 2009. In that part we will examine how Syria and Turkey relations which came to front of war in 1998, became High Level Strategic Allience in 2009.

6.1. The General Policy Of Bashar Al-Assad Government and A New Era In Turkey – Syria Relations

Hafez Al-Assad reign in Syria, which had continued since 1971 (Borshchevskaya, 2010: 42), ended on 10 June 2000. Hafez Al Assad, who was 69 years old, died on 10 June 2000 while he was on a telephone interview with his Lebanese counterpart. (Zisser, 2000: 3)

Bashar Al-Assad's taking the Office after his father's death was not a suprise for anybody. Because, Hafez Al-Assad had supported Bashar Al-Assad as the successor president during the last days of his presidency. (Zisser, 2003: 15)

In the last years of his life Hafez Al-Assad's health was deteriorated. Even, according to the news in the Israeli press Al-Assad suffered from dementia; and his appearence changed dramatically. Especially in his last years, Al-Assad could not participate in long meetings, had had difficulty in remembering details; sometimes he had turned in upon himself and had lost contact with the people in the meetings. (Zisser, 2000: 5) Therefore Hafez Al-Assad's death was an anticipated one.

In fact, Bashar Al-Assad's taking the chair was not something thought until 1994. His elder brother Basil was expected to take the chair after Hafez Al-Assad. Because Basil received the grooming, positions and exposure which were accepted as prerequisites for an important role in Syrian politics. However, after Basil's death in a car accident in January

1994 Hafez Al-Assad had to change plans. At the same time Bashar Al-Assad's life had changed. (Hemmer, 2003: 223)

Bashar Al-Assad was born on 11 September 1965. While he was 5 his father had taken the chair in Syria. Bashar Al-Assad used the expression President Hafez Al-Assad instead of My Father before public. (Bar, 2006: 367) It is known that Hafez Al-Assad was a man who worked intensively. (Hemmer, 2003: 224) When the statements of Bashar Al-Assad and his father's intensive working are taken into consideration we may deduce much of a governor-governed relation instead of a father-son relation between Hafez Al-Assad and Bashar Al-Assad.

Bashar Al-Assad had attended Syrian schools during the first years of the Ba'ath regime. If one looks at the textbooks from which Bashar probably compiled his knowledge of inrternational relations, history, and regional politics, one can see a two-dimensional world composed of the brave and noble Arabs, evil and conspiratorial colonial powers and Jews. He had specialized in ophthalmology in UK. His discourses didn't provide insights into Western concepts of philosophy, international relations and government. Also he had little contact with the local culture because of his study load. In any case to extent that he was exposed to Western thought, it was when he was an adult, with preshaped political values and ideals. If one consider Bashar Al-Assad's little knowledge about Syrian public and his leave for attending schools in the UK one can think that he had not had a thought to participate in the government. (Bar, 2006: 367) Also, Bashar Al-Assad's not having an education on politics, in the UK, and his being strange to Western system of though and philosophy had revealed itself in the reforms he made and hindered the reforms from progressing wholesomely. Eventhough Bashar received education in the UK, he had compiled knowledge of history glorifying Arabs and reviling Jews; and due to his education in the UK not being on politics and history he remained stranger to the Western system of thought and Western history, and this influenced his view of the world in general. Bashar Al-Assad's taking the office was not a coincidence. Because Hafez Al-Assad had made some reforms to increase the chances for Bashar to become president. Firstly, he ousted the three other potential candidates from Syrian political life. In February 1998, he dismissed his brother Rif'at from his position as vice president. Hafez Al-Assad

did everything to prevent his brother from interfering with Bashar's road to the presidency. Nevertheless, Rif'at did not give up. He went into exile in Europe. He tried to build up his power and influence from Europe, especially by means of the media empire he runs out of London, including the ANN television satellite service and the weekly magazine, Ash-Sha'b al-'Arabi. (Zisser, 2000: 7) Inspite of all his efforts, Rif'at had lost his standing long ago, it wasn't easy for him to achieve. (Zisser, 2003: 16) In July 1998, Chief of the General Staff Hikmat Shihabi who had served in this post for twenty-four years was pensioned off in. Also, Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam was stripped of most of his authority in the sphere of Syrian foreign relations, especially the Lebanese and Iranian portfolios. It should be added here that, Shihabi and Khaddam had been thought of as possible compromise candidates to succeed Hafez Al-Assad. Secondly, Hafez Al-Assad ousted the old guard in the army and security apparatuses who had filled key positions from the time Hafez Al-Assad rose to power and who had ensured the survival of his regime, but whose loyalty to Bashar is in doubt. In June 1999, Commander of the Air Force Muhammad al-Khuli and the deputy head of the general security directorate, Muhammad Nassif Khayr Bek were pensioned off. Also, Ali Duba, the head of the military security department, retired, in February 2000. A host of veteran officers, especially at the division commander level, were dismissed and replaced by relatively young men who were thought to be close to Bashar. It was clear that Bashar was exploiting the vacuum created by his father's absence to take over his authority in spheres of activity once reserved for Hafez Al-Assad. Thirdly, after a break of fifteen years, Hafez Al-Assad decided to convene the Ba'ath congress on 17 June 2000. The appointment of Bashar as a member of the regional command of the Ba'ath party indicated that Hafez Al-Assad had reached the conclusion he should accelerate the process of cultivating Bashar as his successor. (Zisser, 2000: 7) Besides these, Hafez Al-Assad prevented Bashar from informing the public of his own worldview, avoided to declare that he wanted Bashar to succeed himself, and therefore prevented Syria's senior military and political figures to take action. (Zisser, 2003: 16)

However, along with all these, Hafez Al-Assad did not leave the office for Bashar to become president more easily. Hafez Al-Assad's Syria rules were incontestable and his leaving the office would ease Bashar's taking office. However, Hafez Al-Assad did not rush to leave his post to Bashar. Probably, he was worried that Bashar was not ready to

take the office. According to Lebanese media reports, Bashar is called the child. In the West, he was called a student. Hafez Al-Assad seemed not convinced yet of the ripeness of his son to take the power. The old guard had been close to Hafez al-Assad for forty to fifty years, long before Bashar was born, they were also close to him ideologically and as far as their worldview was concerned. Because of these, he tended to listen to them. May be psychologically, Assad hesitated to transfer power because he wanted to stay at the center of the political scene. (Zisser, 2000: 10) According to Hinnebusch, Bashar's election for presidency in Syria was natural. Because as an Assad, he would reassure the Alawis; yet he was popular as a modernizer with the public especially with younger generation and hence represented both opportunity and change. (Hinnebusch, 2008: 274)

As from Bashar's return to Syria, he was a captain. Within a year he was promoted to major. The next year he was promoted to Lt. Colonel. In 2000 Colonel, and after the death of his father, he was promoted to three-star general and commander in chief of the armed forces. Besides, the new heir apparent was placed in charge of Syrian relations with Lebanon and headed a high profile anti-corruption campaign. (Hemmer, 2003: 223)

Many opinions were stated after Bashar's taking the office. According to Zisser, Syrian people answered the question "Why did Bashar take the office?" as "There was not any other option". The regime in Syria almost turned into an Assad family regime. At first, there were doubts about Bashar Al-Assad's ability in governing. (Zisser, 2003: 15) And there were various opinions about Bashar's taking the office. Some criticisized his taking the office since it was not up to Bashar's endavours but his father's support. For some others, Bashar was not his father's first choice and this was suspicious. As there were some people who criticisized his lack of real military experience and political background; there were some people who were unconfortable with the existence of the old guard who were loyal to Hafez Al-Assad's opinions and wishes. (Bar, 2006: 368) As it can be seen, even if Bashar Al-Assad took the office unproblematically, there was distrust among the people; and this would be reflected in the discourses and actions of Bashar in foreign politics.

The great Assad family did not supported Bashar wholly. His uncles Rif'at and Jamil headed the ones that did not give support to Bashar. There were disputes in the family

about Bashar. For instance, many reports speak of trouble between Mahir who was Bashar's impulsive young brother. And there were thoughts about the trouble between Bashar and his sister Bushra and her husband Asaf Shawkat. In fact, there was not any significant issue. Nevertheless, it was clear that the great support behind Hafez Al-Assad was not behind Bashar. (Zisser, 2003: 20) Also, there were rumors that Asaf Shawkat and Mahir were ambitious to take Bashar's position. Besides, the Syrian elites were not afraid of Bashar, as they were of Hafez Al-Assad. (Zisser, 2006: 63) The weakening of family solidarity and the absence of a closer inner cicle of dependable senior advisors magnified the effects of Bashar's inexperience, youth, and immaturity. So that, Bashar was being led and directed and there was no apparatus to assist him in making difficult decisions. For instance, the Old Guard refrained Bashar at his first year of presidency when he sailed close to the wind due to his lack of experience. (Zisser, 2003: 20)

In the beginning of Bashar's reign there were four kinds of opinions about Bashar. The first one was put into words by the Western media mostly. According to this opinion, his medical education in the UK, his efforts for the internet and other branches of technology raised the thoughts that he would do modernizations of Western type. Secondly, there was a view of Bashar portrays him as his father's son. According to this view, inspite of his two years education in the UK, he was an Al-Assad and he would adopt his father's worldview. Some people doubted about his medical education. According to this view, Bashar Al-Assad received medical education, and he was politically inexperienced. Because he had medical education, his education would be insufficient for the complex structure of Syrian policy. The view about Bashar's inexperience would be insufficient for Syria's foreign policy had a wide support. According to this view Bashar was making his statements recklessly. For instance, at the November 2000 meeting of OIC, Bashar accused Israel of practicing a new Nazism and in falsifying history in its claims on Jerusalem. In January 2001, Bashar described Israel as "a state based on loathsome racist values and hatred toward Arabs and Islam". In a speech to the 2002 Arab Summit in Amman, Bashar accused Israeli civilians with his arguments. He said that the problem was not any particular leader in Israel, the armed forces, or the govenment, but inherited in Israel's racist society. (Hemmer, 2003: 224-5) The anxiety caused by Bashar's not having war experience (Bar, 2006: 369), on the contrary to his father, should be emphasized here.

During Bashar's reign, Syria has not experienced a war, but has witnessed the retreat of Israel from Lebanon. For Hemmer, Bashar Al-Assad associated this retreat with the thought that Israel could be defeated and made bolder statements on issues his father avoided to do so. (Hemmer, 2003: 224-5)

On the contrary to Hafez Al-Assad who did not care economy, Bashar developed an economo-centric thought. He recognized the priority of modernizing Syria's economy. He was aware that he had to gain the goodwill of the West to modernize Syria. (Bar, 2006: 371) He thought that the process of liberalization could open Syrian economy to the world economy. (Zisser, 2003: 18) To make this come true, he spearheaded an anticorruption drive. But whatever reduction in corruption occured at lower levels of government, it was more than ofset by increases at higher level. (Borshchevskaya, 2010: 43)

Hafez Al-Assad was elected president with 99.99% vote of confidence in the 10 February 1999 elections. However the traditional swearing-in ceremony lasted shorter than usual and Al-Assad did not give his addressing speech to the assembly. Hafez Al-Assad spent more time in the traditional process of resigning of the previous government and constituting the new one. Also, the speeches by Al-Assad addressing the Syrian people and his interviews with the media decreased. In December 1998, People's Assembly met for its first session. Hafez Al-Assad did not give a speech in the first session of the assambly. Also he started to give less interviews to Arab and other Foreign media. He started to pay less foreign visits, broke connections with the public and decreased the visits he paid to military camps, factories or agricultural projects. It was clear that Hafez Al-Assad reflected his distrustful, cautious and even passive character, especially caused by his health conditions in the last years, on Syrian foreing policy. The introvertion in his character was reflected on his worldview. He thought that Syria was a small, weak country surrounded by enemies and constructed his new foreign policy based on that belief. The failed attempt for his life in June 1980 may partially have explained why Asad had closed himself off; the change in his work habits seemed to be followed on the severe heart attack he suffered in November 1983. By his son Basil's death in 1994, Hafez Al-Assad's self-imposed isolation, and even his withdrawal into himself, was exacerbated. Also, there was the plain problem of his advancing age. (Zisser, 2000: 6-7)

As it was mentioned above, during Hafez Al-Assad's reign, Syria had closed herself against the world. This closeness revealed itself in domestic policy applications too. Before the 1970 coup which brought him to power, the Baath Party which he would soon head, had enacted an emergency law on 8 March 1963, that suspended basic constitutional rights such as freedom of speech and assembly. Article 8 in Syria's 1973 Constitution which was developed by Assad regime, assigned all government posts to Ba'ath Party members. The Syrian government soon put heavy and impractical regulations in place; any significant commerce required briberly of key officials. Although Syria struck oil in 1968, and high prices during the 1973-74 oil crisis boosted the country's economy significantly by 1995, Syria's oil output began to dwindle due to technological problems and depletion of oil reserves. By 2007 Syria had become an oil importer. (Borshchevskaya, 2010: 42)

According to the reports of 2003, almost 45% of Syria's population is under 15. This means that a great proportion of the people would need jobs in the future. A significant portion of Syrian jobs remained in the inefficient public sector, which was currently losing equivalent of %10 of Syria's GDP every year. It was not surprising that Bashar had prioritized job creation over privatization. (Hemmer, 2003: 226) Also, this should be added that three families are prominent in economy of Syria. The Assads, the Shalishes, and the Makhlufs with perhaps ten other families forming a second tier. (Borshchevskaya, 2010: 43)

The slow progression of economic reforms, such as making new laws for foreign enterprise incentives continued with Bashar Al-Assad too. Bashar Al-Assad allowed for the internet and the cell phones into Syria. He unified exchange rate and new laws to allow private banks. Even some eight partial foreign private banks were given the right to operate in Syria. But we should add that the slow pace of change disappointed many Syrians. (Hemmer, 2003: 226)

Bashar Al-Assad tried to promote the opening of private banks in Syria. In December 2000 he persuaded the Baath Party Rational Command to ratify a decision to this effect, culminating in April 2001 in new legislation. (Zisser, 2003: 17) Nevertheless, the first private bank could be founded in 2004. The branches were opened around country and

private banks were increased their market share, but the Central Bank of Syria, under the control of the Ministry of Finance, continued to regulate these banks. Because of that, they couldn't make their own decisions as setting their own budget or developing a business strategy, a situation which was seen in Eastern Europe during Soviet era. Credit remained allocated and subjected to manipulation. Besides, only Commercial Bank of Syria and the Real Estate Bank were allowed to go to get involved in foreign correspondance. Knowledgeable insiders reported that each of six publicly-owned banks employed around 12.000 Syrians. Any reform would require the firing of between 50-70 percent of these employees. The lack of any social security net further hampered government options because the regime would have been forced to deal with a significantly larger unemployed population without financial or health benefits in a solution where unemployment was already high. (Borshchevskaya, 2010: 47)

The Syrian regime founded the Expatriate Ministry in 2002 to develop foreign investment. However it did not take long for the financial backers to see Syria's unwillingness in development. For instance, in 2000, SyriaTel received governmental license for mobile phone services. Rami Makhluf owned 75 percent of the company. Orascom, an Egyptian company, owned the remaining 25 percent. After two years, Makhluf accused Orascom for cheating him, in a Damascus court. The Egyptian CEO and marketing director claimed they were then threatened by Syrian intelligence called Mukhabarat. By April 2002, the CEO was given three days to leave town. As a result, many investors pulled out although those who were able to link themselves to high officials in the regime benefited greatly and stayed. The Syrians who had no ability to leave the country were all too vulnerable to these kinds of manipulations. For instance, when a business became profitable, the Al-Assad government either demanded a share of the profit or did not allow it to operate. Syrian officials who dared to go against the regime found themselves in jail. For instance, Issam Zaim was forced to give up his post as minister of industry in 2003. He made a decision in favor of a German company based on the actual text of Syrian law. After that, his personal assets were frozen. He left Syria in fear of his life. It shouldn't be surprising that domestic investment is paltry. (*ibid*: 45)

Ba'athist ideology didn't govern policy. Liberalizing reform was a strategic choice. Because Bashar lacked an elaborate blueprint to substitute for Ba'athism and he proceeded

by trial and error. He was aware of provoking enemies before he had built up his own reformist faction and the risks of going too fast. So that Bashar saw reforms as a gradual process, in which he had to proceed in small steps. For him, he wouldn't risk stability or make mistakes. Syria would pursue a middle way, bucking the neo-liberal trend in regard to crash privatization, the shrinking of the public sector would have to run paralel with growing private sector, at the same time joining the Euro-Med partnership would lower barriers to global integration and undermine crony capitalist vested interests obstructing a deepening of the market economy. Political, bureaucratic and legal obstacles slowed down this modest reform program, while corruption, crony capitalists, the lack of accountability, and continual regional conflict was major disincentives to get the investment which lonely could make reform a success. (Hinnebusch, 2008: 275)

The political refoms can be seen as modernizing authoriterianism. The first priorities were to foster modernizing cadres and to combat waste, chaos, and corruption through increased accountability and transparency and by strengthening institutions through administrative reform and rule law. But Bashar thought that Syria was not ready to import democracy of Western type. (*ibid*: 275-6) The country Syria has taken as model was China. Because they wanted to avoid the political collapse that hit USSR and its Eastern European allies. Syria prefered a slower paced set of reforms that operate within the existing political system. Another model that was taken as an example was Egypt. In Egypt political reforms, some political debate, and elections all take place within the framework of an authoritarian system. This meant that the political reform process would go even slower than the already sluggish economic reforms. And also this meant that this process had suffered some significant reverses in recent months. We can understand the half-hearted nature of the reform process from its slogan "change within stability and continuity." (Hemmer, 2003: 227) Although Syria looked different in 2009 than it did under Hafez Al-Assad, movement was not always synonymous with change. Bashar's reforms ultimately were aimed at keeping the regime alive. Corruption in Syria prevented it from being as open to the world as it would like to appear. (Borshchevskaya, 2010: 45)

In the first years of Bashar's government, Bashar ended the monopoly the Ba'ath Party had on Syrian newspapers. He allowed political parties and affiliated with the Ba'ath in the National Progressive Front to begin publishing their own newspapers. Bashar also

approved the publication of a satirical newsmagazine. He discouraged the public display of pictures of himself and his father that were virtually omnipresent in Syria. He said that when his seven year term ended, he would like to hold a presidential election rather than a simple referendum. He released large numbers of political prisoners. (Hemmer, 2003: 227) Bashar continued the discharging of old guard which began in Hafez Al-Assad's period. Some of them were sent out to pasture with honor, such as Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas and Chief of Staff Ali Aslan. On the other hand, others were forced into exile including former Chief of Staff Hikmat Shihabi and former Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam. Some were committed suicide such as former Prime Minister Mohammad Zu'bi and Interior Minister Ghazi Kana'an. The former head of internal security, Bahjat Suleiman, was removed from his post, apparently on the urging of Asef Shawkat. After the retirement of the Old Guards, the Young Guard, comprising of younger generations emerged. The younger generation of those same families demonstrated much less of an affinity to their ancestral homes or even to their Alawite identity. Most of them were born and bred in Damascus but they lacked the distinct Alawite accent and the savy to curry favor within tribes they sprang from. However, their associates in the military, business or academic worlds in Damascus, most of them were Sunnis. (Bar, 2006: 383)

Old Guard had personal loyalty to Hafez Al-Assad. They used to an autrocratic micromanager. They were centralist for decision making. They had clear definition of authority. They were little familiar with Western culture. They were socialist, Arap Nationalist. They supported state controlled eceonomy and they were military technocrats who experienced war and defeat. On the other hand, Young Guard was second generation and borned into privileges. They had less loyalty and vasted interests. They used to consultation and consensus. They were de-centralized of decision making. They had ambiguity of authority. They were educated in USA or UK. They were ideological pragmatists. They supported wider private economy. They were academic technocrats and they had no experience with wars. (*ibid*: 383) It should be added that, with Bashar's taking the office, new faces appeared in the Ba'athist Party. (*ibid*: 371) However the personal relations of the Old Guards to Hafez Al-Assad were not present between the Young Guards and Bashar Al-Assad. This decreased the influence of Young Guards on decision making. Besides, there were no experts among Young Guards on international relations and strategy. (*ibid*: 375)

Syrian experts named the period Bashar Al-Assad had made political and economical reforms since the fisrt years of his reign as Damascus Spring. Bashar allowed the foundation of political and cultural forums in Damascus and other cities with the political reforms he had realised. In these forums the intellectuals discussed the necessity of democracy in a relative openness and freedom atmosphere. Some of the intellectuals founded the Committee for the Establishment of a Civil Society. (Zisser, 2003: 17) The most renowned forum was the Al-Kawakibi Forum. The forum took its name from Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi who mentioned the Arab renaissance after the Enlightenement in Europe in the 18th century. The Al-Kawabi Forum gained great significance with Majid Manjouneh, an intellectual from Aleppo. In this forum attracting an increasing number of Syrians every week, debates were held about the formation of the government, equality and oppression. The Attasi Forum founded by Habib Issa but named after the Nasserite intellectual Jamal Attasi, advocated the Arab Nationalism of the fifties and the integrity of Palestine, and also reacted against Israel. In addition to these, the Syrian Parliamenter Riad Sa'if founded the National Dialogue Forum. The forum used the Manifest of Social Peace which offered transparency and accountability to the government. Ma'amoun Al-Homsi, another parliamenter, issued the declaration of 7 August 2001 which invited Al-Assad to make emergency laws and to conform to human rights. The intellectuals made criticisizms about Syria's security was limiting the daily lives. According to Syrians, Syria was remembered not with her past acquisitions but with the Sednaya Prison and the hitches of the Ba'athist Party. Intellectuals also criticized the false face value Bashar Al-Assad tried to establishe. (Ghadry, 2005: 63-4)

However in February 2001 the Damascus Spring ended. The forums were closed and these kinds of meetings were banned unless they receive permission from the government. (Hemmer, 2003: 227) A period called the Damascus Winter started in January 2002, and the intellectuals and their parliamentary backbenchers were arrested. (Bar, 2006: 372) The spokesmen of the regime, even Bashar Al-Assad himself made declarations about the reform process and reformists, such as "agents of the West whose only aim is the undermining of Syrian domestic stability in the service of the enemies of the state". (Zisser, 2003: 17)

With the cease of the Peace process which was a required supplement form economical refoms, Bashar's economical reforms weakened more and more. Also, Bashar harsened his reaction against Israel, as in al-Aqsa Intifada, in order to reinforce his government inside. He reacted against Iraq's occupation by USA and increased anti-USA movements. The increase in anti-Americanism caused the aids he could receive for realizing the economical reforms to be blocked. The conjuncture emerged after the Hariri assassination hindered Syria's membership in the Euro-med which was a trump card of Syrian reformists against non-reformists. (Hinnebusch, 2008: 277)

Many Syria experts related the end of Bashar's reform period to various factors. Firstly, some of them think that Bashar believed that he could open the door to incremental reforms and he didn't expect the groundswell of demands for full civil liberties. Neither the elites nor Bashar were prepared for the demands of freedom and the criticisms against the government. So the course of the reforms frightened them. Secondly, some believe that the precoutions reflected Bashar's beliefs that the direction which civil society took was incompatible with the interests of the regime and its survival. Thirdly, some think that the revilization of the party at this stage was commensurate with Bashar's own statements. He said that the public desire for participation could be satisfied by adjustements in the structures of Ba'ath party. Fourthly, some experts think that the attempts to create a semblance of due process of law in arrests and indictment of oppositionist figures didn't represent an acceptance of principle of seperation of branches of government. (Bar, 2006: 373) Some optimistic experts related the end of the reforms to the Gorbachev Syndrome of the Old Guards and the Ba'athist Party and their perception of threat. (Bar, 2006: 372) According to this view, Bashar Al-Assad was in fact willing to do the reforms, but the old guards convinced Bashar Al-Assad that the reformist did not know the limits. According to Zisser, the reason for this resignation was the political inexperience of Bashar Al-Assad and his lack of domestic power to take some decisive actions in Syria. The end of the Damascus Spring demonstrated that Bashar had no clear vision of his own goal. (Zisser, 2003: 18) Some experts give reasons such as Ariel Sharon's taking the office in Israel, the increase in the perception of threat in Syria due to this development, Bashar's opinion that it would be appropriate to make reforms after gaining domestic support first, and, established his own forces, and unilateral and unauthorized action on the part of the

security forces, which forced a fait accompli on the president without first obtaining his acquiescence as other factors that affected the end of the reforms. (Bar, 2006: 373)

According to Syrian government, the reforms might cause turmoil in Syria's political system. Bashar, as his father, thought that "key constituencies are likely to be threatened by liberalization, while liberalization's agents and beneficiaries are historic regime rivals". The foundation of new enterprises would probably provide an economic innovation but also would give harm to regime supporters whose profits depended on government protection. Decreasing corruption might make economic sense, but on the other hand access to corrupt profits was one of the most important rewards the regime bestows on its loyal supporters in addition to providing a useful tool that Bashar could and used to get rid of potential rivals by selectively prosecuting them for corruption. (Hemmer, 2003: 230)

Also, there is one reality that can be skipped by the ones that think Syria would have a new vision due to Bashar Al-Assad's education abroad and representing the younger generations. Bashar Al-Assad is an Assad; eventhough he lived abroad for a limited time, his historical knowledge is not pro-Western as it was mentioned before. He is not familiar with the Western philosophy and system of thought due to the medical education he received, and this caused Bashar to remain inexperienced in making correct syntheses. Therefore, Bashar remained under the influence of the ones manipulating him due to his inexperience. Bashar Al-Assad, too, as Hafez Al-Assad, represented 12% of the Syrian population. The political coalition that left from Hafez to Bashar was much broader than simply an Alawi-dominated military regime, or a regime dominated by different minority groups. For instance, the revolution that brought the Ba'ath Party to power was hostile to the traditional Suni elite of Syria's major cities. But Suni leadership from rural areas had an important role in stabilizing the Al-Assad regime. Al-Assad regime wasn't an Alawi dictatorship, from formal government to the party and to military intelligence agencies, but on the other hand the Alawi presence became more and more predominant. %12 of population is Alawis, but close to %90 of heads of military and security services were Alawis. Alawi dominance was especially felt in Praetorian Guards, the military unitstationed in and around Damascus. Suni military commanders were generally paired with Alawi deputies, and vice versa. These institutions helped explain in part the ease of transition to Bashar, because institutions were far easier to bequeath to a successor than

were personal alligiances. (*ibid*: 227-9) It can be said that the most significant personal action of Bashar Al-Assad was the choice of spouse. Asma al-Akhras is a daughter of a Sunnite family from Homs and she was born and brought up in the UK. Asma received her education on computer science and worked as an economist in JP Morgan and Deutsche Bank. From his marriage to Asma we may infer that Bashar wanted to work with Sunnite businessmen. (*ibid*: 230) Bashar continued his father's efforts to bring the Suni business elite into coalition. But the interests of this group were increasingly diverging from the regime with regard to pace and direction reform. (*ibid*: 230)

Syrian military commanders thought that they were weak against their potential enemies, mostly Israel, like Hafez Al-Assad. They tried to balance this inferiority through the ballistic delivery systems and the acquisation of chemical weapons and by asymmetric Proxy warfare against Israel through support of Hezbollah and Palestinian organizations and against USA in Iraq by permitting elements of the former Iraqi regime and Islamists to operate from the Syrian-Iraqi border. Obtaining chemical weapons and Medium Range Ballistic Missiles were seen as a military defence action on the other hand Bashar Al-Assad was aware that sponsoring terrorist organizations was dangerous. This opinion was reinforced with the lessons taken from the 9/11 attack and during Syria's support to PKK. The relative contunity of the Syrian military command helped to preserve its traditional strategic worldview. The advisors of Bashar Al-Assad were young, educated in the West and did not have any military experience, so that their advices to the president seemed to neutralize some of the cautions of the military advisors. Because he did not have any military experience, Bashar took decisions regarding these advices because. It is claimed that Bashar felt a need to counter the image of a weak leader and this need manifested itself in bursts of political and military machismo. (Bar, 2006: 404)

Bashar Al-Assad's policies, at least in the first years, might be called as a follow up for his father's policies. In this respect, as his father, Bashar too tried to keep the balance in the relation with the East and the West. On one hand he established relations with Western Europe, the moderate Arab countries and even USA on the other hand he established close relationship with Iran and developed relations with Iraq. Bashar Al-Assad evaded the remnants of the past in the relations with the world, and made a clean break; and this created a positive effect on Syria's relation with her neighbors. With respect to this policy,

Syria started to review the relations with Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, which she had issues in the past. However, the regional reality was more prominent than Bashar's good will, and only this good will was not enough to improve relation with the neighbors. When the political insufficiency of Bashar Al-Assad in international relations and his lack of knowledge on Syria's regional and international role were considered it was not suprising that he developed radical policies on Arab-Israel issue. However, according to Zisser, these policies did not serve for the interests of Syria, and even harmed Syria's foreign relations. (Zisser, 2003: 46)

The strategic conjuncture surrounding Syria changed as Bashar took the office. Israel withdrew from Lebanon. Labanese arena began to adjust itself to the new situation. Attempts to exploit the Israeli withdrawal in order to evict Syria from Lebanon began. The Palestinian Intifadah broke out and Ariel Sharon was elected as Prime Minister of Israel. So Damascus made a sharp turn to a hard-line policy in Jerusalem. In 2001 9/11 attacks happened and under the Global War on Terrorism Afghanistan was occupied. The invasion of Iraq began. All these developments affected Syria's regional and international relations. It was a great unluck for Syria that this critical period coincided with the inexperienced time of Bashar. The transfer of government in Syria from an elder, experienced father to a young and inexperienced son posed negative effects on Syria's position in regional issues. But it can be observed that Bashar's foreign policy did not fall afoul of his father's. Bashar's foreign policy behavior was clearly defensive and reactive. According to Hemmer, it includes (Bar, 2006: 404-5);

" Attempts to reach a modus vivendi with Washington, at least so as not to provide a pretext to the United States or Israel to step up their campaign against the regime. Bashar seems resigned to American hostility to his regime, and does not seem to believe that there is an option for stable positive relationship with USA, at least under the present administration.

Attempts to improve relations with Russia and Europe as a counterbalance to the hostility of the USA. This policy-at least on European front- has soured in the wake of the murder of al-Hariri and the rupture of his relations with France.

Cultivating the strategic relationship with Iran, much as Bashar attempted to lean on Iraq before the war.

Dangling the prospects of gradual democratization -by presidential elections of 2007- and warning of the chaos that would emerge from regime change, in order to deter attempts to remove the regime.

Occassional willingness to renew negotiations with Israel and restrain the pro-Syrian Palestinian factions.

Attempts to create "nuisance value" for Syria by measured support of the Iraqi insurgency, along with signals that he may change that policy in return for a suitable political -and economical- compensation."

There were two significant events that influenced the regime, during Bashar's first years. The first one is the Palestinian Intifada of September 2000. This was followed by the activities of Hezbollah over Israel's northern border. Hezbollah's anti-Israel actions influenced Israel-Syria relations. It is a fact that Syria did not start the anti-Israel operations of Hezbollah in October 2000 and even Syria was not informed about these actions. However, Bashar Al-Assad wanted to take advantage of the Intifada to reinforce his position, Syria's position in the region and to take the presidency of the Arab Rejectionist Camp. For Zisser, we can say that the basis for his policy vis-a-vis the crisis into which the region had deteriorated wasn't only calculated. Bashar wanted to exploit the opportunity afforded him by the Palestinian Intifada to prove his abilities as a leader at home and abroad. According to many people in Israel and in the West, in his reaction to the renewed flare-up in Israeli-Palestinian relations, he was seen as emotional and hasty to say nothing of immature and inexperienced. For Zisser, his immaturity led him far afield to places where he most probably didn't want to go. (Zisser, 2003: 47)

The second problem Bashar faced was the 9/11 attacks and the assaults of USA on Afghanistan and Iraq under the name of Global Anti-Terrorism. USA started to blame Syria to establish relations with the elements perceived as enemies such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Hezbollah, and this situation continued with the isolation of Syria; and Syria's foreign policy was affected as it will be mentioned later.

The statements of Bashar Al-Assad on Syria's Israel policy were just like the ones from Hafez Al-Assad. These include (Bar, 2006: 406):

"Blantly anti-Semitic statements drawing on Christian and Muslim demonization of the Jews.

Nonacceptance of Israel as a 'real entity' with a real attachment to its land. Statements to this effect also echo Arab propaganda from the 1970s which portrayed Israel as a sort of artificial 'Cruser Kingdom' of uprooted people who, if given the opportunity would return to the countries from whence they came.

Statements to the effect that even if a peace agreement with Israel were to be concluded, the Arabs couldn't accept Israel as part of the region and would continue to see it as threat.

Statements aimed at lowering the priority of peace with Israel. Syria according to Bashar, wants peace but 'an honourable peace' and can wait until such a peace is attainable. Peace should be reached from a position of strength. This strength must include a credible deterrence of Israel, which can derive from military

capabilities or even Arab solidarity. Until this deterrence is achieved, any peace that is reached would be a 'peace of the weak'"

Bashar knew that willingness to re-engage in the peace process with Israel was his most important card. The debate was over his ability to compromise on the main bones of contention: "the international versus the 1967 borders and the extent of normal relations between the two countries". In his first years, all the signs indicated that Bashar wasn't willing to be able to be flexible on the former issue, on which he was committed to the legacy of Hafez Al-Assad. Bashar held a deposit that he extracted from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin regarding total Israeli withdrawal from Golan in return for comprehensive peace. This was also the basis for the Syrian negotiations with Prime Minister Binyamin Netenyahu and with Ehud Barak. It was clear that this was Bashar's true position and not because the Old Guard would not countenance any concessions in this regard. As it was mentioned before, the Old Guard had been ousted since Bashar took the office. (*ibid*: 404-5)

Although the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'athist regimes had been historically problematic, Bashar government established relations with Iraq. The Syria-Iraq border were opened to trade more and more, the official visits between two countries increased and Syria did not obey the UN embargo on Iraqi oil flowing from Kirkuk to the Syrian Mediterranean port of Banyas, since Syria got cheaper oil from the pipeline. (Hemmer, 2003: 233) Bashar refused that Iraqi oil was being exported through their territory to the world. He claimed that the oil flow was only intended to test the Iraqi-Syrian oil pipeline. But they lied regarding the flow of Iraqi oil via Syria. Syria also ignored the warnings of USA and did not stop her support to Hezbollah, providing shelter for Palestinian terrorist organizations. Although Syria's support to USA in providing information about al-Qa'ida (Zisser, 2003: 19), any improvement in USA-Syria relation could not be recorded.

As it was mentioned before, Hafez Al-Assad availed the Syrian-Israel peace talks and the Lebanon issue with his policy during the Persian Gulf War. However, due to Bashar's attitude, which did not take lessons from history, the relations with USA deteriorated, and caused the concerns that Syria might share the destiny of Iraq of the Iraq War. France was an important ally of Syria, historically, among the EU member states. Just after Bashar Al-Assad's taking the office, French President Jacques Chirac took Syria under France's

wings and advocated for Syria's policies. However, the French approach to Lebanon issue was a significant blow to Syria. Russia was an important actor for balancing USA. However, the receded relations with Russia in the Post Cold War era, re-escalated with Bashar taking the office. In January 2005 Bashar Al-Assad visited Moscow. He settled the issue of Syria's 12$ billion debt to the former USSR and hold talks on the possibility of the sale of advanced Russian weaponary to Syria. Bashar was aware that he couldn't expect help from Russia against USA and French plans in the UN, or USA's possible decision to topple the Syrian regime by force. (Bar, 2006: 417-8)

The relation with Iran had developed with the Islamic Revolution in Iran. For Iran, Syria's Alawite regime had an important place in the Arab World. Syria, among the Arab states, was the sole supporter of Iran during the Iran-Iraq War and the preeminent supporter during Iran's isolation. Iran and Syria collaborated intimately on development of surface-to-surface misilse and Iran's influence in Lebanon was due to Syrian acquiescence and support. Syria-Iran relations which improved under Bashar government improved more after the occupation of Iraq and shaped in the framework of Israel and Lebanon hostility. This appeared directly and through the relationship between Bashar and Sheikh Hasan Nassrallah, the leader of Hezbollah. One version presented Syria's relationship with Iran as deriving from the same factors that prompted it to support Iraq: "a belief that such a country could serve as a strategic support, admiration for a self-confident and proud leadership and for leaders who stand up to USA, a sense of common fate." In the Iranian front this was augmented by the traditionally close relations between Iran and Syria. (*ibid*: 415)

Syria and Turkey relations had always been problematic. For Syria Turkey was a NATO member USA ally; and a Middle East Country which had relations with Israel. Syria and Turkey had issues on Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and the historical Hatay issue; and Turkey was a country which had a military power that could harm Syria. However, there had been an improvement in the relations since the last years of Hafez Al-Assad. It was possible to state that the period between 1998 and 2000 was the period of creating mutual trust. Turkey had measured to what extent she could trust Syria and to what extent Syria conformed to the Adana Protocol until 2000. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 238) The participation of the 10th President of Turkey, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, to the burial service of

Syria's former president Hafez Al-Assad was the first high-level relation after a very long time. Turkey started to put forth the approach of removing the complications and improving the relations around these dates. (Orhan, 2009: 40) In the conjuncture after 1998, it is possible to state that both the Kemalists and the pro-Islamists in Turkey wanted this convergence. (Robins, 2007: 296)

With this visit, it can be said that both Turkey and Syria were willing to improve the relations, however it cannot be said that there was unanimity on Turkey's side for how to approach Syria. The foreign Ministry announced it was important to solve the water issue and the border issue which was called Hatay issue, but the military focused on a more pragmatic approach. They believed that they should emphasize cooperation on security matters and leave water and border issues for later. The foreign ministry prepared a declaration of principals which included respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of each country as a prerequisite for the advancement of relations. However, Syria was unwilling to sign such a declaration, and therefore Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's Turkey visit could not be organized. Syria informed Turkey that they wanted to resolve the border issue, but they needed their people to get used to this situation. Turkey accepted this offer and decided to talk this issue in the future. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 239) The Bashar Al-Assad government was very new at that time in Syria, and in my opinion declaring such a policy change all of a sudden might have frightened Bashar Al-Assad, for the sake of his government's stability. Because the Great Syria Ideal was an important trump card for Al-Assad's political stability, and this was the dominant view in the country. Bashar Al-Assad's attempt to make such a radical change in the first years of his reign would be dangerous for the future of Al-Assad's government. With Bashar Al-Assad replacing his father, the liberalization and change process sped up. But there weren't a prominent change in the foreign policy. The softening in the relations with Turkey can be considered as the speeding of the process started with the 1998 crisis. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 240-1)

During the Ankara visit of Syrian Minister of Interior on 28 September 2000, parties arrived at a concensus for joint-actions against terrorism, organized crimes, and drug trafficking and document forgery. In the meeting of the Syrian Minister of Interior and Turkish Minister of Interior Saadettin Tantan, the issues such as Syria's freezing PKK's

bank accounts, closing the PKK camps in Bekaa Valley were discussed, any discussions about the water issue were not held. (Pamukçu, 2004: 260) Abdel-Khalim Haddam visiting Turkey in November 2000 brought the message "We wish for good relations" from Bashar Al-Assad to the Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. Turkey wanted to add articles regarding the resolution of all the issues in the principles that would determine the foundation of the relations. However, Syria was in favour of a slow resolution via dialogue. Also Abdel-Khalim Haddam declared, in his reception of the Turkish Committee in Damascus, that one should see the glass half full in relations and Syria was not the old Syria; and stated that Bashar Al-Assad would certainly visit Turkey. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 241-3)

On 23 June 2001, during the Ankara visit of Syrian Minister of Economy and Trade Mohammad Imadi to improve the trade volume between two countries, issues such as increasing the number of border gates between Syria and Turkey, founding business councils, opening up of Turkish businessmen towards the Middle East over Syria, buying natural gas from Syria, allowing for more Turkish goods to enter Syria and cooperation in tourism were discussed. (Milliyet, 23 Haziran 2001) The Turkish Minister of Interior Kazım Yücelen visited Damascus on 9 September 2001 and signed the Security and Cooperation agreement with joint counter-terrorism as the most important article. (Milliyet, 9 Eylül 2001)

The trade between two countries also improved. While the trade volume between Syria and Turkey was 279 million dollars, it increased to 539 millions in 1999, to 724 millions in 2000, and to 744 millions in 2001. Syria took the 18th place in Turkey's exportation with a 337 million dollars amount in January-September period of 2002. It was stated that Turkey's potential export to Syria is about 1 billion dollars. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 242)

It can be said that there were some changes in Syria's approach to GAP. For instance, Minister of Irrigation Taha al-Atrash paid an official visit to GAP region in 2001 to get information about the project and to make use of Turkey's technical staff and agricultural education. (Oktav, 2003: 111) With the agreement signed on 23 August 2001 the way to the participation of Syrian experts in the GAP education programs was paved. In the visit,

the ministers of two countries emphasized that they are willing for the resolution of issue of sharing the Euphrates and Tigris waters among Iraq, Syria and Turkey. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 253) As it can be seen, while Syria had used PKK against the progression of GAP project once, and after 1998, she planed to make use of the technical and educational accumulations of Turkey regarding the GAP project. This situation is an obvious example that indicates the change in the relations between Turkey and Syria between 1990s to 2000s. Most of Syria's export is oil and oil by-products. With the decrease in world oil prices, Syria's export revenues decreased, and the import of goods related to the industrialization and investment policies increased. Syria placed 22nd among the countires Turkey exported most in 2001. Turkey's import from Syria in 2001 was 463 million dollars with a 1.1% share, Turkey also placed 21st among the countries Syria imported from. While Turkey took place near the top in Syria's foreign trade volume, Syria's remaining falling behind in Turkey's trade volume was due to difference between the amounts of trade volume of the two countries. (*ibid*: 243)

Untill 2009, the improvement in trade relations between Syria and Turkey would affect the political relations positively, and also would leave a positive effect on the Middle East. Syria, leading the foundation of the Arab Common Market, went to a graded customs discount with Lebanon since 1999 to 2009. In June 2001, Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Libya signed a Free Trade Agreement. Therefore Turkey would have the right to make trade without customs to the member states of the Arab common Market over Syria. Thus, Turkey's way of convergence with Arabs, both poltical and economical, passed through good relations with Syria. For Turkey, Syria was seen as a gate opening to Arab world. (*ibid*: 245)

In 2001 Syrian Minister of Petroleum Mohammad Mahir Jamal and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Cumhur Ersümer signed a declaration on Cooperation in Oil and Natural Gas in Ankara. The issues included in the declaration were (*ibid*: 243-4):

"Developing the cooperation in oil and natural gas reserves search and administration between two countries; starting necessary initiatives to carry Syrian natural gas to Europe over Turkey; founding a joint work group to develop the natural gas search and production activities; incentivizing Turkish private sector to participate in possible oil and natural gas projects in Syria."

Turkish Minister of Interior Rüştü Kazım Yücelen paid his first official visit to Syria in September 2001, and indicated that the issues between two countries have been overcome and the dialogue process should begin. In the end of September ministries of Interior of two countries discussed all the issues in their areas of interest along with counter-terrorism, organized crimes, drug trafficking, struggle with forging and black money, information and education exchange, and signed the results of the discussion. (*ibid*: 246)

Turkey started a work to cleanse the 822 km Syrian border from landmines and to open these areas to agriculture again; in March 2002, a Turkish committee comprising of military officers headed by a Major General and other diplomats visited Syria, and after the talks lasting three days the decision of Turkish Army's training Syrian soldiers both in Syria and in Turkey was taken, and the signing of an extensive military training and cooperation agreement was decided. (Demir, 26 March 2002) Turkey informed Israel, with regard to the signing of this military cooperation agreement, that convergence with Syria did not pose a threat against Israel. (Şalvarcı, 2003: 247)

Syrian Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Hassan Turkmani as the official invitee of Chief of Staff General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu between 19 and 22 June 2002 was accepted by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. During this visit the Educational, Technical and Scientific Cooperation Agreement and the Military Training Cooperation Agreement which were decided before were signed. Turkish Chief of Staff General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu declared that these agreements were historical landmarks. In his speech, General Kıvrıkoğlu indicated that the cooperation in training and defense industry between Turkey and Syria would be in favour of both countries and declared that improving the cooperation in security would contribute to the Middle East Peace and stability. Lieutenant General Turkmani expressed that he was glad to see the increase in the friendship and cooperation between two countries and wished these relation to be improved further, in other areas too. This agreement prevented a threat from Turkey in a period in which the threat from Israel continued. Also this agreement would avail Turkey in converging to Arab world. (*ibid*: 247-9) The agreement was signed with Syria, who had been feeling herself in danger due to the MTCA's signed with Israel. This was a good example to the changing relations. (Oktav, 2003: 111)

Between 18 and 20 November 2002, some Turkish authorities visited Syria and informed and warned Syrian authorities about the KADEK, the substituent of PKK, and its activities in Syria and Lebanon. On 12 March 2003 new talks were realized between Turkish and Syrian high level security units and it was decided to continue the operation towards overthrow the terrorist organization. (Yavuz, 2005: 455)

The improvement in mutual relations started after the 1998 crisis and continued with President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's visit, as it is seen, made towards a rapid convergence in a very short time. Abdullah Öcalan's deportation out of Syria was of great significance in this. Syria, under the leadership of Hafez Al-Assad, decided to take the rightest action by stopping PKK for Syria to be excluded from the list of Terrorism Sponsoring States of USA, and participated in the Middle East Peace Process with the support of USA. Hafez Al-Assad's health problems played an important role in Syria's change of politics. Hafez Al-Assad followed a policy of convergence with the neighbours due to his health problems. Thus he smoothed the way to Bashar Al-Assad's government. In addition to this, Syria realized that, in the Post Cold War atmosphere, she should increase the welfare and life quality of the individuals and reduce the social and economical difficulties. In order to provide this, Hafez Al-Assad resorted to opening Syria's gates to the world. The view that Turkey could serve as a bridge for Syria's opening to Europe and provided economical benefit policy (Oktav, 2003: 108-9) was very common in Syria.

With the declaration of George Bush stating that the countries sponsoring terrorism would be considered as enemies of USA, Syria felt herself disturbed; because Syria was insistent sponsoring the anti-Israel terrorist groups. Israel's and USA's pressure forced Syria to develop good relations with her neighbors and even to follow an ally relation if necessary. In addition, the conjuncture, that enabled USA to occupy Iraq, converged Turkey and Syria. The view that the Kurdish population present in both countries might realize a new formation by combining with the Kurds in Iraq is common in both countries. Therefore, Turkey increased diplomatic relations with Syria and Iran against a possible Kurdish State; however she declared that there was not an alliance on this issue. The reason for this was to prevent USA reaction, since USA followed harsh policies against these two countries. (*ibid*: 110) The significance of the Iraq policy of USA in Turkish-Syrian relations will be mentioned later.

In order to make sense of the change in the relations between Turkey and Syria, Syria-Israel Peace talks should be considered too. With the Adana Protocol and Öcalan's deportation from Syria, a more trustable atmosphere emerged, the terrorism issue disappeared and the relations started to softern gradually. As for the relations with Israel, they got deeper. Therefore, in when the Israel-Syria Peace Talks started in 1999, Turkey's perception of the talks was different from her perception during 1995-1996 peace talks, since in this new period changes were experienced in the relations to both of these countries. Turkey declared that she welcomed these peace talks and wished the process to come through right away. Turkey's Israel Ambassador Barlas Özener said that (Sever, 2001: 93-4),

> "Syria is a potential partner for peace and without it there will bie no genuine peace in the region. We have no problem with Israel solving its problems with Syria, and the better our relations with Syria, the more flexibility we will have in our ties with Israel."

In addition to these President Demirel showed that Turkey was in favour of the peace talks by visiting Israel. Barak emphasized that a Syrian-Israeli agreement would not harm the close ties with Turkey. (*ibid*: 94-5)

The peace talks between Syria and Israel started with the participation of President Clinton, Prime Minister Barak and the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk Al-Shaara. (*ibid*: 95) In the talks, four separate commissions were established for mutual relations, security, use of water and determining borders. While Syria wanted the border issue discussed first, Israel was in favour of starting off from mutual relations and security issues. In the end the decision of discussing both border and security issues together was taken. However, while parties were leaving the talks, Syria felt that Barak was avoiding discussing the 4 July border. Therefore, Syria realized that she would not come to terms with Barak. In the talks between Al-Assad and Clinton on 26 March 2000 in Geneva, Al-Assad was insistent on the 4 July border, but Clinton stated that Israel was determined to retreat from Golan with the condition that the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee would remain in Israeli borders. However, this condition was unacceptable for Syria. (Süer, 2004: 176-8) During the talks, Turkey concentrated on the water issue this time, instead of terrorism issue. Turkey brought the issue of retreat of Isreal from Syria which directly interested Turkey. From Turkey's side the relations with Israel were seen such good that

Israel's reply to Syria's demands at the expense of Turkey relations were not expected. Israel emphasized that the water issue would not be discussed in the talks; and for the resolution of the water issue between Syria and Turkey, an agreement should be made between these countries. Turkey declared that she would not accept any peace agreements in which Turkey's waters would be mentioned. Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that Turkey could only contribute the Middle East Peace process by selling water. In July 1999, President Demirel in his visit to Israel said "we can definitly supply Israel with 180 million cubic meters of water right now, and more in future". As it was mentioned before, in 1987 a project for carrying water to the Persian Gulf countries under the name of Peace Water Project and the Manavgat Project were presented by Turgut Özal. Both projects, as it was mentioned before, aimed at Turkey's contribution to the stability of the region and Turkey's economical benefit. However, these projects were rejected by Arabs. In 1999, selling the Manavgat water was brought to agenda again and Israel leaned towards it. But any agreement weren't signed on this issue. (Sever, 2001: 95) There weren't any results achieved in the talks on 17 January 2000. Hafez Al-Assad's death in 2000 elaborated the situation. (*ibid*: 95) With the subsequent Al-Aqsa uprising started in September 2000, and election of Ariel Sharon who was known with his bloody assaults in Southern Lebanon and his effective border operations against Syria, the talks which had already halted were suspended. (Süer, 2004: 179) The talks would restart with the intervention of Turkey as we will mention later.

6.2. The New Foreign Policy Towards Middle East By The AKP Coming To Power After 2002 General Election In Turkey

In order to make sense of Turkey's Middle East policy, one should comprehend the Turkish Foreign Policy conception of Ahmet Davutoğlu who had served as the Principal Consultant to Prime Minister between 2002 and 2009 and who has been the Minister of Foreign Affairs since 1 May 2009.

Davutoğlu divides Turkish Foreign Policy Strategy to Turkey's three geopolitical spheres of influence.

1. Near Land Shelf: Balkans-Middle East-Caucasus
2. Near Marine Shelf: Black Sea-Adriatic-Eastern Mediterranean-Red Sea-Persian Gulf-Caspian Sea
3. Near Continental Shelf: Europe-North Africa-saouth Asia-Central and East Asia. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 118)

According to Davutoğlu, Turkey's geopolitical significance arises from her position in the center of the land and marine power centers; the domination areas in the direction of east-west and north-south; and the transition zones. Turkey includes the land transition zones from North to South that connects Eurasia to Africa, and the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Bosphorus as a marine transition zone; and connects these zones to Middle East and Caspian zones which are of great significance for Eurasia. As for East-West direction, the Anatolian Peninsula has a special significance for Eurasia. (*ibid*: 116) According to Davutoğlu, Turkey should make sense of her position in these geopolitical zones and should integrate these zones with the cultural formation in her domestic policy (*ibid*: 118); because, according to Davutoğlu, the geopolitical position determined by the geography of this county should be re-determined by the international balance of power and the changes in this balance. Only this way a country's geopolitical significance, determined by her geographical position, may provide an advantage, instead of disadvantage. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey had used the geopolitical power, mentioned above, just as a trump card in negotiations by entering under the security shelter of USA and the NATO during the Cold War. This policy only aims at preserving the status quo. (*ibid*: 116)

After the Cold War, Turkey was seen as a bridge between East and West, in international societies, and Turkey followed a policy to preserve her own stability against new issues such as crises in the Balkans, Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. (*ibid*: 78) For Davutoğlu, using the geopolitical significance just for preserving the status quo, in a conjuncture in which bi-polarity era ended and the global and regional balances changed, renders the geopolitical advantages inoperative. Turkey should seek the aim to turn this geopolitical significance gradually into an opening to the world, and to turn her regional effectiveness into global effectiveness. Turkey's new foreign policy should be re-interpreted over creating new alternatives the relations with power centers, and to create a domestic area in

which cultural, economical and political ties are robust. (*ibid*: 116-8) Each of these geopolitical spheres of influence may be separate research subjects. However we will only focus on the relations of Turkey to the Middle East area.

Firstly, we will briefly touch upon the history of the Middle East. Middle East can be defined as the region starting from Morocco, Tunusia, Algeria, Libya, Somali, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, stretching to the Gulf of Oman in the East, including Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Umman, covering Turkey, Caucasia and Central Asian Turkic republics, and also Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the North; and in the south stretching to Yemen over Saudi Arabia covering the Arab Peninsula with Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine in the middle. (Arı, 2007: 25)

The Middle East term was first used by the British in World War II, for defining the military troops in Egypt. Before WWII, the term Near Eastern was used to define the region. This term was also used to define the territory under the reign of the Ottoman Empire. (Sander, 2006: 220)

The Middle East region has hosted many civilizations since the beginning of history, and functioned as a juncture for other civilizations developed in other regions of the world to spread. The region played an important role in the distribution of cultures, beliefs and civilizatrions apart from the trade goods. The first settlements were founded in this region and the first changes, material and economic, were realized here, and the most important religious traditions spread out from the region. The Middle East region has been an area of interest for every country that aimed world domination, since it played an important role in the development of world history. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 130-1) The region has witnessed the migrations of the tribes in North-South and East-West directions from Eurasia because of the land states' wish to reach open seas, and this has increased cultural interaction. The region, being a central one, has been influenced continuously from external factors. (*ibid*: 132)

The Crusades started after the conquest of Anatolia by the Seljuks in 11th century caused the geocultural disintegration of the region. Today, the Middle East region is the

geocultural route zone between East and West. The dominance of Islamic civilizations all over the Middle East region has casued geocultural integrity and the region has been seen as the domain of Islamic civilizations. In 18th century the Ottoman system started to collapse slowly and this changed the views of colonial empires, which grew stronger with the rise of colonialism, about the region which was of great significance on their transportation ways. In the first half of the 19th century, the Middle East witnessed the military and diplomatic attacks of the Western Forces who wished to dominate the region. During WWI, Russia, who wanted to reach warm seas; the UK, who wanted to secure her relations with her dominions; France, who wanted to occupy new dominions; and Germany, who wanted to politicize the Berlin-Baghdad line and catch up with others in colonization race, engaged in competition over Ottoman Empire. This was realized with the collapse of Ottoman Empire after the war, and Middle East, rich in raw materials, was divided between colonialist powers. Later, with the National Pact, accepted by the Independence movement in Anatolia, did not cover this region, and thus accepted that the region was left to colonialist powers. (*ibid*: 131-4)

The bi-polar ideological disintegration conjuncture of the Cold War era changed the religion based geocultural formation of the Middle East. The disintegration between Ba'athist and Nasserist dictatorial formations, oriented by socialist ideology, and the pro-Western dynasties become the geocultural disintegration measure for the region. The geoeconomic significance of the region during the Cold War was equated to oil. The geopolitical significance, on the other hand, was perceived from different perspectives. USA accepted the line starting from the Northeast of Turkey stretching to Afghanistan over the north of Iran and Pakistan as important zone defending USA interests. The USSR, on the other hand, was in pursuit of reinforcing the Afghanistan-Syria-Southern Yemen-Ethiopia line surrounding the Persian Gulf, and seeking an easy way to reach the Persian Gulf over Caucasia by creating unbalances in Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Here it should be mentioned that the foundation and rapid emanation of Israel has influenced the internal balance in the region. (*ibid*: 134-5)

The ideological polarizations in the region have left their places to a polarization based on religion and civilization in the post Cold War era starting from 1980's. These theories were

first put forth by Western theoreticians and politics makers, and accelerated with the Iran Revolution and the Persian Gulf War. In the beginning of eighties Brzezinski evaluated the Islamic revival as a development jeopardizing USA interest; in nineties, Fukuyama presented the Islam World as a reverse polarity which threatens the Western Values in his 'the End of History' thesis; and Huntington in his 'the Clash of Civilizations' thesis, presented Islam World in the center of the clash of civilizations. In this thesis, Turkey is evaluated as a *torn country* who tries to get out of the civilization sphere she belongs to, but cannot gain acceptance from the civilization sphere she wants in. (*ibid*: 135-6)

The Middle East comprises of countries belonging to North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf sub-regions; therefore it has three sub-regions in itself. According to Sander, the Middle East Region does not comprise of countries who share common political features such as government systems as in Western Europe, and modernization in culture and social expectation levels. There are reformist and conservative monarchies, and at the same time republics with democratic and totalitarian regimes in region. The region is not an economic integrity also. Oil-rich and oil-poor countries live together with developed and underdeveloped countries. Culturally, Islam and Arabs are dominant in the region except for Turkey, Iran and Israel. This situation may be seen as the common feature of the states in the region. (Sander, 2006: 221)

In order to make a full sense of the region, one should consider the region geographically, geoeconomically and geoculturally. We will make use of Strategic Depth by Davutoğlu, and evaluate the issue in the light of this work.

The Middle East Region includes the West of Asia, the North of Africa and Europe's eastern borders in terms of land shelf. In terms of marine shelf it covers the South and the East of the Mediterranean and the Southern costs of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Red Sea and Persian Gulf are in this region. Five of the nine most important passageways in the world, namely the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles, the Suez Canal, and Straits of Aden and Hormuz are in this region too. In addition to these, one of the most important fairways, the Gibraltar, is indirectly related to this region. According to Davutoğlu this geographical formation provide the significance of the reigon. (*ibid*: 324-6)

According to Davutoğlu, the significance of the Middle East for Turkey should be considered from three different perspectives. First, the region is in the near land shelf of Turkey and it affects Turkey's regional policies. Second, there are near marine shelves, coastlines and hinterlands of which Turkey is in relation with; and third, the region plays an important role in the policies towards Asia and Africa and in establishing near land connections. For Davutoğlu, it is impossible for Turkey to follow a foreing policy limited to her own regional interest areas, with a conception passed down from the Cold War Era, while other countires pursue policies towards exploring their near land shelves. A country, in position of Turkey cannot enter into pursuit of a unilateral international position, and she can obtain a powerful economic status by directing towards the centers in which the economic resources are concentrated and the global economic transformations accelerate. (*ibid*: 217-8)

When the bi-polar order disappeared with the end of the Cold War, the views about the region of the global actors, which increased their areas of influence in international relations, has changed and the operational zones of the regional forces who are capable of developing regional-scale politics, are widened. This situation created the possilibity of low-intensity conflicts in the region. The region witnessed attacks of the regional forces, such as Iraq, who wanted to benefit from the post Cold War conjuncture. The USA, considering these risks, has gone into the effort of reorganizing the global formation over the region. (*ibid*: 126-7) The New World Order shaped by this attitude of USA, one of the most important concepts of the post Cold War era, has been first applied in this region. Although the Persian Gulf interference was supported by the Western powers, there has not been a dramatic change in their approach to the regional issues. According to Davutoğlu, the economic relations of the EU states with Iran, on which USA applied an embargo within the context of double containment doctrine; and the France-Syria convergence which can be given as an example to short-term alliances depending on the interests in the region can reveal the differences in the conceptions. Therefore, for Davutoğlu, "it is inevitable for the region to maintain this dynamic geopolitical formation in connection with the global balances, despite many international conferences covering the whole region and realized in the framework of Middle East Peace Process." (*ibid*: 139-40)

As it was mentioned before, the Middle East region has got an important place in the history of humanity. The geographical position of the region forms a basis for the cultural interactions. None of the strategic issues can be understood without taking the historical background into consideration. Davutoğlu gives Jerusalem as an example to this point of view. This issue is the key point of the Middle East Peace Process. Jerusalem is a center for three important religions. Therefore, Jerusalem turns out to be a common issue of three major religions for the parties, instead of being a regional issue. Again for Davutoğlu, Turkey as the heir to Ottoman Empire, who hosted Jerusalem for the longest time in its history, can play an active role in this issue. However, for achieving success with her present condition, Turkey had to penetrate into the geocultural and historical depth of the Middle East. (*ibid*: 327-8) If Turkey wants to continue a more active policy in the region, she should establish healty communication medium between research institutes and policy makers in order to resolve her theoretical deficiency about the region. For instance, speaking Arabic has been causing misperceptions in the internal policy; and therefore there had been a shortage of personnel speaking Arabic with regard to the exportation campaign towards the Middle East in the 1980s. This situation should change. (*ibid*: 58)

According to Davutoğlu, two elements, internal and external, can be given as reasons for the geocultural disingtegration emerged in the region after the Ottoman Empire. External element is the colonialist European factors spread over the region and the establishment of Israel State. Thus Christians and Jews obtained an area of influence in the region. Davutoğlu considers the nation-states as the internal element. According to this view, each nation-state established entered into search for a new cultural identity and historical reference to create a basis for their legitimacy, and this caused the Arab nations to divide into smaller units. (*ibid*: 329-30)

Davutoğlu expresses that the geocultural disintegration in the Middle East and the potential of ethnic, religious and political polarization caused by this disintegration is high. The increasability of the differentiation of the Turkish, Persian, Arab and Kurdish elements; the cultural/political tensions the Israel state, founded by global factors, with regional elements; different national identities the nation-states try to establish;

geopolitical/ideological fraction lines; and the changes between the geocultural fraction lines cause the cultural differences to be a threat of depression. This situation creates a conjuncture that can be manipulated by both regional and global powers. Davutoğlu argues that Turkey's use of her inheritance from the Ottoman Empire as a strategic pivot is of great significance for both Turkey's effectiveness in the region and for establishing an equitable and permanent order in the region. (*ibid*: 330-1)

Also, there is a serious discrepancy between the political geography defined by state formations emerged with the end of the colonialist era and the geopolitical lines defined by the physical geography; and this is among the most important reasons for the intra-regional depressions. There is generally a dispute between the border neighbors of the region. This condition provides an area of operation for the regional powers. Davutoğlu gives Iraq's attack on Kuwait as an example to this. (*ibid*: 140-1)

Davutoğlu touches upon the geoeconomic importance of the region. The region is commemorated equivalent to oil nowadays; however this is deficient, if not false. The region being at the center of the temperate climate zone is important for the agricultural potential and for being a commercial transit line. The region covers almost all transportation and trade routes of the Afro-Euroasia continental shelf. The trade between the Mediterranean shelf and China and between the steps at the North of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean and Egypt carries the region to an important position. The China-India and Egypt-East Africa trade routes pass through the southern coasts of the Middle East region. The Middle East has developing port cities in the Mediterranean, Anatolian, Black Sea, Red Sea and Persian Gulf coastlines. And throughout Eurasia there are trade cities comprising the juncture points. This situation also increases the importance of the region for Davutoğlu. The region also functions as a resource transit line between Western Europe, which lacks natural resources, and the East which has got the resources but lacks the industry to process these resources in European quality. Oil, on the other hand, brings a vital role to the region. Oil is the junction point of geopolitics and economy-politics today. The Middle East, once viewed as barren land, has gained great importance. Davutoğlu gives the relation between the post Cold War concept The New World Order and the Persian Gulf War as an example to the importance of oil in world politics. Davutoğlu, at

this point, emphasizes again, the inheritance of Turkey from the Ottoman Empire, and finds Turkey's remaining inefficacious in the region with regard to oil as an heir of such a state odd. (*ibid*: 332-5)

Davutoğlu considers water as another geoeconomic element that concerns Turkey. According to Davutoğlu (*ibid*: 335):

"The water issue in the Middle East becomes a potential area of conflict that would influence intra-regional alliances and conflicts. One of the most important factors emerges this potential area of conflict is the discrepancy between the geoeconomic resources of the Middle East and the current political formations founded by the nation-state borders. The map of Middle East based on the artificial borders which include the lines of the colonialist era, was built on top of the principle to prevent the monopolization of the water and oil resources."

The number of the rivers that spring and disembogues in the same country is very few. Therefore, there are issues about the water resources that would satisfy the agriculture need of the region. For Turkey, GAP is a subject that should be evaluated in this respect. The planning of the GAP coincides with the Cold War era. Then, USSR-Syria, USSR-Iraq and USA-Israel, USA-Iran alliances created a relative stability along the southern and eastern borders of Turkey. However, the change in the views of Western states about the GAP with regard to the Iran Revolution, the collapse of USSR, the end of the artificial alliance between the Eastern and Western blocs and the newly emerged geostrategic factors caused Turkey to lose her previous easiness about GAP. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey, in this respect, should give up her politics in the region, dependent on extra-regional factors, and should revise the water and oil politics over the region stretching from northern Caucasia to the Persian Gulf. This should also be added that, Davutoğlu thinks that the issue of a war over the use of water resources in the region is a means to influence the intra-regional balance in the Middle East Peace and War processes, used sometimes by extra-regional and sometimes by intra-regional actors. Also, he points out that the Iraq-Turkey water issue's arise as a threat from the south just before the Persian Gulf War and as Turkey focuses on the Balkans and The Caucasus is remarkable. (*ibid*: 336-8)

There is another question to be asked at this point. Is Turkey a Middle Eastern country? According to Fuller, Turkey is a part of the Middle East, geographically, as she is a part of

Europe, the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. However this question is beyond geography and is related to identity, orientation and wishes. And this is dependent on the political point of view of the individual. However, whatever thought an individual has, according to Fuller, Turkey's geographical positions drags Turkey into the Middle East politics. (Fuller, 2009: 28-9)

As for Sander, he argues that the different racial features of Turks and the laic state structure cause us to question the position and role of Turkey in the region. Sander, as Fuller, accepts Turkey as a Middle East country geographically; however he argues that Turkey does not share any of the integrating elements in the Middle East for not being Arab, and for being a laic state comprising of a Muslim majority instead of being an Islamic state. According to Sander, this ambiguity sometimes draws Turkey away from the Middle East. (Sander, 2006: 221-2)

Turkey, with AKP policies, has leaned towards the Middle East more than ever before in the history of the Republic of Turkey. Then, how is Turkey's image in the Middle East region comprising of Arabs? Making sense of Turkey's image from the Arab perspective plays an important role for determining the advantages and disadvantages in Turkey's policies on this region. While there was not hostility in the new Turkish state, founded after the Independence War after the WWI, there was a powerful hostility against the West among Arabs. From Arab point of view, the West did not keep promises given to Arabs and the region fell under the domination of European powers in the post Ottoman era. The settlement of Jews in Palestine with the support of the Western powers and as a consequence the foundation of Israel, a Jewish state, under the protection of the Western powers and USA clinched this hostility. (*ibid*: 227)

However, the Arab Nationalism, emerged as a main movement after the WWI, describes the Seljuk-Ottoman era as a period in which Arabs had been removed from the stage of history. From this perspective the Arab history ended with the defeat of Abbasid Caliphate by the Mongols in 1258. According to Arab nationalist, if the Arabs had protected their independence for all these years, if they had developed their own institutions and governments, they could have resisted the European imperialism more efficiently.

(Davutoğlu, 2001: 406-8) The inclination of the Ottoman Empire towards the Turkism movement from the Ottomanism/Islamism movement caused Arabs to get alienated to Ottoman Empire. The Arab identity had emerged as a politico-cultural alternative resisting to the heavy rules of the elites of the Committee of Union and Progress, during the weakening stage of the Empire. This consciousness was first seen in the anti-Turk actions of Sherif Hussein, the ruler of Mecca. From the traditional history perspective of this era, the anti-Arab politics of Cemal Paşa, governor of Syria were accepted as a landmark for that era. Ottoman era is seen as a weakening stage in Arab history, and accepted as an obstacle before enlightened Western thought. (Aras, 2002: 50) However, according to Davutoğlu, Ottoman Empire did not hinder the development of Arab world, on the contrary functioned as a shield against Western colonialism; and protected Arab World from the dissolution of the colonialist West. The anti-Ottoman image could only be broken after Arab nationalist comprehended this fact. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 406-8)

According to Davutoğlu, Arabs' seeing Turkey as the reason for their not being developed, emerges the thought among Arab nationalist that they had to be freed from Turkish influence to prove themselves. Davutoğlu evaluates the relations between Arabs and Turks within the framework of a feeling of denial together with secret admiration seen between the Eastern Europe nations and Germany; and Eastern Asia societies and Japan. He gives as an example the political alienation between Turkey and Syria, despite the deep cultural and geographical ties. Davutoğlu argues that this kind of psychological barrier affects negatively the Turkish-Arab relations, and emphasizes that Turkey should make sense of the region, encompass it, and orient it as a country having the Ottoman inheritance. (*ibid*: 409-10)

The Ottoman effect is not different for Syria too. According to Aras, Arab nationalism in the Syrian province developed as an opposition movement and gained momentum as the nationalist Young Turks enforced measures to replace Arabs with Turks and enforced administrative centralization. This policy of the Ottoman Empire caused a new middle class to emerge; and their material expectations were much ahead of actual growth. Syrian Arab nationalism has been shaped along anti-Turkish thoughts and this anti-Turkish

movement is focused on the Hatay issue, on which Syria claimed rights, which is now Turkish territory. (Aras, 2002: 51)

According to Aras, Syrian and Turkish governments are stuck in the 20th century and the ruling elites' worldviews and identities constitute the main obstacles behind the formation of rational foreign policy behavior. The mutual intellectual obstacles hindered the perception of each other's actions. The same intellectual obstacles held the parties away from each other as possible, and caused them to ignore each other. According to Aras, the governors of both sides maintained the distance between the two and kept the hostility alive in order to defend their own governments by exaggerating present or nonpresent threats. (*ibid*: 52)

According to Aras, Turkey acted hesitant to separate the Middle East from its historical roots or its geographical contexts in her foreign policy. However, the international developments, especially the Soviet threat directed towards Turkey and Turkey's effort to take part in the Western Bloc emerged the thought in the Turkish foreign policy makers to compensate the post Empire loneliness of Turkey, and Turkey had to revise the Ottoman inheritance once she despised. The Middle East had become one of the most important areas for Turkey to test her identity and mission in the post Cold War era. According to Aras, Turkey contains many negative opinions about Arab world. Firstly, Turkey sees the acceptance of Islam under the influence of Arabs as the source of her backwardness. Secondly, Turks think that, during the WWI, Arabs cooperated with the British and stabbed them in the back. Third one is the negative effect, caused by Arabs' taking part in the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War. The hostility against Arabs had not been felt until 1910s. Aras gives as an example to this, the lack of any negative thought in the works of Ahmet Mithat Efendi, an Ottoman intellectual and author; and on the contrarty the depictions of Arabs in his works as virtuous people. (Aras, 2002: 50) However, it can be said that negative discourse was present in later works such as the expression "- I want - neither the sweet of Damascus not the face of an Arab" in the Zeytindağı novel by Falih Rıfkı Atay.

After the WWI the Arab World was placed out of the area of interest. We can list the reasons for this as Arab World's not being a part of Turkish state anymore; Arab states, under the mandate of Western states, not posing a problem for Turkey; Turkey's being busy with her own nation-state formation; and Turkey's priority being establishing relations with her previous enemies in the West. Thusly, the recognition of Turkey's sovereignity was very important for maintaining the existence of the Republic. (Fuller, 2009: 68-9)

Although Republic of Turkey has 83 years of history, the formation of her standards of judgement goes back to 1830, the Rescript of Gülhane. The modernization struggle started in the last stages of the Ottoman Empire and continued with the reforms of the Republic of Turkey under the reign of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founder of Turkey. According to Robins, this struggle is to bring the country to a post-enlightenement modern level, and keeping the Islamic and cultural views alive, which had made Ottoman a great empire. Again according to Robins, Kemalizm is a movement of thought existing before the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. (Robins, 2007: 289-304)

The main elements of the Turkish identity are determined by the thought of founding a civic and modern state with respect to the reforms realized during the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. This new identity formation – later called Kemalizm – had been realized around the westernization thought which was popular at that time and which reflects the thoughts of Ottoman intellectuals. The main elements of Kemalizm were founded on top of leaving the old Ottoman past and the Islamic power which ostracized non-muslim societies. However, on one hand, the modernization movements, aiming at carrying Turkish economy to the Western states' level sped up; on the other hand, the doubt against the West, inherited from the Ottoman Empire, continued. In addition, the obscuring the Ottoman past, and the Kurdish uprising in the first years of the Republic of Turkey caused the Turkish identity to lean towards ethnic nationalism based on Turkishness. (Aras, 2002: 48)

Kemalists wanted to build a new nation-state based on new nationalist values that would replace the multi-national, multi-religional and Islamic-oriented values of the Ottoman

Empire. In order to realize this, Atatürk cleared up the traditional clergymen, appropriated the glebe of the ulama, and changed the Arabic alphabet into a Latin one. The sultanate was abolished and a Republic was found instead. Islamic law was laid aside by taking Western laws. Western clothes were presented to the society. However, among the reforms made, the biggest blow to the relations between Arabs and Turks, according to Fuller, was dealt by the abolition of caliphate in 1924. Abolition of caliphate deprived the Muslim community of its central institution and the higher religious authority, according to Fuller. Fuller expresses that the lack of caliphate chair is still being felt in the Islam world with the following words (Fuller, 2009: 63-5):

"The continuing lack of caliphate has found its reflections in most of the Islamic movements of the 21st century very recently. Really, it is accepted, by many, that this deficiency has a serious effect on the weakness and disintegration of Islam today. After the start of global war against terrorism, a serious fear of anti-Islamic crusade prevails among Muslims. After all, the caliphate is still a key symbol and a political chair and waits for the rise of a charismatic leader. All of these set forth the significance of a decision Turkey took in 1924, and give clues about the Muslim worlds former, present, and the future attitude towards Turkey."

Fuller expresses the Muslim World view of Kemalist Turkey as such (*ibid*: 65):

"Kemalist Turkey, for Muslims, especially for Arabs represents the total denial of Islam, of the ancient ties and common cultures of Arab world and Islam world in general. Moreover, Kemalist Turkey represents the despise of Islam as a religion, Turkey's leaving Arabs strategically to the hands of Western imperialist powers among which she has taken part, and weakening of the Muslim power in a time when Turkish power is most needed against the ever-growing Western threat."

Turkey's declaration of laicisim played an important role in Turk-Arab relation. In fact, Turkey established a new state by struggling and by denying the conjuncture emerged after the WWI, and provided the inspiration for many Middle East intellectuals and governors. The Independence War of Turkey served as a model for many Middle East countries planning their own independence wars. The pro-modernization reforms inspired countries such as Iran, Tunusia and Afghanistan. (Altunışık, 2008: 42) However, it should be mentioned that religion had a more widespread and powerful role in Arab independence movements. Therefore, Turkey's reforms realized with the motivation of laicism and nationalism were considered as Turks' separation from Islam by Arabs. (Sander, 2006: 228)

According to Davutoğlu, the Kemalist era described the culture accumulation under the influence of Arabs as an obstacle before modernization; and therefore aimed at

liberalizing from the Arab influence. At the same time, they started to see the region as a military/political risk area to be avoided, considering the effects of the WWI. Due to this perception, all of the analyses related to the region were fed by external resources; and Turkey was alienated to the developments and changes in the region; and therefore her chance to cath up with the rhythm in the region was lost. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 409)

Kemalist tendency had been influenced by the policy of defending the Ottoman Empire against external powers for a long time. (Aras, 2002: 48) and acted with the feeling of protecting the government. According to Fuller, although Atatürk followed a non-irredentism, a doctrine of not intervening other states' affairs, impartiality and not claiming right on the lost territory; Turkey had Mousul issue with Iraq and Hatay issue with Syria, and these influenced the communication between neighbors negatively. (Fuller, 2009: 70-2)

As for Aras, he argues that the "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" principle of Atatürk caused Turkey to follow an introvert and hesitant foreign policy. With the thought pattern called the Sevres Syndrome by Aras, Turkey had the opinion that she was surrounded with enemies which would divide her territory; this thought had an important role in establishing a nationalist foreign policy. (Aras, 2002: 48)

Turk-Arab relations have not presented a rapid deterioration during the period between two great wars. Relations with Afghanistan and Iran, which were independent Islamic states during the first years of the Republic, were developed; Shah of Iran Rıza Shah Pahlavi, and Amir of Afghanistan Amanullah Khan visited Turkey and even an agreement with the first article mentioning the friendship of the two countries was singed. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 258) In this period, Atatürk's offer to take joint actions against imperialism and his decision to be in favour of an Arab national independence slowed down a rapid disengagement. (Sander, 2006: 228)

After the occupation of Ethiopia by Italy in 1935, Afghanistan also took part in the agreement signed between Iran, Iraq and Turkey in Geneva, and in 1937 the Treaty of Saadabad was signed. Also, the Balkan Pact was signed in this period. According to

Davutoğlu, this was a policy of Turkey for not losing her interest in the East. However, again according to Davutoğlu, the participation of Iraq in the Treaty of Saadabad with the permission of the UK and the pursuing of relations with legally independent Muslim states instead of Muslim states under mandate shows that Turkey tried to follow a policy that would not unsettle the West. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 258-9)

According to Fuller Muslim World had not have importance for Turkish Foreign Policy until the WWII. Turkey approached to the region with denial and stolidity. However Turkey strived to establish normal mutual relations with newly founded Arab states and had not claimed territory from the non-Turk regions of the Middle East, except for Syria and Iraq. The national founder identities emerged in this period completely drived Turks and Arabs away from each other. This disengagement had increased incrementally during the Cold War. (Fuller, 2009: 73-4)

In the bi-polar conjuncture of the Cold War, Turkey felt herself in danger due to increasing Russian threat and took part in the Western Bloc by giving up the impartiality policy of Atatürk. (*ibid*: 228-30) As for Arabs, they received a threat perception from Israel and started to take part in the Eastern Bloc by getting close to USSR. Turkey's being the first Muslim country to recognize Israel, and her leadership in the foundation of Middle East Defence Organization which aimes at the integration of Arab states into the West, according to Sander, placed Turkey in Arab eyes into the enemy bloc. (Sander, 2006: 228) The rise of Arab nationalism in that period *otherized* Turkey more and more. At that time Arabs saw Turkey as an instrument of the West, due to Turkey's membership to NATO and they continued the negative historical perception inherited from the Ottoman Empires especially in Mashreq. On the other hand, Turkish elite saw the Middle East unstable and prone to conflicts; and avoided being in on the regional issues. (Altunışık, 2008: 42) There can be three reasons for Turkey to give up the uninterested Middle East Policy towards avoiding the turmoil and protecting the territorial integrity and security of Turkey, remaning from Atatürk; the defense concerns about the unstability in the Middle East, Soviet threat, and transition to a multi-party system. Again according to Sander, different foreing policy approaches, the political and social structures, and the changes in the international system made Turkey familiar with the West, and the Middle

East countries with the East, and this is not suprising. For instance, Turkish writers were inspired by the West and the Arab writers from the East; and economically both parties could not establish a mutual relation. Therefore, Sander argues that, one cannot mention a political cooperation without the cultural interaction and economical relations. (Sander, 2006: 229-32)

In 1955 Turkey, the UK, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan formed the Baghdad Pact. This situation raised reactions from the Arab world against Iraq and Syria, because the common perception was that Israel was the common enemy, not the USSR. (Fuller, 2009: 77) Between 1950 and 1960 the first democratically elected government of Turkey, the Democratic Party (*ibid*: 78) had defined its philosophy as establishing tenace ties between Turkey and Western Powers. This placed Turkey in the enemy bloc from the Arab perspective. (Sander, 2006: 231)

Turkey had gone into normalizing her relations with the Middle East during the mid-1960s. The differences of opinions between the blocs formed by the Cold War and USA nuclear shelter's not providing assurance against USSR, after USSR's becoming a nuclear power were the factors affecting Turkish foreign policy. (Arı, 2007: 378)

Also, USA resorted to resolution ways for the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 over Turkey; remained ineffective in protecting Turkish interests against Greek-Cypriots; and the renowned Johnson Letter was sent to İnönü government by President Johnson. (*ibid*: 376) With the decision taken in the UN General Assembly on 17 December 1965 about the Cyprus Crisis, Turkey felt herself alone in the international system. (Sander, 2006: 232-3) Also, with the softening process of the Cold War the countries in the blocs had the opportunity to behave more freely and this provided Turkey to pursue a more restful policy against Arabs. (Arı, 2007: 376-7) In addition to this, the public opinion's applying more pressure on the government by means of the new constitution of Turkey adopted in 1962, caused Turkey to act more freely in the Middle East. As for Arabs, they reduced their dependence on the East as the international structure changed, and started to establish dialogues with the West. (Sander, 2006: 233-4)

As a consequence, Turkey had developed relations with the Arab World. Turkey sided with the Arabs in 1967 Arab-Israeli war and declared that she would not allow USA bases in Turkey to attack Arabs. Also, Turkey made statements in favor of Arabs in the UN meetings related to the Palestine issue. After the sabotage to the Al-Aqsa Mosque on 21 August 1969, Muslim states convened in Cairo on 25 August, and decided to convene an Islam summit instead of an Arab summit, hence caused the emergence of the OIC. Turkey participated in the OIC at the level of Minister of Foreign Affairs. (Arı, 2007: 376-7) Turkey's participation in these Islamic meetings has gradually increased. Turkey participated in the Taif Conference in 1981 at Prime Minister Level and in the Cazablanca Conference in 1984 at President level. This is a measure, for Sander, of the power the emerging social group obtained and the weakened positing of the Republican elites. (Sander, 2006: 236) Developing relations had continued with Turkey's support in Arabs in the 1973 war, and Turkey's granting approval for the decision that defines the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinians, in the Arab summit in Rabat in 1974. (Arı, 2007: 377-8)

Turkey, in general, has never faced the colonial formation of the West - their short-term occupation after the WWI, ended with the Independence War -, and has became the only country in the region who became member in the Western institutions and organizations after WWII. Turkey has been doing almost half of her foreign trade with Western states and the public opinion is supporting Turkey's integration with the West. According to Arı, Turkey, due to her historical and cultural ties is interested in the Middle East, at the same time she is poised towards policies that would steer her away from the West. Therefore, eventhough Turkey is search of something from time to time; basically there has not been any change in Turkish Foreign Policy. In addition, with the Western states opposing Turkey in the Cyprus Peace Operation in 1974, and the embargo decision in 1975, Turkey leaned towards improving her relations with the Middle East and USSR. The USA President Carter feared the Soviet influence on Turkey and lifted the embargo. (*ibid*: 378-80)

Along with this, one of the most important reason for Turkey's leaning towards the Middle East was the interruptions in the aids from the West, consequently Turkey also

suffered from the oil embargo in 1973 and from the increased in the prices. (*ibid*: 381) This unexpected increase in the prices caused the problem of finding the necessary funds for oil importation. This problem caused Turkey to enter the Middle East market and to increase her exportation towards the region. (Sander, 2006: 236) In addition, Turkey leaned towards the Middle East more in her foreign policy approaches. She supported Arabs more enthusiastically in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, lowered the Israeli representative office in Tel Aviv to charge d'affairs after the occupation of Jerusalem by Israel in 1980, and declared that she would not allow her NATO membership to be used against the Middle East. (*ibid*: 237) Also, she had remained impartial during the Iran-Iraq war and due to the war both countries has become economically dependent to Turkey. However, these economic relations decreased with the end of the war. (Fuller, 2009: 85)

Turkey, really has followed a policy leaned towards the Middle East more than ever before during the AKP period. As it was mentioned above, Turkey had not developed relations with the Middle East until 1960s except for alliance relations such as the Treaty of Saadabad, and Baghdad Pact; however, developed more intimate relations after 1960s, with the transition to a multi-dimensional foreign policy. In 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israel wars Turkey obviously sided with Arabs and did not allow USA to use the İncirlik base against Arabs. In 1980s and 1990s, Turkey had developed economical, political and military ties with the region without directly engaging in the region. According to Uzgel, when considered in this context, the multi-dimensional policy Davutoğlu mentioned is not a new approach in Turkish foreign policy. It can be defined as reawakening of a policy used in the past. (Uzgel, 2009: 360)

According to Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, However he denied that, Davutoğlu's policies are the wish to adopt the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire by her heir. Davutoğlu and AKP are striving to realize this policy in the context of the Middle East. According to them Davutoğlu policies should be called Neo-Ottomanism. (Yeşilyurt ve Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 382)

AKP's Middle East policies, without doubt, are influenced from the policies USA pursues in the Middle East. After the 9/11 attacks, there are two tiers of the changing USA policy

in the Middle East. First, creating new security architecture in the Middle East by military interventions; second tier is the administering of the neo-liberal transformations, overdue, in the countries in the region and the construction of the necessary social, economic and political reforms for the establishment of democracy. The first tier would abolish the irreconcilable regimes and secure the oil reserves, and build a foundation for the realization of the second tier. With regard to the first tier Afghanistan was occupied in 2001 and Iraq in 2003; threatening attitudes were adopted against Syria and Iran, Israel's harsh politics against Palestine and Arab states were ignored, and the operational area of NATO in the Middle East was expanded. (*ibid*: 389)

With regard to the second tier of USA Middle East policy, the MEPI was declared in December 2002, and the BOP was declared in 2004 G-8 Summit. These initiatives had been prepared by the Arab elites within the context of the UN development program between 2002 and 2005, with the reference to the Arap Humanitarian Development Reports that presented the development issues such as lack of democracy, lack of education, insufficiency of information exchange, and weakness of private sector. The common target of the initiatives starting off from these reports was to enable the neo-liberal transformation of the states and economies, and to enable their integration with the global system which had been overdue during 1990s by promoting the reforms in education, politics, economics, and the social status of women in the Middle East countries, in a all-comprehensive, long-termed and high-budget project. According to Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, these values are positive in fact; however, they were promoted not due to the needs and problems of the region but due to Western interest which were indirectly affected from the problems in the region; and therefore, they were instrumentalized. (*ibid*: 389-90)

According to Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, USA expected AKP, while supporting their government, to function as a facilitator in both tiers of the Middle East policy. However the frustration in the 1 March Memorandum indicated that there would be some limitations of Turkey's use in constructing new security architecture in Iraq. The tense atmosphere after the 1 March Memorandum caused fear in AKP administrators that they could not play an active role in the re-formation of the Middle East. Therefore, AKP

wanted to take part in the second tier of USA policy. Thus AKP circles gave voice on all occasions that a comprehensive reform was needed in the region and Turkey wanted to play a facilitator role in this process. (*ibid*: 390)

According to Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, USA wanted to make use of the positive atmosphere for Turkey emerged in the Arab World after the rejection of the Memorandum. Also, USA accepted to give an active role to Turkey in BOP in order to attract the attention away from the resistance in Iraq to the process of democratization of the Middle East as whole. At this point USA had expectations in three main issues: improving the current relations with Israel, supporting the stability in Northern Iraq, and joining in the international isolation on Syria and Iran. As for Turkey, she tried to reinforce the relations with Israel, and she withdrew her red-lines in Iraq close to USA lines by giving some compromises in the struggle against PKK. However, she invalidated the third one by trying to convince USA how important the relations with Syria and Iran were. (*ibid*: 391-2)

According to Uzgel, BOP realized its pilot application in Turkey, and followed the aim that AKP, emerged with the moderation of the National Vision Movement, would be a model for the Middle East. The Turkey model with moderate Islamic government, defining laicism moderately, royal to neo-liberalism, aiming the EU membership and having close relation with the EU and Israel, gained importance due to the changes in the post Cold War era, and especially in the post 9/11 era. With this policy Turkey, which were strategically significant for the containment of USSR during the Cold War, and the containment of Iraq after it, gained importance with her regime in which the model of reconciliation of the Islamist with the system has been tried. (Uzgel, 2009: 368)

AKP realizing that it gained favor in USA over BOP tried the advocacy of the project in the region; since the project carried AKP to power. While important Middle East countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia did not participate in the meeting at Sea Island, in which the project was presented; leader of AKP and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan participated in the meeting and ensured his position in the project. Turkey, abstaining that the use of the term *model* would raise reactions, took the task of source of inspiration or

officially *democratic partner* with Yemen and Italy. Turkey executed the organization of the meeting and conferences for the realization of the required reforms with regard to BOP. Also, Prime Minister Erdoğan paid official visits to Syria, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunuisa in relation to the project. (*ibid*: 369)

If Turkey was excluded from the restoring Middle East, she could economically loose. The Economical policy of AKP was based on Kemal Derviş's stability program after February 2001. Under this program, Turkey had to find new markets for her imports and had to attract foreign investment. Also Turkey wanted to be a potentially investment country for Gulf countries' capitals which appeared in Western Markets after 9/11. So that, to be excluded from the region could be a big problem. (Yeşilyurt ve Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 391)

The BOP process slowed down after 2 years of its emergence. The reason for this is the developments in the region. The elections were held in Iraq but the turmoil had not settled down. In Palestine, HAMAS did not become moderate although it came into power; Israel attacked Lebanon in 2006 and Palestine in 2008. In Egypt, the Muslim Brethren gained more chairs in the parliament than expected. Therefore the AKP model faced the danger of not having so much importance in the region as before. (Uzgel, 2009: 370)

According to Uzgel, AKP foreign policy resembles to the Özal period policies. First, some bureaucratic mechanisms, reminding the pragmatism and practicalness of Özal period, were formed; also the policy of referring consultant, some of them were businessmen, were pursued. Observations were made that with the new Turkish foreign policy defined as -although AKP denied those definitions- *Neo-ottomanizm* or *Soft Power* by some academicians and writers, Turkey has become a regional power in the Middle East. AKP suffered a serious legitimacy issue, tried to prove that it was stripped of the Islamist/Nationalist Vision identity both in internal and foreign policy, and therefore needed the support of the EU and USA. (*ib*id: 357-8) In addition, Uzgel argues that AKP comes from a movement that experienced the 28 February process; it needed to prove that AKP was a center party more than an Islamic party, and therefore they paid their first visits to the EU states on the contrary to Erbakan who turned his face to the East. (*ibid*:

357) According to Uzgel, the Neo-Ottoman understanding included a comprehensive transformation in internal and foreign policies and the re-definition of Kemalism, politics, society and identity. In this process the issues of softening of the laicism conception and the resolution of Kurdish issue not with Kemalist/assimilationist methods but by religion commonality stood out. (*ibid*: 359)

The soft power concept indicates the importance of persuasion and appeal in the modern and post-modern era. Soft power is an issue related to conquer hearts and thoughts. According to Beng, Turkey's use of this force is related to a better understanding of the region, and a correct evaluation of her power dynamics, historical effectiveness and identity issues. Reforms to be realized in her domestic policy would increase the persuasion and appeal effect she would have on the Middle East countries. Her interest in the regional issues would increase Turkish influence in the region. (Beng, 2008: 254)

The claim of Turkish soft power started with the strategic depth doctrine. With this doctrine Turkey manifested that she had to switch from the policy of being a bridge between Asia and Europe, to the policy of being a regional power. In this respect, Turkey evaluated her own deep strategic significance in terms of geopolitical, geoeconomical and geocultural frameworks. The first effect of this doctrine was felt by the invitation of Khalid Meshal, the Syrian-oriented leader of HAMAS, in 2005. Turkey justified this invitation by declaring that HAMAS was a democratically elected government and nobody had the right to suppress this right. Thus, Turkey exhibited the importance of democracy as a peaceful and democratic state. Beng gives other examples such as the Ankara visit of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Perez and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, and Turkey's peacemaker role between Syria and Israel. According to Beng, these are the examples that show the changing vision of Turkey and that she switched from a bridge role with limited relations with Asia and Europe, to a role of a multi-dimensional regional power in which she used her historical and strategic depth. (*ibid*: 254-5)

Then, what are the limits of the soft power for Turkey in the Middle East? The gradually decreasing significance of Arab nationalism in the region due to successive economic

crises, and the dilemmas caused by the dominance of political Islam caused the countries in the region to reconsider Turkey. Also, the developments in the relations with the EU, the refoms and political and economical renewals paralleling these developments, the livening up of the Islamic movements in the country caused Turkey's interest in the region to increase. According to Altunışık, Turkey has gained credilibity in the region with effect of the economic and political reforms in the context of soft power. Turkey has made a visible socioeconomical and political progress compared to her neighbors. The reforms have started during the Bülent Ecevit government, leader of the Democratic Left Party. (Altunışık, 2006: 43)

In October 2001, a series of reform was performed which included the speeding up the changes in human rights - equality of men and women, petition right for foreigners, partial freedom to thought, expansion in the basic rights - . Also, the civilian representation in the National Security Council was increased (Hürriyet, 3 September 2001), the limitations on Kurdish publications and broadcasting were lifted, and the right of individuals to express themselves in Kurdish was vested. Also, death penalties were limited to the individuals who commited terrorist actions. (Hürriyet, 4 September 2001) A new Civil Code was prepared and entered into effect in 2002, which increased the independence of the assembly and the organizations, and included reforms on gender inequality. In February 2002, a new reform package was adopted in the assembly, which included the penal and anti-terrorism laws. In August 2003, death penalty was abolished, and education in another language than Turkish was legalized. (Altunışık, 2006: 43)

The reforms started in Bülent Ecevit government period have continued during AKP government. In the context of the new adjustment law, the freedom of thought and expression were increased and limitations were brought on torture. Reforms were done in the National Security Council. (cf. Altunışık, 2006) These reforms contributed to the initiation of the EU accession negotiations in 2004. (Altunışık, 2006: 43)

According to Altunışık, the progress rate of the reform process being equal to the EU membership process affected Arab World which experienced crises in governance and legitimacy. Also, for Altunışık, the election of a transformed Islamic policy in the form of

AKP after the 2002 elections increased the soft power of Turkey in the region; because AKP administration, with its reconciliation of democracy and Islam, and presenting the evolution of the Islamic movement, posed a model for Arab World. Turkey's model country position was considered as a cure to radical Islam; because Turkey, for Arab countries, was a country that was followed closely for being a county that is democratic, laic, well-integrated with globalization economically, in the process of EU membership, a member of European institutions such as NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe and OECD. According to Altunışık this situation renders the limitation of Turkey's soft power to the Islamic change and AKP government impossible. The idea of democratization of the Islamic world and the integration of the West and the East coincided with the ideology of AKP. While this role increased the strategic significance of Turkey in the relations with the EU and USA; it also gave Turkey a leadership role in the transformation of the Arab World. These ideas were attributed to the efforts for the EU membership; because the EU had the image, in the eyes of Arab World that it would not allow a Muslim country in. However, Turkey's EU membership process was being closely followed by Arab World. In addition, we can say that Turkey's disallowance of USA to open a second base against Iraq increased her credibility in the Arab World, and Turkey gave an image counter to the claims that she was an instrument of USA, made by the intellectuals who criticized the government for their hidden support to USA on the contrary to the demands of the public opinion. (*ibid*: 44-5)

According to Aras, the volume of the successive crises and conflicts experienced in the post Cold War era caused a longing for the security of the old Ottoman regime with its multi-ethnic and multi-religion nature. While the Ottoman era was being revised in Turkey, Arabs remembered the Ottoman past and started to overcome some of their prejudices, and the sympathy for the Ottoman past increased. (Aras, 2002: 51)

However, it should be added that there are some obstacles before the validity of Turkey's soft force. According to Altunışık, the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the doubts on the future of AKP and the reforms due to the polarization becoming more evident with the second time election of AKP decreased the Turkish effect on the Arab World. Altunışık argues that, AKP in its first electoral period had been working within the limits of

democracy. However, due to the realization of the latest reforms under enforcement, a serious polarization started between the laicists and AKP. The political crises in the system posed obstacles before Turkey's being a successful modernization model for Arab World. Also, again according to Altunışık, the recession in the Turkey-EU relations limited the power of Turkey on Arab World. Turkey blamed the EU for hindering the process, and the EU blamed Turkey for hindering the reforms. Altunışık adds to his words that the polarization and radicalization around the *us* and *them idea* in the Muslim world, and which strengthened EU's and USA's hand with Islamophobia, limited the soft power of Turkey. (Altunışık, 2006: 47-8)

Relations with Syria were important for Turkey, because the development of relations with Syria would be an important echelon for Turkey's relations with Arab World to develop and her power in the Middle East to increase. Also, developing good relations with Syria was an important tier of the foreign policy of Ecevit government, which was aimed at developing good relations with all regions, independently from the West. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 240)

AKP acted as a catalyzator in relations with Syria. Muslim World is of great importance for AKP which has Islamic root in Turkey. The historical ties with Syria had a special meaning for the relations. Prime Minister Erdoğan emphasized in a visit to Damascus that it was not possible to distinguish a Syrian from a Turk in the dwellings they live in, and said "I want to call you not my friends but my brothers." According to Altunışık, this expression briefly reflected AKP's policy. (*ibid*: 245) According to Davutoğlu, on the other hand, the re-establishment of the Turkish-Arab relations on a rational basis, since Turkey and each Arab state were in the process of a transformation, was of great importance with respect to not only the interests of the parties but the regional peace. In order to achieve this, the psychological factors should be overcome, a conception of common-fate of the region should be settled and the shaping of mutual relations with respect to global balances should be prevented. For Davutoğlu, Turkey should always feel the pulse of the Arab World and catch up with the rhythm of the political, social and cultural changes in the Arab societies. Davutoğlu gives Syria as an example for his ideas,

and emphasizes the necessity to follow diplomacy towards this country by evaluating the formation that Syria would take after Hafez Al-Assad. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 414)

According to Davutoğlu, there are both ideational and geographical bases for Turkey's view of the Middle East. Due to being the heir of the Ottoman and her geographical position, Turkey cannot define herself in a defensive understanding. Turkey should start an economic and cultural cooperation campaign towards the region in order to solve the security issues. According to Davutoğlu, turning back on the issues of the region is not a solution; these issues will absolutely affect Turkey's internal stability. Therefore, Turkey should play an active and constructive role to create order and stability in her periphery with respect to her internal security and stability. (Davutoğlu, 2008: 79-80) According to Orhan, Turkey's becoming a country that can communicate, negotiate and make her to be listened to by all countries in the region, is of great significance. For this, the foreign policy instrument is dialogue. This approach is the consciousness of Turkey for creating different alternatives to prevent her from being West-dependent in her foreign policy. This situation weakened the West dimension as it reinforced the Middle East relations. (Orhan, 2009: 42)

In Turkey's leaning towards the Middle East in the post Cold War Era, the regional changes played a significant role. In this new conjuncture Turkey turned towards areas, which she had historical ties, such as the Middle East and Central Asia. Also, the end of the Cold War changed the threat perception of Turkey. The principal threat during the Cold War came from the North, from USSR. However, Turkey faces different threats. Kurdish nationalism and separatism; increasing sectarian violence in Iraq that threatens to spill over and draw in outside powers; an increasing assertive Iran that may acquire nuclear weapons; and a weak, fragmented Lebanon dominated by radical groups with close ties with Syria and Iran. Most of these issues are at the South of Turkey; and therefore Turkey is interested in the Middle East more than ever before. According to Larrabee, Turkey's security perception knots at this point. (Larrabee, 2008: 3)

In AKP policies leaning towards the Middle East this much, the hitches in the EU membership played an important role. The EU has been the major actor of political

developments in Turkey since the grant of candidate status in 1999. (Kaygusuz, 2009: 411) However, the EU states took a dim view of Turkey's membership due to immigration, unemployment and enlargement factors. (Larrabee, 2008: 4) Also, the discourse that there are cultural differences that could not be made up, between Turkey and EU states increased; and the French Parliament adopted a preventive legal regulation that dictates Turkey's membership to be decided by a referendum. The present situation indicates that the tensest issue of the EU relations is Cyprus; because Turkey signed the supplementary protocol on 3 October 2005 that expanded the Customs Union to cover the newly joined countries in the EU in 2004; however she sent the text of the protocol with a declaration that indicated the signing of the protocol would not mean the recognition of the Greek Cypriot State. After this, the EU Council declared, on 21 October, that the abeyance of the Customs Union with respect to Greek Cypriot state would cause the suspension of the negotiations. According to Kaygusuz, this situation was obvious from the start and it was something both parties wanted, since this issue has the characteristics of blanketing the tensions among parties. (Kaygusuz, 2009: 415-7) AKP government placed emphasis on the EU membership for stripping from the Nationalist Vision identity at the beginning. (Uzgel, 2009: 358) However, the EU's continuously raising difficulties before membership and the decision of the European Court of Human Rights approving the turban-ban in Turkish universities caused AKP to slow down the EU harmonization process. (Kaygusuz, 2009: 424) Also, the declarations that the Turkish people will make the final decision in EU membership and the harsh reactions Turkey gives against the progressive criticisms against Turkey's membership disturb the West. (Oğuzlu, 2009: 47) These problems with the EU caused AKP to lean towards the Middle East policies more and more.

The EU countries support Turkey's being a moderat-Muslim and democratic country in the Middle East. Also, they support the Afghanistan, Iran, Lebanon and Syria policies of Turkey. The prestige of AKP, as an Islamic rooted party, is important for the Western powers too. The policies of the government in Germany, France and Italy are suitable to USA's Middle East politics. Under these circumtansces AKP is important in the eyes of the EU states. (Kaygusuz, 2009: 435-6)

The relations between the EU states and Turkey are proportional to the relations between Turkey and USA. During Iraq war, the Turkish-USA relations had suffered a wound, as it will be mentioned later. Turkey has always needed the support of USA in her relations with the EU. The critical atmosphere emerged after the Iraq war, caused the EU relations to weaken. (Larrabee, 2008: 4) Before this incident, Turkey was getting close to USA when the relations with the EU deteriorated. But in the aforementioned atmosphere this was impossible and thus Turkey has leaned towards the Middle East. (*ibid*: 25) Also, in the new conjuncture, the idea that Turkey cannot trust her allies in the West anymore, and this emerged the idea that Turkey should turn onto her own resources. The Kemalists' losing their previous effectiveness also played an important role in this change. Surely, this does not mean that Turkey turned her back to the EU completely. However, the Middle East emerged as an alternative for Turkey against the EU and USA. (*ibid*: 5)

Another foreign policy aim of Davutoğlu is to actualize the zero problem policy with the neighbors. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey's pursuing a larger-scale foreign policy, regionally, depends on the re-regulation of her relations with the near land shelf neighbors. A country experiencing continuous crises with her near land shelf neighbors cannot follow regional or global politics. According to him, cross-boundary alliances are important unless they are effective on the borders. With their present forms, Davutoğlu sees the alliances with Israel wrong since they deteriorate the relations with Turkey's southern and eastern neighbors. In order Turkey to overcome the problems in the relations with the neighbors, she should determine a policy in which the cultural and economic elements are given importance with respect to intensified international relations. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey should reinforce the economical and cultural relations with her neighbors within a comprehensive peace plan in order to overcome the confidence crises. According to him, causing Turkey to loose time struggling with the problems with border neighbors means to imprison her to her borders. In order to defeat this, the mutual-dependency levels should be raised. Davutoğlu indicates instruments such as developing transportation possibilities, expanding border trade, increasing mutual cultural exchange, easing the labor and capital exchange as means of establishing a mutual-dependence relation. Davutoğlu gives instruments such as transportation, and border trade; and the restoration of Aleppo centered northern Syria as a formation such as

the integrated structure of Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş with their increasing industry and the agriculture of GAP, as examples for establishing the mutual-dependency with Syria. According to Davutoğlu, Turkey's experiencing problems with Syria and Greece at certain intervals keep Turkey from using her true potential. (Davutoğlu, 2001: 143-7)

According to Uzgel, Turkey was really less problematic with her neighbors in 2002 with the AKP government. Most of the problems, which limited the operation area of Turkey in the Middle East and which casued Turkey to approach the region with a security-oriented perspective, had disappeared. In 1998 the Adana Protocol was signed and with this protocol, Syria's support to PKK disappeared. In 1999 Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Kenya and Turkey felt relieved in her foreign policy. After the capture of Öcalan, there had been a relief in the security perceptions against Greece and Turkey had focused on the EU membership. In fact the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the previous government, İsmail Cem, had made the best of the conjuncture and had started a restoration process in the relations with neighbors by offering a forum called Neighbority Forum, in a period in which PKK attacks were stopped. Thus, according to Uzgel, AKP has taken over a process. (Uzgel, 2009: 363) After President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's visit to Damascus, for the funeral ceremony of Hafez Al-Assad, the relations with Syria progressed even further, and Syria removed Euphrates and Hatay issued from her agenda. According to Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, Syria has not officially closed these issues but has laid them aside. In addition, in July 2002, Syrian Chief of Staff visited Turkey for the first time and a MTCA was signed between two countries. (Yeşilyurt ve Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 385)

According to Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, the situation is similar with Iran. Before the establishment of AKP government, the logistics support Iran gave to PKK disappeared and the problem of the two countries' seeing each other as the ideological anti-theses and considering each other as a threat to their own regimes had lost its importance with the policies of Rafsanjani and Khatami in the 1990s; when the AKP government was established this issue disappeared completely by itself. Also, the Iran-Turkey natural gas pipeline project signed by Erbakan, despite the negative attitude of USA, was actualized in 2001, and it increased the trade volume between two countries as it affected positively the relations in political and security areas. Problems with Iraq have been continuing since

1991 Persian Gulf War. According to Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, when AKP came into power, the problems with Syria had been overcome, and the situation with Iran was similar too. What remained were the problems with Iraq. Therefore it would be wrong to appropriate the whole process to AKP. (*ibid*: 386-7)

If we are to evaluate the Syrian relations in terms of zero problems with neighbors, according to Aras, we should recognize the existence of the concepts of securitization and desecuritization in these relations. Securitization is a power-oriented process aiming at gaining support from the public opinion by mentioning any threat from various actors. Desecuritization, on the other hand, means removing the security concerns, and returning a socio-political discourse and a normal political discussion atmosphere. If securitization is a speech act, desecuritization should be marked by the lack of any such speech acts. Therefore, desecuritization occurs not through further speech but through its absence. The desecuritization process has started with the EU membership process in Turkey. Turkey applied for membership in 1999 and while this process was on its course, Turkey started to give more right to her citizens and ethnic groups. The capture of the PKK leader and the overthrowing of the Welfare-Path government after the 28 February process had contributed in the establishment of desecuritization atmosphere. According to Aras, AKP government's declaration mentioning the Kurdish right and the changes made internally were directly reflected on the relations between Turkey and Syria. According to Aras, in the course of the EU membership, the classical understanding of the National Security should change and most journalists started to criticize the status of the National Security Council and the National Security Document. In the desecuritization process, NGO's and the public opinion played a more active role in foreign policy. Except for some research centers, defining themselves as laic, Kemalist and nationalist, other research centers - such as Association for Liberal Thinking, Turkish-Asian Center for Strategic Studies, and Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research - played an encouraging role in the foreing policy with regard to desecuritization and democratization. Among the reforms actualised in the course of the EU membership candidacy, the changes in the formation of the NSC can be listed among the factors increasing desecuritization. Some changes in favor of civilian members in the National Security Council were done; a civilian was assigned to the secretetiat of the NSC, the military representatives in the Radio Television

Supreme Council and Council of Higher Education and the Turkish Armed Forces Court Account was taken under the control of civic jurisdiction. The weakness of the armed forces on Turkish foreign policy is evident in their remaining silent about supporting the Coalition powers led by USA in Iraq. (Aras and Polat, 2008: 495-502)

The Kurdish nationalism caused Turkey to pursue a securitization policy against Syria; similarly, the Islamist policy of Iran casused Turkey to follow such policy. According to Aras, the democratization and desecuritization movements in the internal politics enabled Turkey to follow a more independent politics against these countries in the foreign policy. Turkey had drawn the foreign politics process from ideational obstacles, and provided flexibility in foreign policy, and thus expanded the operation areas in regional politics. Turkey re-evaluated her friends and enemies in the region within the context of desecuritizaiton. The liberal social powers increased their influence on foreign politics and this, according to Aras, weakened the old-bureaucratic traditions and brought a visible relief to Turkish Foreign Policy. Turkey's foreign policy priorities and the regional security areas formed a context, and desecuritization emerged in this context. All three countires having a common Kurdish concern; Iran and Syria searching an ally against the pressure from USA, and the idea of Turkey to reduce security dependencies on USA brought closer these three countries. The self-confidence Turkey had with regard to the changes in the internal politics fastened the confidence she felt for bringing stability into the region. Turkey's transformation was built upon freeing from the security country image of a Cold War style. For this, Turkey's foreign policy makers think that Turkey should avoid the prejudices against Syria and Iran and soften the relations. (*ibid*: 503-4)

Turkey-Syria relations have been based upon a historical hostility, hostile ideologies and the politicians' internal problems for a long time. However, according to Aras, international orientation brought the political maturation and has provided the Natural Security organizations to stay behind, and this affected positively the relations. Also, Syria went to some changes under Bashar Al-Assad reign, even if not as much as Turkey. Turkish politicians started to evaluate Syria differently. Turkey, seeing herself as a part of the EU, started to behave more confident towards her neigbours. The capture of PKK leader and the weakening of the terrorist separatism played an important role in the

emergence of these circumstances. Syrian relations were important for Turkey both with regard to both economical and security reasons. On the other hand, Syria was in search for a more pragmatic way to establish relations with USA and the EU after 2001. For Turkey, finding a constructive way for Syria would reduce the doubts directed towards Syria and as a consequence, it would help to reduce the tension in the region. In this context the thought that Syrai could be an important friend for Turkey was common. (*ibid*: 509-11)

According to Aras Turkey saw Iran and Syria within the perspective of political Islam and Kurdish issue. However, the recent changes in the internal politics, the desecuritization process, and the reforms actualized in the course of the EU harmonization process, democratization and the changes in political areas changed Turkey's Iran and Syria policies. Issues dramatized with respect to securitization were as normal in the desecuritization process, and this enabled the politicians to act freely form ideational obstacles and to act more comfortably in regional politics. (*ibid*: 511)

As a result of the changes in the security perceptions, Turkey left the northern Iraq and security oriented view in making Middle East policies. Thus, she developed a holistic perspective towards the Middle East. The idea that Northern Iraq issue could not be taken into consideration separately from all other regional problems, and all the unstabilities in the region affected negatively the internal stability became common. (Orhan, 2009: 42)

6.2. Effects Of 9/11 Bombings and Iraqi War (2nd Gulf War) and The Importance Of These In Turkey – Syria Relations

In order to make sense of the couse of Turkish-Syrian relations, the attacks USA suffered on 11 September 2001, and the 2003 Iraq war should be briefly mentiond. Notwithsanding, these two incidents played a determinative role in USA-Syria and Turkey-Syria relations.

The Middle East has a special meaning for Bush government. More than 60% of the world oil reserves are in this region and the region has a special meaning for USA hegemony. The report by the National Energy Policy Development Group presided by vice president

Dick Cheney included the claims that USA government would need oil importation and the Gulf would become one of the most important resources. Also, Bush government believed that the major resistance to the American hegemony came from the Muslim/Arab World. According to Altunışık, Bush administration seemed to follow their policies completely in the framework of the parameters of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis. The 9/11 attacks have reinforced these theses. Countries such as Iraq and Iran, from USA perspective, had the image as if they were distrupting the projects re-designing the Middle East. Bush administration had started to pursue politics aimed at the re-formation of USA leadership in the region, which was thought to get weak in the Middle East, and at the breaking of the resistance to the new Middle East order. Bush administration, from the very beginning, had declared that Clinton's policies failed in Iran and Iraq, and the policy should be harshened against these countries who caused unstability in the Middle East. The 9/11 attacks reinforced these thoughts. Bush administration, on the contrary to Clinton's, had seen the resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict not so important for the regional stability. Bush substantially adopted Sharon's policy, which considers Palestine issue as a matter of terrorism. While Bush focused on the reforms in Palestine and the security of Israel, he did not try to revive the Syria tier of the peace process. He accused Syria of supporting HAMAS, Hezbollah and the resistance in Iraq, and pursued an isolation policy against Syria. While the military existence of Syria in Lebanon had been ignored before, Bush administration forced Syria to retreat from Lebanon. (Altunışık, 2009: 75-6)

After taking office in 2000, it had not taken long for President George Bush and President Bashar Al-Assad to be at odds. For instance, USA Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice prepared an aid package, 13 million dollars to Egypt and 30 million dollars to Israel. The USA declared that she gave this package in order to unify USA allies against Iran, Syria and Hezbollah. Factors such as Syria's rejecting to give information about Hezbollah to USA, Syria's military existence in Lebanon in order to prevent an independent Lebanon-Israel peace, the claims that Syria secretly and actively supported the uprisings in Iraq, an the attempts to increase the number of weapons of mass destruction with the help of Iran and North Korea, played an important role in USA including Syria in the enemy states. (Oktav, 2008: 75)

According to Hinnebusch, USA-Syrian relations should be evaluated over five factors: the locks in Arab-Israel and Syria-Israel talks, the rise of the neo-cons in USA, the effects of 9/11, Iraqi-Syrian cooperation, and the resistance of Syria against USA in the Iraq War. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 2)

According to many researchers, due to Syria's complex population and her being governed by a minority group she could not form a consistent internal policy, and needed slogans such as Arabism and Islamism. (Oktav, 2008: 106) Syria's state structure, especially the historical disunity of Syria, and the Zionist colonization in Palestine caused the Arab identity and the irredentism policy to gain power. This casued the changing governments in Syria to make a foreign policy based on Arab nationalism. The occupation of Golan Heights by Israel in 1967 dragged Syria into a struggle that rooted from the policy she based on reclaiming these heights. In this struggle USA was thought as the sole power to stop Israel and the only support for the Israeli-Syrian settlement to reclaim Golan Heights. Therefore, Syria was trying to convince USA that such a settlement was necessary for USA policy aiming at the stability in the region. Hafez Al-Assad tried to stop the signing of a peace agreement between Israel, Lebanon and Jordan, leaving Syria out. The new developments forced Syria to balance USA-Israeli forces by entering under the Soviet, Iran and Arab protection. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 2-3)

However, when the balancing policy was rendered useless after the end of the Cold War, Syria began to bandwagon with USA hegemon, partly in order to balance the greater threat from Israel. (*ibid*: 3) As we mentioned before, Syria followed an anti-Iraq policy together with the Western countries-Arab countries who were pro-American, during the Persian Gulf War. (Yavuz, 2005: 406) Also, Syria left the pan-Arabism and anti-Israel policy, which she had pursued for a long time, and placed emphasis in the peace talks with Israel in the new atmosphere emerged in the region after Persian Gulf War. (Altunışık, 2002: 271)

With Bashar Al-Assad taking the office, after Hafez Al-Assad's death in 2000, it was believed that he would enable a deep economic liberalization, a reduction of rent-seeking corruption and a greater participation of Syria in the world market with his modernization

vision as a representative of a new generation. Really, an initiative towards Europe can be observed in Bashar Al-Assad's foreign policy. Hinnebuch gives Bashar Al-Assad's paying first official visit not to the Eastern Bloc countries by to the capital cities of Western Europe as an example to this change. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 3) According to Oktav, Bashar Al-Assad's attitude towards the demands declared in the interview with USA Secretary of State Colin Powell on 3 May 2003 can be given as an example to the change in Bashar Al-Assad's politics. Powell demanded support for the road map the Bush administration followed in Palestine-Israel peace talks, and wanted Al-Assad to remove the Syrian units of 20,000 soldiers from Lebanon. Although these two demands were unacceptable for Al-Assad's policies; in December 2003, Bashar Al-Assad denied Syria's discord and declared that Syria was willing to accept USA and Israel demands and to accept the re-start of the Israel-Syria peace talks without any conditions. This was the first time that Syria offered to negotiate Golan Heigths independent from any other conditions. However, the Iraq War in March 2003 seriously strained the Syrian-USA relations and the attitudes of Bashar Al-Assad were evaluated as tactics by USA. (Oktav, 2008: 102)

The lock in Israel-Syria peace talks, the second Palestinian Intifada and the establishment of the hard-line Sharon government in Israel rendered the reforms planned by Bashar Al-Assad ineffective. Peace talks' being removed from the agenda, and the thought that economic liberalization could save the economy led the way to an initiative towards Iraq. Thus, Syria fell afoul with USA. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 3-4)

It can be said that some improvements have been observed in Syria-Iraq relations with Bashar Al-Assad's taking office. However, it should be added that this process had started by Hafez Al-Assad. Hafez Al-Assad, in 1997, declared that the Ba'athist regime of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, whom he had been at odds due to his support in Iran during the 1980 Iran-Iraq war, was not a threat any more, and indicated that he wanted to develop relations with Israel and USA. Syria leaned towards developing relations with Iraq with the concerns caused by Netanyahu's taking office in Israel and the military cooperation between Israel and Turkey. Bashar Al-Assad's government didn't hesitate to express explicit and unequivocal support of Iraq, even to the point of attempting to establish a unified pan-Arab front against the American intention of attacking that country. At the

end of 2000s, when the Palestinian Intifada broke out, the Iraqi forces moved towards Syrian border, most probably for giving a warning signal to Israel. In 2002 summer, reports were published that Syria had turned a blind eye to the smuggling of weapons from Eastern Europe to Iraq via Syria involving Firas Talas, son of Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Talas and a well-known businessman in Damascus. Syria refused these news articles. According to another news item published at the end of 2002, Syria allowed Iraq to store her weapons in Syrian territory, and even played an effective role in transferring these to Hezbollah. However, Syria denied these news items too. (Zisser, 2003: 48-9) As it can be seen, Syria and Iraq had developed their relations further in the period from Bashar Al-Assad's taking the office and the invasion of Iraq; because both of them had the same enemy, Israel and USA. This convergence between Syria and Iraq contributed in Syria's being a threat to USA.

Syria's increasing relations with Bagdhad in reply to USA policy for isolating Iraq caused USA-Syrian relations to deteriorate more. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 4) Syria, in breach of the UN decision, imported 200,000 barrels of Iraqi oil and caused Iraqi oil exportation to increase. In exchange for this, Iraq started to buy consumer goods from Syria. (Oktav, 2008: 103) This situation was against USA policy of Iraq's isolation, they were falling afoul with Syria more and more.

The Middle East policy of USA was based on two main issues. First one aims at keeping the oil prices below the reasonable prices, and second one aims at enabling the security of Israel. USA was in the opinion of securing these aims with the role she played in the Middle East Peace Process, and therefore, Syria was seen as an important focus to get into contact. Syria, in the nineties, was at the brink of an agreement with Israel on the new settlements, with the third party mediation of USA, and the Israel-Syria relations at that time were at their best. However, peace talks came to a lock and USA accused Syria for this lock. This accusation caused a rapid deterioration in USA-Syria relations. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 4)

Hinnebusch presents the rise of the Neo-cons in USA as another reason for the deterioration in Syrian-USA relations. (*ibid*: 5) Neo-cons - neo-conservatives - believed

that the American Global Leadership was best for USA and for the world, and America should use force when needed. The fiercely criticized Clinton and his politics, and defended the idea that USA should follow a military force and moral openness policy as it had been in Ronald Reagan period, in a report they published under the think-tank The Project for the New American Century founded in 1997 to support the global leadership of USA. After the 9/11 attacks the ones defending this ideology became more effective and received public support to their politics. The new National Security Strategy in 2002 presented the principles of the news policy by Bush administration. According to this document, the preventive war policy developed instead of containment policy for building USA hegemony. Within this policy USA did not need the support of the UN. (Altunışık, 2009: 74-5)

Neo-cons were close to the right wing Likud party of Israel and were supporting the Great Israel project. This thought was harming the Peace Process, and was jeopardizing the relations with Arabs regarding oil trade. On the other hand, Neo-cons were in favor of changing the balances in the Middle East by using the military power of USA. They hit on the idea that seizure of Iraq's pivotal oil fields would make appeasement of the Arabs superfluous; moreover, from this Iraqi base USA could intimidate remaining resistance – from Syria and Iran - to imposition of a pro-Israeli Pax-Americana in the region. Neo-cons such as Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, Richard Perle and David Wurmser argued that Israel should attack Syria and they were lobbying for USA military power to be used on Syria. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 5)

On 11 September 2011 the World Trade Center towers in New York and the Pentagon, the Department of Defense in Washignton DC were hit by passanger planes. The airliner which was claimed to be heading towards the White House crashed before reaching its target. (Gerger, 2006: 481) It was found that the attacks were performed by Al-Qa'ida of Usame Bin Laden. After this incident, USA started to evaluate the Middle East policy from a new perspective. USA started to ask the question "Are you on our side in the war against terrorism?" to every Arab state and every Muslim government. According to Zisser, Syria's reply was "We are with you", but "we are against you" speaking below her breath. (Zisser, 2003: 31) After 9/11 the neo-cons started to define the enemies of Israel as

the enemies of USA. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 5) George W. Bush on his addressing to the nation, on 29 January 2002, accused Iran, Iraq and North Korea of sponsoring terrorism and of attempting to develop weapons of mass destruction and declared them as the axis of evil. Although Syria was not in this list, Bush administration set forth that they would follow a policy of isolationg Syria. (Altunışık, 2009: 76)

Syria became conscious, in the 1990s, about not taking part in anti-American terrorism, and Bashar Al-Assad made quite an effort to prove that Syria was not a part of 9/11 incidents. The FBI agents visited Syria in order to investigate which Al-Qa'ida militant was in Syria or whether they contacted any Syrian citizen. George W. Bush personally phoned Bashar Al-Assad to thank for Syria's cooperation. (Zisser, 2003: 31) Syria supported the war of USA against Al-Qa'ida. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 5) However, USA declared that the war against terrorism included Hezbollah too, and stated that three of the perpetrators in the 9/11 incidents were Hezbollah members. But Syria did not help USA in this issue, since, for Syria, Hezbollah was not at the same category as Al-Qa'ida. (Zisser, 2003: 32) Hezbollah was founded by Iran, and it was not possible for Hezbollah to be such powerful without Syria's support. Hezbollah's weapons, ammunition and other support came from Iran but transported over Syria. (Oktav, 2008: 109-10) Hezbollah was required both in Lebanon and in Israel. Also, Syria continued to sponsor the Palestinian groups such as Islamic Jihad and HAMAS. (Zisser, 2003: 32) The accusation of Syria, by some USA Neo-cons, for sponsoring some radical Palesinian groups and Hezbollah drove Syria to the search of balancing the powers by reinforcing relations with some countries. Syria continued good relations with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran; tried to decrease the obstacles in her relations with Jordan, and reinforced her contact with the Saddam regime in Iraq. Syria, at the same time, tried to reinforce the ties with the EU in order to balance the pressure of USA, and this was also depending on a new liberalization strategy that would enable Syria to make a smooth and cautious entering to the World System. In this context, the Syrian elites made a critical decision on developing the relations with Turkey. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 239-40) On the other hand, the Neo-cons decided to overthrow the regime in Syria by diplomatically isolating Syria, and applying economical sanctions and military threats since their demands, within the policy of war against terrorrism, were rejected by Syria. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 5)

USA determination to invade Iraq was the immediate catalyst of deterioration in USA-Syria relations which enabled the Neo-cons to get the upper hand over the official moderates. (*ibid*: 5) Oktav relates the source of the tension between USA and Syria to two developments. First, Bashar Al-Assad made a conscious selection and ignored USA reaction against the arms shipment from Syria to Iraq, and she placed her chips on Iraq border as soon as she understood that the Iraqi regime would be overthrown by USA. As the second development, Oktav indicates the start of a diplomatic campaign by Syria against USA forces and prompting Arap support against the change of regime in Iraq. (Oktav, 2008: 103)

Iraq's integrity was of great significance for Syria, and also Bashar Al-Assad feared that the collapse of the Saddam regime, which was also a Ba'athist regime, would encourage the opposition in Syria. Syria supported Saddam with military soruces, provided shelter for Iraqi fugitives, and allowed the radical Jihadists to enter Iraq to take part in the battles. (*ibid*: 103) In November 2003 an act called the SALSA was prepared which proposed applying economic and diplomatic sanctions on Syria until Syria has accepted the demands of USA. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 12) SALSA came at a time when USA's concern about Syria were at a peak and at the same time illustrated the Bush Administration's seriousness about the pacification of Syria. However, the Western states gaining more positions in Syria's foreign trade and Syria's having a little trade volume with USA, limited these sanctions. (Oktav, 2008: 103) The sanctions would only be valid if USA were successful in convincing other countries to apply these sanctions. While the EU argued that the sanctions on Syria were not useful, Syria's neighbors, Turkey and Arab states criticized the sanctions. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 12)

The EU is the most important trade partner of Syria, and Syria has been negotiating with the EU states for a long time to sign an association agreement, signed with some Arab states. Also, the EU's opposition to the regime change in Iraq, and Bush administration's, on the contrary to Clinton's, never removing Syria from the state sponsors of terrorism list had caused Syria to dissent USA. The overthrowing of the Saddam regime, the replacement of Yasser Arafat with Mahmoud Abbas, and the Free Trade Zone proposal of

Bush for the region, informed Syrian administrators that there would be so many changes in the region. The thought that Bush administration would pursue a policy to isolate Syria and overcome terrorism caused Syrian administrator to ask themselves "Are we next?" (Oktav, 2008: 103-4)

Syria had various reasons for the anti-American policies she had pursued during Iraq War. According to Zisser, the first reason was the doubts that Syria was next target after Iraq. Moreover, Bashar was influenced by his instinctive anti-American feelings and refrained from balancing these instincts against Syria's strategic interests that might have dictated more coutious behaviour vis-a-vis the USA. Also, Bahar Al-Assad wanted to increase his influence on Syrian people and Arab public. The unwillingness of Bashar Al-Assad in actualizing the reforms might be blanketed by an inciriminating attitude towards USA, and thus the attention could be drawn to another point. In addition to these, Bashar Al-Assad did not want a quick and decisive American success in Iraq due to the lack of self confidence in the new administration; because such a success might yield traumatic results for the future of Al-Assad government. (Zisser, 2003: 53)

Syria compromised from her rejection of the invasion after Iraq war, and wanted to take part in the re-formation of Iraq. Syria came to terms with American generals to re-establish the trade relations of Syrian businessmen with Iraq in exchange for providing electricity for Northern Iraq. Not wanting to be isolated from its Security Council allies at a time when it was under American threat, Syria also reluctantly adhered, albeit after the fact, to UNSC Resolution 1483 which in effect legitimized the occupiers' control of oil money. But, Syria refused to recognize USA installed Iraq Governing Council and campaigned in vain to prevent other Arab states from doing so. Since Syria voted for UN Resolution 1511 in October 2003 that affirmed the Governing Council to embody the sovereignty of Iraq in transition until an internationally recognised representative government was established and which called on neighbouring states to prevent the transit of terrorists to Iraq. At the same time, Syria openly received delegates of Sunnite groups overtly opposed to the occupation and Governing Council. Bashar Al-Assad declared that they would recognize Iraq when elected autonomous institutions were founded. (Hinnebusch, 2005: 7-8)

However, he declared, in March 2005, that Syria would start diplomatic relations with Iraq after 25 years, despite the government of Iraq was still under the influence of the occupation forces. The reasons of these were explained by Hinnebusch as such (*ibid*: 8):

> "While this ambvibalance could reflect incoherence and factionalism in the Syrian leadership, it more likely reflects rhe contraray impulses buffeting the ragime. It is caught between its reluctance to acknowledge the principle of regime change and occupation on the one hand, on the other hand, its need not to be outside UN legitimacy, its desire to salvage some of its interests in Iraq, and its wish to use the American predicament in Iraq to extract concessions on USA-Syrian relations."

According to Hinnebusch, USA was continuing to accuse Syria in order to draw attention to another point, in the face of failure in finding non-conventional weapons in Iraq, and increasing resistance against the occupation. Syria, on the other hand, increased the security over her borders against these accusations of the Neo-cons, organizing assaults against the Islamic militant centers in Aleppo, and striving for enabling the American generals to work with Syria. The USA army welcomed these efforts. However, in December 2004, USA accused Syria of taking part in killing Americans actions of Iraq. In 2004, despite Syria had tightened her borders, USA claimed that the suicide-bombers mostly came from Syria and monetary aid were transferred to the Iraqi militants from an underground bank run by Ba'athist party leader. In May 2005, USA forces organized USA counter-insurgency operation near Syrian border. (*ibid*: 8)

The claims of Syria's support to international terrorism, her military existence in Lebanon, her hostility against Israel, ideas that Syria posed a threat with respect to weapons of mass destruction, and she supported the resistant Iraqis against USA invasion reviled Syria in the eyes of USA. Among these issues, the greater issues, except for the existence of Syria in Lebanon, continued and this caused anxiety in Syria for the next American attack after Saddam. For instance, according to Oktav, the mentioning of Hezbollah offices in Syria, and the emphasis on Syria's not giving up the support to Hezbollah and other Lebanese groups in the Syrian Accountability Act, indicates that USA may carry out an attack against Syria. After the Iraq war, American distrust grew violent and the opinion that Syria was surrounded by American allies became common. Therefore, Hezbollah has been seen as an important trump card in Syria's hand. (Oktav, 2008: 105)

The relation between Iran and Syria can be defined as a religious activist relation between the Alawite regime in Syria and the regime in Iran. Both of them were afraid of the external powers interfering in their internal affairs. This can be seen in the Hezbollah organization best. Hezbollah was founded by Iran, but it was impossible to be such effective without Syria. Hezbollah's weapons, ammunition and other support came from Iran but they were transferred over Syria. In the Hezbollah-Israel battle in 2006, Hezbollah proved the world that Israel can be defeated too. At the end of this battle Hezbollah enabled a new idea to spread; "Islam, Where Arab Nationalism Fails!"Also, Hezbollah posed an obstacle before the idea that peace should be made since Israel could not be defeated. (*ibid*: 109-10)

According to Moubayed Syria, contrary to what is believed, did not want to be so close with Iran except for taking sides against the attack of Bush administration. He gives two countries' sharing a few common features as a reason for this. This alliance relation had been formed perforce due to Syria boycott of the Bush administration, just like the Syria-USSR relations. Syria had always been in search of an alternative in order not to be dependent to Iran. Iran and Syria had fallen afoul in many ways; they were at opposite sides with regard to issues related Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon. Syria did not want to carry out a political relation with religious reference with Baghdad. Syria was against the de-Baathification laws, the Iraqi constitution and all the debates concerning giving an autonomous region to Shiites in Northern Iraq. However, Iran did not care about any of these issues, and sometimes supported these views. Iran's Baghdadi deputies worked with Kurdish deputies and promised to fullfil the Article 140 of the Iraqi constitution and promised a vis-à-vis oil rich transferring from Kirkuk to Iraqi Kurdistan. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maleki in need of Kurdish support to maintain his tottering cabinet coalition saw to it that Arab families were prooted from Kirkuk to increase the city's Kurdish population. Al-Maleki claimed that they had been illegally brought there under Saddam Hussein, for the exact opposite purpose. On the other hand, Turkey and Syria had more common points. Neither Turks nor Syrians wanted Kirkuk to join Kurdistan. On Palestine issue, despite the friendship with HAMAS and the historical hostility against Fateh, Syria did not approve the internal struggles between HAMAS and Fateh. As for Iran, she did not care about this conflict, as long as it served to Iran's interests, since she did not have any

historical ties with Palestine. Iran provided weapons and money to HAMAS which were used in the attacks and the Gaza Blockade in 2007. On the other hand, Turkey's policies under AKP government resembled Bashar Al-Assad's policies. Like Syria, Turkey was against the Iran agenda on Iraq and the Kurdish ambitions on Kirkuk. Turkey adopted an ungratified attitude towards the attacks in Palestine, and saw Syria as an important ally against PKK. According to Moubayed, Syria tried to show the world that Syria and Iran were not the two sides of the same coin. (Moubayed, 2008: 4-5)

The two country's governments' being of Shiite origin was important in Syria and Iran's closeness. However if the government changed in Syria, and Al-Assad leaned towards policies for converging with the Sunnite Arab world, a change in this closeness might be possible. This situation both might reduce the pressure of USA and might be important for the continuance of Al-Assad regime, considering the majority of the Sunnite population in Syria. Therefore, in my opinion, getting close with Turkey was a more preferable relation for Syria than doing so with Iran. Converging with Syria was important for Turkey to balance Iran. One of the reasons underlying the Turkey-Syria convergence was to prevent Syria's closeness with Iran. Syria-Iran convergence should be evaluated from several perspectives. First of all, Syria-Iran convergence delayed a possible intervention USA could carry out; because USA would find Iran and Syria in an alliance whichever she attacked first. On the other hand, if two neighbors of Turkey be in an alliance, Turkey would become isolated and get more close to USA. Also, the Iran-Syria convergence would jeopardize the Middle East Peace Process, because Syria, receiving support from Iran, would not want to compromise. This situation would bring the water issue and Hatay issue into agenda. All these reasons forced Turkey to converge with Syria for administering and orienting many indicents in the region (Ertaş, 2006: 171); because Iran-Syria convergence was against Turkey's interests. Even if USA seemed against the convergence between Turkey and Syria, Americans welcomed the closeness between Syria and Turkey instead of Iran. After all, in a report prepared for USA Congress, it was declared that the Secretary of State supported the dialogue Turkey established with Syria. Syria, being in good relations with Iran for long time, getting close to Turkey, a country in the Western sytem and a close ally to USA, under such circumstances in which Hezbollah

in Lebanon and HAMAS in Gaza strengthened, was something USA preferred. (Uzgel, 2009: 364)

Syria was in a critical position for USA with regard to intervention to Iran. Syria was an Arab state which had established close relations with Iran after the 1979 Iran Revolution. The ties between Syria and Iran should be distrupted before any operation against Iran. (Ertaş, 2006: 128) The attitude Turkey maintained during Iraq war and the deterioration in USA-Turkey relations increased the convergence in Turkey-Syria relations. The Kurdish policy followed by USA after 1991 is important for the future of USA-Turkey relations. As it was mentioned before, Barzani and Talabani were gathered in Washington to solve the problems between them and to enable them to act together against Saddam regime, no information exchange was carried out with Turkey. (Fırat ve Kürkçüoğlu, 2008: 565) Also the decision of making a 97 million dollar aid to Iraqi opposition members and this situation worried Turkey who had concerns about Saddam's overtrowing and doubts about who would restore the authority after this. (Arı, 2007: 626)

Before the invasion of Iraq, Turkey was in favor of peaceful solution of the issue. Turkey argued that Iraq should conform to the UN Resolution, and no force should be used without a UN Resolution. Thus, Turkey tried to be in dialogue with the Iraqi government on one hand, and on the other hand, she tried to provide cooperation possibilities for solving the issue without using force, with the talks she organized with the countries in the region. (*ibid*: 627)

The Memorandum that envisaged the opening of a second front towards Iraq over Turkey was rejected on 1 March 2003 in the Assembly as majority could not be constituted. 533 deputies participated in the ballot, 250 nay votes, 264 aye votes and 19 abstaining votes were casted. However, since the absolute majority envisaged in Article 96 of the constitution, the Memorandum was unrecognized. This situation caused confusion in USA. (*ibid*: 627-8)

The first American reaction was given during an interview of two journalists on CNN Turk channel with the Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz on 6 May. Wolfowitz

accused directly the Turkish General Staff, the main command center of the Turkish administration, and spoke out his reaction with the words "they could not claim their leadership as necessary". After this interview, Turkish Chief of Staff declared that the Turkish Armed Forces was in favor of the Memorandum. However, this was evaluated as a late declaration by USA authorities, according to Gerger. (Gerger, 2006: 494)

Gerger relates the General Staff's keeping in the background and not playing the traditional leadership role to two reasons. First, the cooperation relations between USA and the Kurds in Iraq, and the Kurdish formation, which was thought to get stronger after the war were worrying the General Staff as all other institutions of the state. USA, the UK, Arabs and Kurds were against Turkey's part in Iraq as a partner to the UK. It was impossible for USA ignore a possible bloody conflict between Turkish Army and the Kurds in Kurdistan, thought as a rear guard logistics area. Under these circumstances, Turkish General Staff lost interest. Gerger states that the second reason was the General Staffs wish to lay the responsibility over the civilian authorities' shoulders in case of public reaction. While the good news in the war were counted as the success of the Armed forces, the civilians should pay the bill for the bad news; this view was common in the General Staff. Also the civilian authorities were requested to face the distress in the public, created by the assault against a Muslim country under the leadership of USA. (*ibid*: 494-5)

According to Uzgel, contrary to the anticipations of the strategists in Turkey, USA entered Iraq without using the Turkish Front, after the 1 March incident, and it took very short for USA to invade Baghdad. On the other hand, it is not correct to say that Turkey is now a country without strategic significance. Especially, İncirlik base is still very important for the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, attributing a sine non qua, privileged role to this base will not be realistic from now on. According to Uzgel, the post 2003 era caused Turkey to pass into an era not strategically unimportant but important as others. (Uzgel, 2009: 372)

Turkey in order not to distrupt her relations with USA, started the negotiations to open the Turkish aerial domain after the operation started. Resolution 763 adopted by the Assembly in the session on 20 March 2003 (Arı, 2007: 629):

"This document anticipates the allowance of Turkish Armed Forces to be sent into Northern Iraq; this forces to be used, when needed, within the scope of duties to be determined, and in the scope of a possible military operation the use of Turkish aerial domain by air forces elements belonging to foreign armed forces with respect to the principles and rules to be determined by Turkish Authorities for 6 months as per article 92 of the Constitution."

The first tension between USA and Turkey emerged upon the possibility for Turkey to transfer units into Northern Iraq in order to prevent threats from this region during the occupation of Iraq and USA being against this. On 23 March, Richard Boucher, Spokesman of the State Department replied Turkey's demand to enter into Northern Iraq with humanitarian purposes as "These kinds of demands would cause misunderstandings. We have put it overtly. We do not support non-coordinated uni-lateral actions in Northern Iraq." Same day, Hoshyar Zebari, Spokesman of KDP, argued that if Turkey entered into Northern Iraq, there would be intense conflicts between Turkish soldiers and the local people. The second tension emerged upon the declaration of Turkey that she could contain Kirkuk region if USA did not, due to the plunderings in Kirkuk and the attack against Turkmens by peshmergas after the fall of Baghdad. The USA, hesitant over Turkey's intervention in the region, declared that the peshmergas would retreat and USA would take the control of the city, and she had to act as a result of Turkey's pressure. (*ibid*: 629-20)

One of the most important foreign policy aims of Turkey concerning Iraq, since 2003, has been the protection of the welfare of the Turkmen Population in and around Kirkuk, which is an oil region. (Fuller, 2009: 191) Kirkuk sits on one of the world's largest oil deposits. Many Kurds that Saddam Hussein had forcibly evicted as part of an effort to Arabize Kirkuk after the 1974 Kurdish uprising have returned to Kirkuk over the past several years to reclaim their land and homes. Turkey fears that Kurdish control of Kirkuk's oil wealth would enable the Kurds to finance an independent state. Therefore, Turkey wants to prevent Kurds from Kurdifying the city and making the region an autonomous Kurdistan. (Larrabee, 2008: 9) In order to prevent this Turkey wants the control of oil to be taken by Baghdad completely. For Ankara, Turkmens are trump card for not leaving Kirkuk and

Kirkuk oil to Iraqi Kurds. Turkmens are also divided as Sunnites and Shiites. According to Fuller, Turkish influence is only over Sunnite Turkmens; on the other hand Shiite Turkmens share the same perspective with the Shiite Arabs of the south. (Fuller, 2009: 191-2)

Turkey indicated that she did not approve of new uses of force that would lead to new turmoils in the region by maintaining a resolute attitude against a possible American intervention in Iran or Syria, which was at stake at the end of April, when the occupation ended and the beginning of May. (Arı, 2007: 631)

In a period in which Turkey tried to better the relations with USA, on the Independence Day, 4th of July, USA troops assaulted the Turkish Special Forces bureau in Al-Sulaymaniyah, 11 Turkish officers were taken to Bagdad hooded, an exercise applied to terrorists and resistance members, and they were held for questioning for 55 hours. According to Uzgel this is an action to insult Turkey, and USA has taken vengeance for the 1 March Memorandum. (Uzgel, 2009: 373) This incident shaking the faith between the soldiers of two 53 years NATO allies was caused due to USA's wish to protect the PKK/KADEK/Kongra Gel terrorist organization. (Arı, 2007: 631)

According to Fuller, the ideological and political circles in Turkey became suspicious about the Middle East policy of USA. Most of them think that USA pursued an approach, similar to the European imperialism, and tried to dominate the region as such. It was believed that USA tried to establish a Kurdish state, open to permanent manipulation an intervention of external forces, like Israel. (Fuller, 2009: 197-8) The reluctance of USA, when Turkey demanded a military operation again PKK to destroy its existence in Northern Iraq, worried Turkey.

According to Larrabee, the reasons of USA reluctancy for organizing military operations against PKK are as follows: first, USA needed all available forces to fight the insurgents in Iraq and train the Iraqi security forces. Second, USA regarded the Iraqi Kurds as essential to keeping Iraq together as a unified state. If Iraqi Kurds were to pull out of the

present Iraqi coalition, the situation in Iraq might degenerate into all-out civil war. USA was reluctant to push the Iraqi Kurds too hard. (Larrabee, 2008: 8)

Election of PUK leader Jalal Talabani as president of Iraq in January 2005, the ignoring of Turkey's demands regarding Kirkuk, PKK's existence in Northern Iraq and the security issues in Turkey due to the PKK attacks infiltrating from the border invalidated the efforts to re-establish the trust in Turkish-American relations. However, the areas of cooperation maintained their validity along with potential problems. The economical and political interests of USA, especially energy, in the Middle East and Caucasus-Central Asia made the relations between Turkey and USA important. Also, the tension between Iran and USA increased the importance of this relation. (Arı, 2007: 632)

The crisis in Iraq caused common threat perceptions and areas of interest to emerge for Turkey and Iran and USA policy against Syria caused Syria's convergence towards Turkey. With the change in the regime in Syria in 2000 there were a limited relief in politics, and this caused some other countries to rethink about their foreign policies. In this context, the international pressure over Syria increased. Under these circumstances, Syria re-evaluated her relations to Turkey, the cultural atmosphere was redefined and many Syrian elite started to think that the relations with Turkey should be deepened. As for Turkey, she reviewed her foreign policy keeping in mind that the problems in Iraq affected the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Turkey's Middle East policy, including Syria, has been generally related to Kurdish issue. On the other hand, Turkey's concerns caused Turkey to experience more problematic relations with her old allies, especially USA. However, the elite opinion in Syria didn't emerge so soon in Turkey. The nationalist elements revived recently argued that Turkey should develop more intimate relations with countries like Syria. However these ideas met with doubt by pro-Western individuals. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 230)

2000s were a landmark for both countries. The lock in Israel-Syria peace talks became a milestone for Syria. The conjuncture after 9/11 attack to USA had gone worse for Syria. Although Syria cooperated with USA against Al-Qa'ida, the criticisms of USA did not end. Neo-conservatives under Bush administration accused Syria of sponsoring the radical

Palestinian groups and Hezbollah. This situation forced Syria to reinforce her relations to some countries, by balancing. As it was mentioned before, Syria continued her good relations with countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran; decided to develop relations with Jordan, the Saddam regime in Iraq and Turkey; and in order to balance the USA pressure, she tried to improve relations with the EU. (*ibid*: 239-40)

As for Turkey, she was also willing to develop relations with Syria. According to Altunışık the civil and military elites were satisfied with the security cooperation and wanted to maintain this situation. Also the foreign policy conception of Bülent Ecevit government, based on the idea of contacting all regions, independently from the relations to the West was in favor of developing relations with Syria. Lastly, Syria could be an echelon for Turkey in her relations to Arabs, and it could increase Turkey's power in the region. (*ibid*: 239-40) According to Orhan, Turkey's developing relations with Turkey based on mutual-trust could open up opportunities for Turkey to play a more active role in the Middle East issues. Also, relations with Syria could facilitate Turkey's intervention in regional issues more easily. Orhan argued that the relations with Syria were effective in the mediation role taken in Israel-Syria peace talks, the constructive role played in Lebanon presidency crisis, and the communication, which had been tried to be established with especially HAMAS in Israel-Palestine issue. Again according to Orhan, Turkey could play an important role in the resolution of the issues in the Middle East, with the support she received from Syria. (Orhan, 2009: 42)

Syria, due to her bad condition, economically and strategically, maintained her existence by creating problems and has increased her bargaining power. This policy showed itself in the Syria-Hezbollah-HAMAS association which aimed at destroying Israel, dismissing the West from the region, structuring the Arab discourse on the idea that all problems were caused by Israel; and constructing regional hegemony. (Oktav, 2008: 106)

According to Altunışık, the continuance of the regime is the most important issue in countries like Syria. The regime shift discourse of the Bush administration posed a danger with regard to the security of the regime, especially when Bashar Al-Assad tried to secure his power. Syria followed two strategies against this danger: band-wagoning and

balancing. On one hand, Syria tried to block resistants infiltrating to Iraq, in order to calm USA, and tried to retreat from Lebanon by making a call for the restart of peace talk; on the other hand, she tried to reinforce her relations with friend countries such as Iran or with countries such as Turkey, which could be a link to the West to balance the USA pressure. According to Syria, Turkey, as a country who has international ties with USA and the EU, and who had been an ally to Western powers for many years, could lend assistance to Syria in establishing constructive dialogue with these actors and in reducing the level of the tension. Syria and Turkey shared similar concerns about Iraq and Syria was encouraged with the rejection of the Memorandum on 1 March 2003, which prevented Turkey's cooperation with USA on Iraq war. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 244) Syria thought that Turkey could help Syria to make peace with Israel and be of great importance in her relations to international societies; and believed that the developing relations would play a positive role in both countries' welfare by creating new opportunities, economically, for Syria and would be effective in preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq. (Moubayed, 2008: 1)

According to Altunışık, although Syria had concerns about the limits of Turkish support in case she confronted USA and the EU; the Syrian elites were very willing to develop relations with Turkey. The Pan-Arabic Ba'athist system was changed with the idea of establishing relations with the regional and international atmosphere which did not seem hospitable. The decision Turkey took on 1 March, AKP's Muslim and Arab harmony and its anti-Israel discourse changed Turkey's image in the eyes of Syria. This new image of Turkey was accepted by the Ba'athist and reformist elites. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 244)

The public opinion in Syria was that there appeared maturation in Turkey relations, both politically and economically. Syrian tourism agencies were directing tourists towards tourism spots such as Bodrum and İstanbul and powerful Damascene families organized wedding and parties in which 1000 people stayed at the hotels. Turkey was seen as a shopping mall by Syrians and Syrian universities were organizing student exchange programs with Turkish Institutes. In addition, Turkish TV serials gained great success in Syria. For the first time in history, posters of Turkish actors and actresses were hung at the walls of Syrian youngsters. Syrian censors were continuosly checking the directors and

script writers and they were blocking the broadcast of programs that reviled the Ottoman era in TV's, which was the situation in 1990s. The previous generation had little information about Syria-Turkey relations in the history, except for the period between 1908 and 1918 when Jamal Pasha executed Arab nationalists in Damascus during WWI. Therefore, Syrian and Turkish historians were presenting the positive aspects of Ottoman reforms and Turkey-Syria relations by re-examining the history of the Ottoman Empire. (Moubayed, 2008: 1-2)

6.4. Deepining of Relations Between Turkey and Syria

In the eyes of Arabs, Turkey, governed by the moderate-Islamic identity of AKP, could be of help for the shared historical and Islamic heritage to be gathered again. The idea that Turkey could serve as a bridge between the West and Arab World is very common among Arabs. The idea that a country like Turkey, who has been trying to be a member in the EU, could take an important role in the Middle East and the gate to the convergence with Europe could soon open to Syria and other Arab countries enjoyed credit among Arabs. (Fuller, 2009: 141)

After the 1998 crisis, when factors such as the deportation of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan by Syria, the Adana Protocol, Ahmet Necdet Sezer's Syria visit to attend the funeral ceremony of Hafez Al-Assad, the shared attitude of Turkey and Syria after the invasion of Iraq combined with the changing regional context, and we can say that Turkey-Syria relations entered a new era when we look at the relations untill 2009.

In this process the relations were intensified on many points. The military cooperation on security was expanded. Syria accepted PKK as a terrorist organization. Altunışık gives Syria's definition of a PKK assault in 2005 as a malevolent terrorist attack as an evidence to this change. In terms of politics, on the other hand, the bilateral and trilateral discussions on Iraq attracted attention. In addition to Iran-Syria-Turkey trilateral meetings, Syria became a part of Iraq's Neighbours Initiative started by Turkey. The future of Iraq became prominent as the main issue of the bilateral discussions. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 241)

The best measure indicating that the relations became intensified is the visit by Bashar Al-Assad on 6 and 8 January 2004, after the cancellations in the previous years. Bashar Al-Assad is the first Syrian President visiting Turkey. (*ibid*: 241) On the first day of the visit Bashar Al-Assad sent a diplomatic message to Kurdish groups and said "We denounce approaches that would jeopardize Iraq's integrity". Al-Assad's these expression were interpreted by Turkish media as "Turkey and Syria will not allow the disintegration of Iraq". (Ergan *et al.*, 7 January 2004) As a result of the meetings, three separate documents were signed between Turkey and Syria on preventing double-taxation, mutual incentive and preservation of investments, and the sixth tourism protocol under the present tourism agreement. Syria did not react against the definition of Republic of Turkey in the agreement text. This situation was interpreted as "Syria, albeit indirectly, have recognized the international borders of Turkey including Hatay" by Turkish media. (*ibid*) On the third day of the visit, in the press conference organized in Çırağan Palace, Al-Assad replied, upon he was reminded that Iskenderun had still been shown in Syrian borders in some Syrian maps, as such (Tınç, 9 January 2004):

> "I personally believe that, as our relation develop, I will not even see the borders. Yes, this issue was present in the past. And it was an issue unsettled; however it had never caused close combat. The traffic in the border gate showed a 400% increase last year. The development of our economical and political relations will contribute in the resolution of this issue, too. You will see that this will not be a problem in the future."

As it is seen, although Syria did not officially recognize Hatay as Turkish territory; she gave the message that this could be no longer a problem.

Bashar Al-Assad, on the first day of his visit, met with Turkish Chief of Staff General Hilmi Özkök. In this meeting security issues and the developments in Iraq were discussed, and the satisfaction from the cooperation of both parties' authorities on security issues was expressed. General Özkök thanked President Al-Assad for Syria's operations against PKK, information exchange with Turkish authorities and for making the extradition of the militants easier. (Ergan, 8 January 2004) The message that Turkey might mediate between Syria and Israel to overcome the problems were delivered to Al-Assad, and Turkey offered to host the meeting between two countries. (*ibid*) Al-Assad indicated that the sentimality caused by the problems in the relations between two countries, has been overcome, and a new era has been opened based on mutual-trust; and said those about Turkey's mediation

between Syria and Israel, in the press conference in Çırağan Palace (Tınç, 9 January 2004):

''I have read this subject on the newspapers first. They brought the subject on the first day of my visit. It is USA's will which is decisive for the restart of the peace process. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is going to visit New York. We have informed him about all the details of our position. I would deliver him these subjects in writing shortly after my return to Damascus. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will see how the land lies in Washington. However, I do not think this will yield any results, since USA is in the atmosphere of elections. The Israel lobby is powerful in USA and they are reluctant about Peace. We lean to any initiative from Turkey. In fact we favor every party's taking initiatives for peace. But Israel is against this. USA lobby is distant. European friends seem more consistent with regard to this issue.''

Syrian press characterized the visit of President Bashar Al-Assad as a historical incident, and drew attention the satisfaction felt about the lasting relations between two countries. Al-Ba'ath newspaper, wrote that a common perspective emerged, regarding the Middle East and terrorism in the meetings of President Al-Assad with Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and the lasting relation between two countries was reflected in these meeting, adding that Bashar Al-Assad and spouse Asma Al-Assad were warmly welcomed by Turkish authorities. Teshreen newspaper defined the visit historical in every aspect. The newspaper commented that this visit would reinforce the coordination between Turkey and Syria about Israel-Arab dispute, the peace process and security issues. (Ergan, 8 January 2004)

Bashar Al-Assad gave the signals that there would be development in economic relations in addition to the security and political relations. During Bashar's visit to Turkey, the institutional framework for economic relations was established. The two sides decided to open up a consultate in Gaziantep. And they decided to open up border centers in several Turkish cities to facilitate trade in border regions. Demining of areas in the border teritories to permit organic agriculture was agreed. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 242)

Bashar Al-Assad, in an interview on CNN Türk TV on 8 January 2004, emphasized that there was a shared perspective and perception of threat about Iraq between Turkey and Syria. He replied to a question, summarizing that a Kurdish state was an unacceptable redline for Turkey, as "a Kurdish state would cross over Syria's redline, too". (*ibid*: 241)

6.4.1. Lebanon crisis and effects on Turkey – Syria relations

As it was mentioned before, USA maintained a harsher attitude against Syria, when it was understood, in 2003, that Syria would not help Iraq's occupation and she took a stance against USA troops. In the summer of 2004, when there were a few months to the end of the term of office of pro-Syria Lebanese President Émile Lahoud, the political conflicts and the debates on the military existence of Syria in Lebanon excerbarated. Upon Syria's attempt to prolong the term of office of Lahoud for another three years, in a period of increasing USA pressure, USA government took action and brought the Lebanon issue on the agenda of the UN. This situation increased the international pressure on Syria. (Ayhan, 2009: 29) The UN Security Council, with Resolution 1559 on 2 September 2004, put on the agenda the end of Syria's existence in Lebanon and disarmament of Hezbollah, and Syria's withdrawing her military forces, of 20.000 soldiers, deployed in Lebanon at the end of 1976 Civil War. (Middle East Web, 2004)

Despite this, the day after the adoption of Resolution 1559, Syria supported Lahuod Parliament adopted the law that prolonged President Lahoud's term of office for three years. Upon this, USA started an effective campaign for Syria's retreat from Lebanon. (Ayhan, 2009: 29) Even Syria's old friend France was criticizing Syria. Although France and Syria had been at the same side about Iraq issue, Syria's existence in Lebanon aligned France and USA on the same side. (Oktav, 2008: 111-2)

The pressure of the international community calling for a complete withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon would remove Syria's last bargaining chip with Israel. A withdrawal also destroyed both a key source of capital for the regime and the principal source of income for hundreds of thousands of Syrian migrants in Lebanon, most of whom would otherwise be unemployed. (*ibid*: 112) Thus, Syria did not want to withdraw from Lebanon.

In a period, in which the pressure about Lebanon was very intense, in December 2004, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a two-day visit to Syria. The Prime Minister said, about the visit "this is the indicator of how distant relations get close", and Syrian Prime Minister Naji Al-Otari said "our relation will develop further in every

aspect". (Ayhan, 2009: 29) At the same time, Erdoğan's declaration, in one of his speeches, that Syrians and Turks were not friends but brothers, was a measure of the change in images between Turkey and Syria. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 395) Although, it was not in the official program, Bashar Al-Assad met with Erdoğan and requested Turkey to mediate between Israel and Syria. (Ayhan, 2009: 29) During this visit, the Free Trade Zone agreement was signed and cooperation was decided on areas such as agriculture and irrigation. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 395) According to Ayhan, by this way, Turkey clearly showed that she would not support the international pressure attempts on Syrian regime. (Ayhan, 2009: 29) A joint protocol was signed in August 2001, calling for training, study missions, technology Exchange and the conduction of joint Project. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 242) The water issue overcome with this protocol was completely off the agenda with the Free Trade Zone agreement in 2004. Both Euphrates and Orontes river issues, except for some problems due to technical reasons, disappeared defacto, albeit they had not been legally resolved. The Hatay issue disappeared defacto, due to Turkey-Syria convergence, but Syria had not made any decleration that Hatay legally belonged to Turkey. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 395-6)

Developments were also recorded in economic relations as a consequence of the improving relations since 2000. Syria could have been a gate opening to Arab world for Turkish goods. On the other hand, Turkey could have been the gate to EU and the West for Syrian goods. Each month a delegation dealing with economic issues traveled one country to the other, showing that the political will was there to further enhance economic cooperation. To Altunışık, progress on the economic front was in turn leading to the emergence of economic constituencies that pushed for further development of economic relations, especially on the Turkish side. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 242)

Bashar Al-Assad, despite the crises in internal politics, deteriorating relations with USA, France and some Arab states, stood up to USA pressure, since he found the Arab world support necessary for the well-being of the regime. Rafiq Hariri assassination came at a time when Bush administration had withdrawn the welcome mat when Clinton administration officially once feted Syrian politicians in Washington. (Oktav, 2008: 112)

On 14 February 2005, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was assassinated and Hariri lost his life. Many Lebanese thought that Syria had a role in Hariri assassination. That event inspired close to one million Labanese protesters to gather in Beirut's Martyrs' Square on 14 March 2005 to demand full withdrawal of Syrian forces and intelligence from Lebanon. On 26 April 2005, the Syrian army declared it had completed its withdrawal from Lebanon in line with UNSCR 1559, and on 23 May 2005, the UN released a report confirming that Syrian troops had withdrwn from Lebanon. (Nowlebanon, 2009: 3)

The claims that Syria was behind the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, increased the USA pressure on Syria to its highest level. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 396) At that very moment, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's visit to Syria was criticized by USA and the EU. The USA ambassador of Ankara Eric Edelman asserted, after a question by a journalist reminding Sezer's visit to Syria, during Edelman's visit to Bursa, that USA, EU and Egypt states were unanimous about the sanctions on Syria, that he hoped Turkey would participate in the international pressure on Syria to force her to withdraw from Lebanon, and if Turkey carried out this visit, she would be alienated by the international community. (Ayhan, 2009: 30)

This statement sparked a debate in public opinion about the visit of the President. While some people in Turkey found the visit to Syria ill-timed and stated that this visit would increase the problems between USA and Turkey; some others mentioned that Turkey should get more close to the countries who were under USA pressure like Syria. State elite and especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that this visit was planned for fulfilling the constructive responsibilities and USA aims could be achieved via dialogue, and emphasized that Turkey would contribute in such an aim with this visit. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 243) According to Robins both Kemalists and post-Islamists jointly defended a position on the grounds of engagement. The continuation of high-level contacts, it was argued, would enable Turkey to deliver the international message on Lebanon. (Robins, 2007: 296)

Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu argue that this visit put forth the irreconcilableness of Turkish and American policies concerning Syria. According to them, USA acknowledged the Turkish-Syrian convergence, which she had criticized for some time, and leaned towards making use of this convergence for her own interests. Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu claimed that, Ahmet Davutoğlu's visit to Syria during July 2006 Lebanon crisis and his meeting in Lebanon to prevent the crisis from deepening, upon USA's request was an example of USA's using Turkey as an echelon in Syria relations. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 396)

The picture was very complex for Turkey. USA was a traditional ally for Turkey and their relation had reached to strategic partnership level in the 1990s. Therefore, it is an important question why Turkey had developed her relations with Syria this far in a period USA increased her pressure on this country. According to Altunışık, it was expected from Turkey to conform to the policies of USA, her principle ally and the global hegemon. Turkey's this policy could be explained with the developments in Iraq and Turkey's perception of threat; because policies of USA and Turkey had got far from each other. However, when the Kurdish nationalism issue of Turkey was considered, Turkey's perception of external threats was not comprised of only systemic elements. Turkey, recently had had a nationalist connection both in the left and in the right due to Iraq War, the debates in the EU and in Turkey during EU membership process, and the Cyprus issue, the common discourse of this connection had ben anti-Americanism. This discourse had maintained a critical attitude towards the EU and had come to an agreement on leaning towards the third world countries. According to this perspective converging with Syria, despite the USA pressure, was a rational action. The NGOs also paid a visit to Damascus as a sign of mutualization. Also, as it was mentioned before, the change in the politics in favor of Muslim and Arab countries with the Islamic rooted AKP taking the office could be given as a reason for this convergence. (Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 244-5)

Sezer's paying the visit, at a time when the international pressure on Syria increased, rendered the visit very important. Another important aspect of this visit was its being paid during a period in which almost all Western states who had been in relation with Syria, such as France and Russia, were also against Syria. In these period Arab states, especially

Saudi Arabia broke off their relations with Syria, the EU states postponed Bashar Al-Assad's Vienna visit after Hariri assassination and they declared that they would not adopt the trade agreement signed in 2004. Thus, Turkey's paying a visit in a period in which Syria was alienated by her traditional allies created trust in Syrian administration and it showed that there was not any threat from Northern Border and no sanctions would be in force from Turkey. The thought that her Northern border was safe for circulation of money and people relieved Syria, in a period in which Iraq was buried into a civil war, and anti-Syria protest arised in Lebanon. Turkey's support to Syria in 2004 and 2005 played an important role in changing the Syrian policies against Turkey, and created sympathy among Syrian people. (Ayhan, 2009: 30-1)

According to Hinnebusch, Syria was punished for being against USA, just like she had been rewarded for taking sided with USA in Persian Gulf War in 1990-1991. USA had always considered Lebanon as a suitable country to harm Syria, due to her defenseless position; and therefore Lebanon had been the theater of war of waging powers in the Middle East. The issue of prolonging the term of Emile Lahoud's presidency created an opportunity for USA and France to draw Hariri away from a long-termed alliance with Syria and this formed the first tier of balance-changing policies in Lebanon. Again, according to Hinnebusch, the assassination caused great harm to Syria. The assassination was used as a means for pressure to drive Syria out of Lebanon. This situation has started the struggle between Syria's enemies and proponents. It could not be prove whether Syria was responsible or not for the assassination. On the other hand, what was important here was rendering the issue into an international investigation. Thus, Syria's enemies obtained the sword of Democles, with the ever-renewable court demand, that they would swing over the regime to demand political privileges from Damascus. The issue served many political purposes. Hinnebusch lists the examples as such; the unconditional release of the pro-Syria Lebanese security officers on lack of evidence; and the claim of a German newspaper, just before the election in Lebanon in July 2009, that it was not Syria that assassinated Hariri but Hezbollah. This claim caused the 8 March coalition headed by Hezbollah to unexpectedly lose the elections. (Hinnebusch interview, 10 August 2009)

At that time Turkey had been pursuing a Lebanon policy independent from Syria. Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu defended this view with the example of Lebanon's retreat, upon Turkey's reaction, from an oil prospecting agreement in South Mediterranean with Southern Cyprus in February 2007, not only due to pro-Syrian elements but also due to anti-Syrian element. They set other examples such as the emphasis of Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül that Turkey was equal to all groups in Lebanon, in the Arab League Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting in March 2007; and Erdoğan's taking direct initiative in the 2007 Presidency election crisis in Lebanon and his contribution to the resolution of the issue. According to them, Turkey has started to play a diplomatic role, also conforming to USA politics, in resolving crises as a country with increasing reliability in the eyes of the countries in the region. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 396-7)

6.4.2. Syria – Israel Peace Talks and Turkey's mediation role

An inverse direction has been in question in Turkey's relation to Syria and Israel since 1990s. Turkey has got away from Syria as she has got close to Israel. As it was mentioned before, we can relate this situation the the security perceptions of Turkey and the Golan Heights issue between Syria and Israel. However in 2000s, the friendly relations, shaped with the 1998 Adana protocol and the regional context, had caused Turkey to converge with Syria, and therefore caused the relation with Israel to settle down. As it was also mentioned before, relations with Israel were of great importance for Turkey who wanted to take part in the BOP process. In order to make sense of Turkey's mediation role between Israel and Syria, one shoud consider Israel-Turkey relations in the regional context after 2000.

AKP, coming into power after 3 November 2002 elections, was a party, comprising of members of a movement that experienced the 28 February process. The turban issue in internal politics and Israel issue in external politics were of great significance for AKP. From the very first days of their coming to power AKP acted sensitively in both subjects. AKP, having the infrastructure of Welfare Party mostly, and aware of the sensitivity of the Armed forces in Israel issue, placed EU membership process to the basis of its foreign

politics. The reason for this, according to Dursunoğlu, was the wish of AKP to show that it was at a different point that Welfare Party. (Dursunoğlu, 2005: 329-30)

The dilemma AKP experienced about Israel can be put into words as such: Should its leadership have the courage of its convinctions from the days of the Welfare Party and criticize İsraeli conduct in Palestinian territories, or should re-evaluate its position in light of responsibilities of power, as it had done more swiftly over relations with EU? The answer to this question, according to Robins, explained the two-fold policy of AKP. On one hand, Erdoğan, as it will be mentioned later, reproached the Israel attacks on Gaza in 2004; on the other hand shook the hand of Ariel Sharon, who was declared war criminal by AKP members, recognizing that criticizing Israel that harsh would jeopardize relations with USA. (Robins, 2007: 299)

While AKP could not follow a stable policy towards Israel, the Kemalist establishment largely stood aside in favour of tangible but less visible action working quietly to keep the relationship with Israel firmly on track. According to Robins, this situation created a very fragile balance with regard to developing relations both with Israel and Arab world at the same time. (*ibid*: 300)

Until the mid-2000s, there had been a standstill in Israel-Turkey relations. Turkey's resolution of problems with all her neigbours until the mid-1990s, and thus the relative decrease in the importance of Israel could be given as a reason for this situation. Secondly, Israel had toughened her policies against Palestine and this caused the peace talks to stop. There has been a sympathy for Palestine case in Turkish people, and this situation has hindered the governments to develop good relations with Israel overtly. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 392) In addition, Israel's starting to follow an egocentric policy, benefiting from the Iraq war and its consequences, was another reason for this standstill. Turkey disapproved this policy. For instance, Prime Minister Erdoğan reacted against Israel's attack by defining them as state terrorism. Israel had built a wall of 660 kms long in the beginning of the 21st century to stop suicide bombings. It was clearly stated in the Resolution of International Court of Justice, dated 9 July, that this wall was against international low. However, despite this Resolution, Israel has insisted on protecting the

wall. In addition to all of these, Israel has been posing a threat in the Middle East with regard to manufacturing of nuclear weapons. Israel would not allow any country to manufacture nuclear weapons, although she has been manufacturing. Her greatest support is USA. Israel has been rejecting to be a part of Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and to enter under the control of International Atomic Energy Agency. (Türkmen, 13 July 2004) After Iraq's occupation in 2003, the news about Israel's increasing her activities in Northern Iraq (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 392-3) and the news that Israel provided military aid to Kurds in Northern Iraq affected the relations between two countries negatively. Albeit the accuracy of this information is not acknowledged, it can be said that Turkey's and Israel's politics did not coincide, concerning Iraq. (Türkmen, 13 July 2004) The Northern Iraq issue combined with the nostalgic ideal of Great Israel the interests of Turkey and Israel on Northern Iraq have started to clash. Moreover, Turkish interests on Northern Iraq coincided with Iran's and Syria's, who were Israel's enemies. This situation was harming Turkey-Israel relations. (Yavuz, 2005: 465) Also, the attempts of the left wing in Israel to compare the Armenian issue with the Jewish Genocide worried Turkey. (*ibid*: 464) It is a fact that Israel's and Turkey's problematic policies part at the regional matters. However, it is quite out of question that Turkey turned her back to Israel completely; because reinforcing the relations with Israel was a prerequisite for taking part in BOP. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 392)

The relations have really entered into a more problematic period in Turkey. Ariel Sharon government coming to power, the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Uprising and the suspension of the peace talks have had great effect on this process. Reactions in Turkey have incrased after this uprising. Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit warned Sharon, in a visit in 2001 and said "If the hope for peace is lost, our relations would go worse". (Tür, 2009: 23-4) In April 2002, Ecevit blamed Israelis with carrying out genocide against Palestinians. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 392) However, despite the tension in the relations the economical and military relations have continued without an effect. The trade volume between two countires has risen to 1.3 billion dollars as by the end of 2001 the modernization project of 170 Turkish m-60 tanks was given to an Israeli company two days before Ecevit's declaration, in 20 March 2002. (Tür, 2009: 24)

With AKP government taking the office, the idea, that Israel-Turkey relations were dependent on the resolution of conflicts between Arabs and Israel started to develop in Israel. In addition, the effect of the regional developments which had been effective on the mutual relations from the beginning of 1990s until 2000 has started to be separated to some extent. However, the future of the mutual relations has become more dependent on the regional conjuncture since AKP coming to power. According to Tür, it is possible to mention a crisis-softening-normalizing cycle in the relations. (*ibid*: 24-5)

Israel's top level authorities visiting Ankara successively aimed at drawing the relations in its old course. However, Israel Minister of Foreign Affairs Silvan Shalom's visit on 14 April 2003 revealed the differences in the perspectives of the parties over the issues. USA and Israel's aiming their arrows at Syria and Iran, without waiting the completion of Iraq's occupation; and especially their attempts to apply intense pressure on Syria was drawing reaction from Turkey. Abdullah Gül was replying that Turkey did not approve of using force in the region to the declarations of Shalom accusing Syria. According to Arı, in line with USA proposals Israel's switching on the Mousul-Haifa pipeline and trying to by-pass Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline can be given as another example that the interests have separated. (Arı, 2007: 643-4)

These were not the only developments that caused untrust between Israel and Turkey. Israel's attempt to obtain land from Northern Iraq based on the land titles of the Jews, once emigrated from the region was concerning Turkey. (*ibid*: 644)

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül, in his speech addressing the party group in September 2003, used the expression "the countries in the region, including Israel, have been buying land in Northern Iraq". He stated that the bases for this claim were the home and land loans given by the Kurdistan Credit Bank, the bank was backed by Israeli financiers, and the only condition for the loan was to buy from Turkmens and Arabs only. (Tür, 2009: 25) Accoding to Hersh, Israel considered the pro-Iran Shiite groups as opponent in Iraq, and started to support the formation of an independent Kurdish state. With this purpose, Israel sent MOSSAD operatives to Northern Iraq to train the peshmergas. (Hersh, 28 June 2004) The news about Israel's establishing relations with

Kurds in Northern Iraq and supporting the project for the establishment of a Kurdish State disturbed Turkey. Especially the news about training the Kurdish guerilla and buying land from Northern Iraq infuriated Turkish side. In reply to these, Erdoğan has started to use the expression state terrorism while mentioning Israel in his speech and Turkey started a diplomatic attack against Israel at the Islamic conference in May 2004. (Arı, 2007: 644)

In 2004, Israel organized an assault to Refaa Refugee Camp. Erdoğan and Gül overreacted against this assault and this showed that the relations in the future would not be close and warm as it was before. While some circles in Israel worried about this reaction, the idea that the relations would be restored to their previous position was prominent in Israel. Turkey's this reaction had its broadest repercussion in Arab world and increased her popularity. (Tür, 2009: 25) Also, Hitler's book, famous of anti-semitism propaganda, Mein Kampf -My Struggle- entered for the bestsellers list in March 2005 in Turkey. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 392)

However, this tension had not lasted long and the attempt to reproach Israel for her activities in Northern Iraq by Iran and Syria was stopped by AKP's initiatives in the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Countries Neighboring Iraq convened in Cairo, Egypt on 21 July 2004. (Dursunoğlu, 2005: 337)

The biggest step taken by AKP to ameliorate the relations has been Erdoğan's visit to Israel on 1 May 2005. Dursunoğlu relates AKP's willingness to restore relations with Israel to several reasons. First of all, Turkey could not make any progress in EU membership, on the contrary EU states lined up requests that would strain Turkey, such as Cyprus, Kurdish and Armenian issues. Thus, relations with Israel gained importance. Also, the deterioration in the relations with USA was another reason for coverging with Israel. Erdoğan's reception by Bush, after the 3 November elections, as the leader of AKP was interpreted as the USA support to AKP, but a recession was observed in USA relations after the rejection of 1 March Memorandum. The developments in Iraq and Palestine in 2003 further deteriorated the relations. The tortures in the Abu-Gharib prison in Iraq, the massacres in Najaf and Falluja, the hood incident in Sulaymaniyah, and the assassinations of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin and Abdel-Aziz Rantisi in Palestine disturbed Turkish public opinion. Also,

Bulent Ecevit claimed that USA wanted to kill him; Deniz Baykal accused USA for the opposition against him; and AKP deputy Mehmet Elkatmış described the incidents in Falluja as genocide. All these developments raised the opinion on USA side that the anti-Americanism was on the rise in Turkey. President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's visit to Syria and Edelman's declarations further strained the relations. (*ibid*: 338-40) If one considers that one of the aims of BOP was to lower anti-Israel attitudes, Turkey had to restore and develop further the relations with Israel to get acceptance from USA and to play an important role in BOP. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 392)

With this in mind, the idea that a revision was required in the relations with Israel emerged in Turkish government. With this respect, the first meeting of Ankara forum, aiming at creating joint projects by providing the cooperation of Israeli, Turkish and Palestinian private sectors was held in April 2005; and the Industry for Peace project was brought on the agenda which aimed at remediation of the Erez Industrial zone inexchange of Israel's retreat from Gaza. (*ibid*: 393)

With Erdoğan's Israel visit in May 2005 just before his visit to USA, all obstacles before his participation in the BOP process were removed. Turkish and Israeli authorities signed numerous agreements. For instance, an agreement was signed for cooperation in industrial research and development. Israel stated that they would buy the Manavgat water as soon as the issues related to Manavgat River were solved. Turkish committee assured of Sharon on six irrigation project which had been left off-budget due to the savings in the GAP region. Minister of Defense Vecdi Gönül debated on joint defense projects with Israel. On 19 April Turkey and Israel signed an agreement involving Turkey's purchase of three unmanned aerial vehicle systems, ten secret surveillance equipment and land-control stations, costing 183 million dollars. (Dursunoğlu, 2005: 345-8) The talks on the Mediterranean Pipeline project which would transfer water, natural gas, oil, fiber optic cables and electric lines between Ceyhan and Askelon in Israel started during this visit. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 393)

In January 2006, after the Palestinian elections, HAMAS Politburo Chief Khalid Meshal visited Turkey and this caused a new tension in relations. Turkey had not officially invited

Meshal and had not hosted him officially. However, spokesman of Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Turkey had made a mistake in their relations and asked "What would you do if we meet with Abdullah Öcalan?" (Tür, 2009: 27) According to Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, despite this situation appeared a policy against Israel, it was observed that Turkey, later, took part in HAMAS isolation. On the other hand, Turkey supplied the aid, which she had planned for Palestine to El-Fateh, not HAMAS, after the elections. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 394)

According to Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, developing of Turkey-Israel relations at the expense of losing Arab world did not suited both parties' interests. Therefore, the anti-Israel discourse of AKP has not been a problem for both USA and Israel, unless it created a structural problem. In the period after 2005 to 2009, there weren't any development harming Turkey-Israel relation except for a few symbolic declaration and visit. This situation indicates that Turkish leaders' rebukes were done to conceal the ties to Israel from Turkish and Arab public opinion. (*ibid*: 394-5)

Turkey gave a harsh response to Israel during 2006 Lebanon War. (Tür, 2009: 27) However, after this incident, Turkey decided, in conformity with Israel's policies, to send 1000 soldiers to UNIFIL in Lebanon. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 394) On the morning of September 6, 2007 Israel Air Force planes penetrated deep into Syrian airspace and attacked a nuclear facility near the town of Dayr al Zur in the the Norhereastern of Syria. (cf. Zisser, 2008) Turkish airspace was used for this attack and the timing of this attack coincided with a period in which the relations, with regar to peace talks, were intense. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 397) Turkey did not give any response to this attack except for characterizing it as unacceptable. For Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, these politics of AKP can be given as examples to the artificial tension between Turkey and Israel. (*ibid*: 394)

Harmonious relations with Israel were for the benefit of Turkey in her mediation between Syria and Israel. According to some observers, Turkey had been preparing for this role since 2004. As it was mentioned before, this subject had been brought on the agenda during Al-Assad's visit, and Al-Assad's request for talks had been conveyed to Israeli

Prime Minister. Turkey's role as a mediator started with Israel's acceptance in March 2007. Turkey's influence on Syria was seen in 2005-2006 Lebanon incidents, and the possibility the peace talks between Syria and Israel to start under the mediation of Turkey emerged. Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt argued that, both parties' accepting Turkish mediation proved the improvement of AKP in regional politics, and also the mediation initiative should be interpreted as efforts of USA and Israel to solve problems with Syria making use of their influence on Turkey. (*ibid*: 395)

Syria had many conditions for these talks to be resulted positively. These were, Israel's returning Golan Height, which she had occupied in 1967 and incentivize the foreign investment, which had decreased after the Saudi Arabian and Syrian Accountability Act. On the other hand, Israel understood that nothing would be achieved with regard to Palestine after the Annapolis Conference in November 2007. They realized that a peace deal with Syria would be more than just a real estate deal. Also, Israel had the opinion that the balances in the Middle East would completely change in case of the talks resulting positively, and Israel's conflict with HAMAS, Hezbollah and Iran would be affected. Turkey, on the other hand, if the talks came out well, would be remembered as the country who succeeded in bringing peace over Israel-Syria border, which could not be achieved by none of the USA governments after Jimmy Carter. (Moubayed, 2008: 5)

USA, on the other hand, had not leaned towards these talks; because in case of an Israel-Syria peace, the boycott policy in Syria would stutter. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert indoctrinated USA not to reject the peace talks, in his White House visit in 2008. Both Turkey and Israel tried to convince USA that Syria was a country they could develop economic relations. Olmert stated that Syria, contrary to Iran, did not have an anti-American past, and Syria could be of help in solving issues such as Palestine, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon. (*ibid*: 6)

Turkey, Israel and Syria became aware that it was impossible for Turkey, at her own, to achieve the signing of the Israel-Syria peace treaty; because only USA could provide the economic, security and politics guarantees for both Israel and Syria. As for Turkey, she could only provide the suitable atmosphere for the direct talks of the two countries. In this

case, USA's support was a must. However, there emerged another problem. The agreement had to be prepared before the end of 2008. If USA continued to raise problems, the signing of the agreement would be possible on 20 January 2009 when the President of USA changed. Also, whoever elected President, John McCain and Barack Obama, the president needed at least 10 months to apply and support the Israel-Syria Peace Treaty. In such a case, Turkey, Israel and Syria would have to wait for another year. During this time Iran might have jeopardized the peace process via HAMAS and Hezbollah. An attack in Israel by HAMAS or a conflict over Lebanon border would have return parties to the beginning. Iran was dissatisfied with the Syria-Israel peace talks mediated by Turkey. Iran felt that a Syrian-Israeli Peace would come at the expense of Iran. (*ibid*: 6)

The coincidence of the September 2007 attacks, mentioned above, with a period in which the peace talks were in their course was expected to jeopardize Turkey mediation role, but Syria did not maintain a negative attitude against Turkey, even on the contrary, both parties declared that they had made progress under the mediation of Turkey in Erdoğan's April 2008 visit. Israel-Syria mediated talks started in Istanbul in March 2008. USA, despite she stated that she felt uncomfortable and doubted the Syrian-Israeli peace, appreciated Turkey's efforts. For Akdevelioğlu and Yeşilyurt, this was a proof that Turkey's being in close relationship with USA opposition powers would serve, in the long term, to USA's interest. Therefore, the idea that Turkey's relation to Syria was not an obstacle before Turkey's playing a more effective role in the region, within BOP project, on the contrary was a factor that reinforced this role was in common in USA administrators. (Yeşilyurt and Akdevelioğlu, 2009: 397- 8)

However the talks were distrupted in January 2008. The harshest reaction to the Operation Cast Lead on 27 December 2008 came from Erdoğan. Turkish Prime Minister was explaining in many platforms Turkey's position, which can be summarized as ensuring the ceasefire between parties, arriving to an agreement between Palestinian groups, and Gazza's reconstruction. However, while on one side Erdoğan expressed these constructive ideas, on the other hand he accused Israel of disrespecting Turkey, and stated that the trust between two had countries diminished. Erdoğan's this idea was based on the subject that Ehud Olmert's concealing this operation in his Ankara visit on 22 December. In this

meeting, Olmert oversaw the subject by giving guarantees to Turkey that the aids to Gaza, supplied by Turkey would not be distrupted. Thus Erdoğan defined this action, just after the peace talks, as a great disrespect against Turkey and declared Israel as and aggressor country. Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan commented that the attitude "let's battle on Israel-Palestine front, let's make peace on Israel-Syria front" would not make progress together. Turkey's leveling at Israel, increased her popularity in Arab World. For Israel, the public opinion started to question Turkey's mediation role and stated the idea that Turkey, as a country developing relations with Iran has rapidly got away from the Western camp. (Tür, 2009: 27-8)

The Israel-Syria mediated peace talks, started in Olmert's term, with Turkey's mediation, came to a halt with Netanyahu government. According to Hinnebusch, Syria would continue her close relations with HAMAS as long as the peace option was kept aside. Especially Hezbollah, whose capacity to harm Israel had been proved, had a deterrent effect against Israel's great military power by being on Syria's side. Hezbollah was a *joker* for the steps Syria would promise fulfilling in a comprehensive peace treaty. Namely, if peace was to be made, and if Israel made it possible to establish a Palestinian state by retreating not only from Golan but from West Bank and Gaza, Syria could have encouraged the moderate elements in Hezbollah and HAMAS. Also, Syria could use her control over the transfer of weapons to Hezbollah as a means of pressure. (Hinnebusch interview, 10 August 2009)

Turkey's playing the mediator role between Syria and Israel is one of the most important evidences for the development in the relations of two countries who came on the verge of war in 1998.

6.4.3. High Level Strategic Allience period in Turkey – Syria relations and abolition of visas

The 1998 Adana Protocol can be accepted as a milestone in Turkey-Syria relations when we look at the parties' relations untill 2009. The two countries, by resolving the Abdullah Öcalan issue, entered into a convergence period. As it was mentioned above, Turkey-Syria

relations have started to improve with the occupation of Iraq, American pressure and the Lebanon crisis; the dialogue increased during this period and the problems and prejudices between two countries were diminished; and two countries arrived at a level of close strategic cooperation from a cooperation level.

For both countries the primary areas of cooperation were economy, energy and water reseources, while the common security concerns arising due to Iraq issue, drawing Syria away from Iran axis towards Arab axis, and ameliorating USA and EU relations of Syria were priorities. (Ayhan, 2009: 31) Because, according to Davutoğlu, while Turkey was the gate for Syria, opening to Europe; Syria was the gate of Turkey to Arab World. (Haddad, 13 October 2009)

The role of economic relations in the political relations between two countries becoming a High Level Strategic Cooperation is undeniable. The increase of the trade volume between Syria and Turkey from 724 million dollars in 2000 to 1.8 billion dollars in 2008, and the anticipation that it would be 5 billion dollars as per 2012, as Prime Minister Erdoğan stated in the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council meeting, is a proof of this. (Tonkuş, 25 December 2009)

Albeit the increase in the trade with Syria was not of vital importance for Turkey, it was of great significance for Syria, whose foreign trade volume is about 25-30 billion dollars. It was expected from Syria to buy good, especially industy-manufactured. On the other hand, Turkey might buy natural gas and oil to be used in border provinces. Opening new production facilities especially in textile and food sector in Syria, where manual labour was cheaper, and crossing of the seasonal workers to both side were other economical acquisitions Syria expected from the convergence with Turkey. (Yavuz, 13 October 2009)

The relations started especially in security areas with the establishment of Joint-Security Committee with regard to Adana Protocol had accelerated in the first period of AKP government with the mutual assignment of special delegates and the increase of high level visits and diplomatic relations, and especially with the joint Military Training Agreement in 2002 (Tonkuş, 25 December 2009), and had peaked, so to speak, in Ahmet Davutoğlu's

period, assigned as the Minister of Foreign Affairs with a cabinet revision. When we look at its policies untill 2009, we can say that the AKP government which had built its relations with the neighbors on the slogan zero-problems with neighbors, started to carry the relations with Arab states beyond zero-problem after Ahmet Davutoğlu's assignment as Minister of Foreign Affairs. (Vurmay, 21 October 2009) The improvements in relations with Syria were the best indicators of this situation. The High Level Strategic Cooperation Council Agreement and both parties' citizens to have the right to travel free from visas, limited to 90 days, were important developments for both near periphery countries and the Middle East in general. (Ayhan 16 October 2009)

Davutoğlu said, with regard to the content of the Agreement related to the establishment of a High Level Strategic Cooperation council, that (TRT Haber, 16 September 2009):

"With this agreement we have just signed, a cooperation council has been established that will be carried out at the highest level. Via this mechanism, joint cabinet meeting will be performed with the participation of the most important ministers of both countries under the co-presidency of the two Prime Ministers."

According to the Strategic Cooperation Council Agreement, the council, under the co-presidency of Prime Ministers of both countries, would comprise of a total of 16 Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Energy, Commerce, Public Works and Settlement, Defense, Interior, Transportation and Agriculture. If needed, other Ministers' participation might be ensured and the formation of the joint-cabinet might be expanded. The joint-cabinet was anticipated to convene twice a year; however the number of the meetings could be increased by joint-decision. In the meetings, substantial agenda items, in the anticipated areas, would be determined and the required amendments would be made in terms of the position of the parties, for the procedures to progress. The cooperation areas would be discussed in the joint cabinet meeting and if necessary agreements, protocols and memorandum of understandings would be signed in the anticipated areas. In order the processes not to be left on diplomatic levels, it was anticipated that the relevant Ministries would prepare action plans about the decision taken in the meetings and would present this plan to the other party. Therefore it was prevented that the process to encounter bureaucratic obstacles. (Ayhan, 2009: 31-2)

After the agreement, it was stated, by the declarations of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both countries, that the visa procedure between Syria and Turkey were abolished. Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu said that (TRT Haber, 16 September 2009):

"The visas between two countries have been abolished completely. From now on, after the signing of the agreement, Turkish and Syrian citizens will visit each other without visas, as a sign of the fraternity between two countries. The relations between Turkey and Syria have been turning into an exemplary neighbority relation regionally and internationally. This decision taken is a sign of the mutual trust between two countries, and it is the greatest gift to next generation."

Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Waled Muallem addressed Turkish citizens by saying "Welcome to Syria" and stated that the abolition of visas was a gift to the citizens for the two countries. Muallem continued his words as "…You will travel to Syria as you have been travelling from İstanbul to Ankara. Likewise, travels to Turkey for Syrian citizens will be like travelling between Aleppo and Damascus." (Today's Zaman, 17 September 2009) Waled Muallem also stated that they decided to abolish the taxation on the trucks carrying goods to-and-from Turkey and Syria. (TRT Haber, 16 September 2009)

The first Cabinet Meeting of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council in Aleppo and Gaziantep on 13 October 2009 was a substantial step for the cooperation in Syria-Turkey relations. (Ayhan, 2009: 32) After the meeting Turkish and Syrian Ministers of Foreign Affairs emphasized the satisfaction they felt of the cooperation in the press conference, and declared that a general concept was formed for the cooperation and this subject would be brought on the agenda in the next meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council during Erdoğan visit to Damascus in 2009, after turning this subject into substantial agreements and protocols. Davutoğlu expressed the friendship of Syrian and Turkish people and the future of the relations as such: (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 13 October 2009)

"From now on, Turkey and Syria will go on progress in the same course with their fates, past and future being common. We will walk side by side; in order to make our region a rising center civilisation again; to make it a common economic basin again, to bring together Antep with Aleppo, Hatay with Latakia, Mardin with Deir ez-Zor, Istanbul with Damascus, and Ankara with Damascus, we will work together. This is a feast for Turkish and Syrian people; we have declared a feast of abolishing visas, between two feasts, it is like a weeding. As there are two families in a wedding who unite their futures, today Syria and Turkey unite all families, clans together for one future in a great weeding."

Davutoğlu also said that, in Turkish and Arabic, "I pronounce our common slogan as 'Share fate, shared past and share future." (Ayhan, 2009: 32) It is understood from the declarations of the Ministers of both countries; Turkey and Syria did not only place

emphasis on economical and political relations but also social convergence. After the meetings convened in Aleppo and Gaziantep, works on 40 protocols, project memorandums and agreements were decided. (*ibid*: 32)

When we look at the relations of Turkey and Syria untill 2009, it is obvious that the Syrian-Turkish relations were planned to be improved in security and defense areas as well as economical and social areas. In this respect, after the "Turkey-Syria Border Units Exchange Manoeuvre" organized on 27-29 April 2009 for the first time, in-depth joint security and defense manoeuvres were anticipated between the Land Forces of two countries. (Ayhan 16 October 2009) In the cabinet meeting Minister of Foreign Affairs Muallem declared that it gratifying that Israel was removed from the Anatolian Eagle Airforce Exercise. On the other hand, Ali Habib, Syrian Minister of Defense remarked that they had performed the first manoeuvers with Turkey including the Land Forces in the previous spring, and added that they agreed, at the joint cabinet meeting, on organizing. (Elci, 13 October 2009)

Israel's removing from the Anatolian Eagle Exercise at the last moment is remarkable. We can say that there was a regression in Israel-Turkey relations, while there was a deepening in Syria-Turkey relations. It is thought that this was caused from the Gaze attacks. Besides all those thoughts, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu repeated Ankara's position that it had not singled out Israel as a political punishment but had decided to call off the international stage of the military exercises, which would have also included the USA, Italy and NATO. But also he told reporters in Aleppo: "Our sensitivity on Gaza, East Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque are there. If these sensitivities are taken into consideration the peace process would resume in the region." (*ibid*)

The first meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council at Prime Ministers level was carried out in Damascus on 22-23 December 2009. Prime Minister Erdoğan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu emphasized that the Strategic Cooperation Council did not only aim at improving the relations between Syria and Turkey, but also aimed at to act together against the regional and international issues. Notwithstanding, the signing of an agreement with Jordan to abolish visas just after the visa-free crossing agreement signed with Syria enabled Turkey to overcome the visa obstacle before the Arab World. In addition to all

these, the Gaziantep-Aleppo railroad, which opened at the day the meeting was convened, was a sign that the social and commercial relations would improve further. The trains on the 209 km long Aleppo-Gaziantep line were decided to make two cruises a week. 50 thousand passangers and 4 million tons of cargo per year would be carried after the trains, with 277 passanger capacity, enter into service. Increasing the cargo amount to 10 million tons a year was anticipated by improving the conditions of the railroad. (Ayhan, 23 December 2009)

In January 2009, the Syrian commission visiting Ankara consulted with Turkish authorities led by Minister of Environment and Forestry Veysel Eroğlu about building a Friendship Dam on the Orontes River which has been an issue between Syria and Turkey with respect to sharing its waters. In the talks between the commissions some agreement texts were signed with respect to the construction of a pump station on the Syrian part of Tigris to irrigate Syrian land; increasing the water quality; and mutual supervising on joint-struggle against drought and the use of water. (*ibid*)

The high level cooperation period between Turkey and Syria would increase the trade between the two. By actualizing the protocols in the 2004 Free Trade Zone Agreement, it was expected for the importation between two countries to exceed 5 billion dollars as per the end of 2010, which was 2.5 billions as per the end of 2008. According to Ayhan, with the abolition of visas the borders would become insignificant economically and socially; the historical issues would disappear via this process; a common water policy could be established; and the border between Antakya and Aleppo would loose its importance. (*ibid*)

The Strategic Cooperation meetings between Syria and Turkey might also play an important role in solving the problems between Iraq and Syria. If the confidence crisis between the two could be overcome, Turkey would have profits from this situation. If a tripartite strategic cooperation mechanism were to be established after the resolution of the problems between Syria and Iraq, this could be effective in solving the problems of these three countries. The issues related to terrorism and security in each of these countries could be minimized. Thus, the economical relations could be established in the

region which was made stable and secure. However, abolition of visas might have some negative effects. A free trade agreement which enabled the custom-free trade between the Arab common market similar the EU customs union between EU and Turkey has been signed between Syria and Turkey. The economic steps taken after 13 October, the visa-free crossings, and the customs conveniences would introduce the mutual exchange of Arab League and EU goods without customs. If the EU goods had an important place in the future of Turkey-Syria relations, criticism might arise from the EU and Arab League, according to Yavuz. Also, with the abolition of visas, it would be possible for the Iraqi refugees in Syria to cross over to the EU states via a mafia-style set-up through Turkey. This would cause public order issues in cities such as İzmir, İstanbul and Edirne; and the precautions to be taken to prevent this situation might pose an extra burden on Turkey's budget, and also they might draw reactions of the EU states such as Bulgaria and Greece. In addition, Turkey might experience an unemployment issue due to the increase in the crossings of seasonal workers, and might suffer from losses of tax due to transfer of factories to Syria. (Yavuz, 13 October 2009)

The improving relations with Syria, Iran and other Middle East countries caused the opinions that Turkey has been getting away from the West, to be called out. In an article published in Financial Times, it was written that Turkey more and more played for the leadership of the Muslim World, but this role was out of Turkey's depth; and this situation would negatively affect the relations with the EU. According to a news item in the New York Times, "Turkey has shaken herself from the straighjacket alliance with the USA, became indifferent to EU membership and shifted her attention on the old Ottomanic neighbors in Central Asia and the Middle East." (Vatan, 30 November 2009: 15) The same new item, this politics of Turkey was not a despise against the West, but was a reflection of a frustration Turkey had experienced due to the infuriating attitude of USA and the EU towards the accession process and Iran issue and due to their support to Israel's Gaza politics. According to the claims of the New York Times, Turkey has been experiencing an Islamic renaissance, and if she completes this process, she could be an important actor in the Middle East. (Vatan, 29 November 2009: 21) According to an article in Foreign Policy, AKP government gets close to Syria on the one hand; and on the other hand it makes declarations about Iran and Israel, and makes eyes at both Islamists

and leftists. The laics think that AKP planned to get a blow in Turkey's laic identity; on the other hand, Islamists think that Israel, together with the TAF planned a coup d'etat. While Islamists blame the West for organizing a crusade, leftists blame USA of capitalism and imperialism. According to an article in The Washington Post, as the term of AKP prolonged, Turkey has experienced an inelegant turn foreign policy and has reproached Israel while she has got close with the criminal leaders of Syria, Iran and Sudan. According to the article while AKP was seen as an example of Muslims' pursuing democratic politics once, AKP's present politics has blackened this image. (Vatan, 30 November 2009: 15)

As it was mentioned before, when we look at the policies of AKP untill 2009, Turkey has been leaving the West-oriented foreign policy and has been facing towards the Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus. At this point, there are two issues that should be put excessive emphasis on. First, Turkey was not giving importance to the EU membership process as before, and second she was experiencing tension in relations with Israel, which had improved during 1990s. The Davos rebuke, to be mentioned later, removal of Israel from the Anatolian Eagle Exercises, Syria relations' turning into high level strategic cooperation and the allowance of TV programs in which Israel was excoriated can be given as examples to the tension in the relations.

Improving relations with Iran also make think that Turkey was getting away from the West. Turkey adopted a more moderate language against Iran's nuclear policies, and declared that she belived that Iran aimed at obtaining nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and stated that other countries, too, had the right to possess nuclear weapons where Israel had these. Turkey brought forward the ideas that HAMAS should participate in the Israel-Palestine peace, and stated that HAMAS was not a terrorist organization. (Oğuzlu, 2009: 45) As it was mentioned before Turkey presented a serious reaction during Gaza attack of Israel and this caused Turkey to be criticized by Israel.

It is important that Turkey took side with the anti-West axis against pro-West axis which started to emerge in the Arab World. While Turkey developed relations with Syria and Iran, she maintained good relations with HAMAS government in Gaza Strip. Turkey

stood closer to the anti-West bloc comprising of Iran, Syria, HAMAS and Hezbollah than the pro-West bloc including Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. This situation fell afoul with the general lines of Turkish foreign policy. Also, Turkey's getting close to Russia, as never before, the expansion of NATO, Turkey's relatively sensible attitude in Russia-Georgia conflict, Turkey's taking steps for the Russian relations' not to be affected from the problems in the relations between the West and Russia were interpreted as Turkey's distancing from NATO. (*ibid*: 46-7)

Turkey's getting away from the West were also caused by Turkey's distrust against NATO in reassuring her own security as before, due to the debates in NATO about the threats and the measures to counter these threats. NATO were not a joint defence alliance, any more, in which the common enemies defined clearly as before; and more and more it turned into an instrument to perform and legitimize USA's global military operations. This situation caused a decrease in Turkey's trust to NATO. (*ibid*: 55)

Turkey's getting out of the Western Axis and starting to pursue a harsher policy against Israel were more obviously revealed in the crisis in the panel titled Gaza: the Case for in Middle East Peace in Davos Economic Forum. Prime Minister Erdoğan criticized Israeli President Peres, sitting next to him, emphasizing that Israel used disproportionate force in Gaza; as for Peres, he said that (Ergan, 30 January2009);

"Hamas entered the elections. They have a different view of democracy. There have been 5 thousand missile and 400 mortar assault since HAMAS came to power. They fired without knowing where they aimed. What do you expect us to do? What would you do if there were missile attack in İstanbul? Israel does not want to kill people. We are not interested in killing people. It is not Israel that started the Gaza tradegy, but HAMAS who has established its dictatorship in Gaza."

Upon Ignatius', the moderator of the panel, not giving voice to Erdoğan, despite his requests, Erdoğan turned to Peres and said (Milliyet, 30 January 2009),

"You're speaking loud. You're older than me, and I know that your speaking louder than me is because of the guilty conscience. My voice will not be this high. May you know this! When it comes to killing, you know killing the best. I know very well how you have killed the children in the beaches, how you have striken them."

Upon Peres' speech receiving applause from the meeting room, Erdoğan said "I also reproach the ones who applauded this cruelty. To applaud the ones who kill children, I suppose is a crime against humanity." (*ibid*) Upon the moderator's interruption Erdoğan said "From now on, Davos is no more for me. May you know this. You do not let people speak. He (Peres) has spoken for 25 minutes and you have let me for 12." and left the meeting room. (Ergan, 30 January 2009)

Erdoğan's this rebuke had a broad repercussion in the world. For the Davos crisis, Felier and Harel argued that AKP was playing upon the internal politics, as in other crises. There was an anti-Israel perspective in Turkey. And Turkey viewed biasedly the Arab-Israel conflict. In addition, AKP satisfied its Islamic grassroots with the Israel rebuke. Also, AKP aimed at the laic system, which was thought to be defending the close relations with Israel with Davos rebuke and others. (Feiler and Farel, 4 February 2009)

AKP needed to make a revision in Israel relations, driven by the need to renew Turkey's image among Arab World. The aforementioned visit of Khalid Meshal to Turkey in 2006, the crisis in Davos in 2009, the criticisms about Israel's Gaza operation, preventing Israel's participation in the Anatolian Eagle Exercises and the criticism of Israel's nuclear power by Turkey provided the expected influence in Arab countries and the credibility of Turkey has increased in the Middle East. (Erdurmaz, 3 November 2009)

Turkey, pursuing a controlled tension policy against Israel for the sake of relations with Arabs, could not lean towards completely turning her back against Israel due to her relations with USA and her need of the Jewish Lobby; on the other hand Israel could not get away from Turkey since she placed Iran at the center of her security policies. However, two countries' purporting a close relationship would increase Turkey's influence on Arab World. Thus, as it was mentioned before, artificial tensions have been created between Turkey and Israel. Davos incident is an example to this. AKP made a movement due to the oncoming elections and for its grassroots, and also won general approval from Arab World by embracing the Gaza issue. Sayingly, AKP killed two birds with one stone. The relation with Israel, relieving and straining from time to time, was a consequence and prerequisite of Turkey's politics regarding USA and Arab World.

However, the High Level Strategic Cooperation period with Syria and closeness with Iran were signs that showed Turkey's bias in the balance were shifting towards Arab and Islam world. Therefore the state of affairs in Israel relations was a testament to Turkey's getting away from the West.

Despite the zero-problems approach in relations to Syria, Iraq and Iran; Turkey's rendering Israel relations into problems, in spite of zero-problems, caused reactions from Israel. Israel was dissatisfied with the declarations of Turkey in favor of Iran's nuclear power. The development of Turkey-Syria, Turkey-Iraq and Turkey-Iran relations, Turkey's wish to be mediator between Syria and Iraq kept Israel in suspense. An alliance in the region to be formed on Syria-Iran-Iraq front meaned a Shiite zone streching from the Indian Ocean and Central Asia to Eastern Mediterranean. This would not suit Israel's interests. For Turkey, on the other hand, good relations with neighbors did not mean anti-Israelism. Turkey had the aim to bring stability to the region and as a consequence increasing her commercial relations with the region. This situation, for Turkey, would contribute to the democratization of the region, in long term. (Yavuz, 13 October 2009)

7. CONCLUSION

Syrian Arab Republic is a Middle East state situated at the South-Eastern strand of Asia. Syria's regime is a multi-party republic. The political power is in the hands of Ba'ath Socialist Party. The Apparatus of Syrian Ba'ath Party includes National Command, Regional Command and People's Council. The 250 membered People's Council also functions as the legislative organ. Execution comprises of the President, the Cabinet and Regional Councils.

The majority of Syria comprises of Sunnite Muslims. Apart from Arabs, Turcomans, Kurds, Circassians, Armenians, Asyrrians and Jews maintain their ethnic identities. The largest religious minority is the Nosairians. Hafez Al-Assad, who presided for a long time, and his son Bashar Al-Assad belongs to the Nousairi sect. The Nousairi organization is seen in the Al-Asad family, and in the critical positions of the army and the state. Nousairi authority began with Hafez Al-Assad. Hafez al-Asad was not only the anchor for national identification, but the source and focus of real power as well. Ex officio, the president controls all the pillars of power: he is commander-in-chief of the armed forces and authority for inteligence services and he is the secretary of the Ba'th Party which controls the parliament. The foreign policy understanding of Hafez Al-Assad was shaped around being a country which surrounded by enemies, and he constructed his new foreign policy based on that belief and he supported terrorist groups. Israel who occupied Golan Heights and USA enemity was in the middle of his foreing policy. Bashar Al-Assad continued his father's authority. At the begining he made some reforms as it was expected. He accepted opening of private banks with limited rules and he allowed private sector nervously. A period named Damascus Spring was started and Bashar Al-Assad administration was allowed to be critisized in some platforms. The other parties were allowed to broadcast newspapers and magazines, the political prisoners were emancipated, Hafez Al-Assad's Old Guard was revived and his own advisor group named Young Guard was founded. The political reforms of Bashar Al-Assad can be seen as modernizing authoriterianism. The first priorities were to foster modernizing cadres and to combat waste, chaos, and corruption through increased accountability and transparency and by strengthening institutions through administrative reform and rule law. But Bashar thought that Syria was

not ready to import democracy of Western type. So that, Damascus Spring was followed by Damascus Winter and the majority of the political elites who talked in platforms were put into prison. The general political understanding of Al-Assad family was not to give place to democracy. We can say that Bashar Al-Assad was a more liberal authoritarian than his father but he couldn't make the reforms which were expected from him, the Israeli enemity continued in his foreign policy, he situated at the opposite poles with USA as his father did. Only the difference with his father in foreign policy was to carry forward the relations with the countries with whom the main problems were disappeared, such as Turkey.

In spite of the historical ties between Turkey and Syria which comes from Ottoman period, Turkey and Syria relations were always problematic since the foundation of Turkish Republic. Those problems started with Hatay issue and continued with water and terror issues and the tension in the relations became more and more impass. The tension between two countries continued untill 2000s. The tension between countries begins with Hatay issue. Hatay was seen as a Syrian territory by Syria and wasn't accepted to be situated in Turkish borders. The Great Syria Ideal of Hafez Al-Assad included the retrieval of Hatay so that Syria put in claim for Hatay. During the Turkish Revolutionary War, although it was situated in the National Pact of 1920 borders, Turkey couldn't be insistent on Hatay because of the conditions of that period. Syria got Turkey's not being insistent on Hatay and the incorporation of Hatay into Turkey in 1939 wrongly and they commented this situation as Turkey was a revisionist country and they started to put in claim for Hatay. However Hatay was situated in the National Pact of 1920 borders but because Turkish Republic was a newly founded country and the condions of the period was not suitable, Turkey couldn't be insistent on Hatay. But the fonder of Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who named Hatay as "my own personal matter" used well the foreign situation of the Second World War and Hatay joined to Turkey on 23 June 1939. Nevertheless with the coming into power of Ba'th Party in Syria, they began to put in claim for Hatay. Turkey underlined at every turn that Hatay was a Turkish territory and this problem would give harm to relations between Syria and Turkey. Especially after 1950 this problem was proposed for the agenda. When we look at the developments untill 2009, we can say that the Hatay problem is put aside with the Bashar Al-Assad's coming to power and with the

good relations between two country but there is no written agreement between Turkey and Syria which put forth that the problem was disappeared, there are only Syrian explanations which underline that Hatay isn't a problem between two country. But it isn't known if Hatay will be a problem again or not in the future.

Another issue between Syria and Turkey is water. Euphrates and Tigris is important for both Turkey and Syria's agriculture sector and electricity production. The problem starts with the different definitions of the rivers and the oppositeness on using rights of the parts and continues with the Turkey's foundation of dam on the rivers. Turkey defined Euphrates and Tigris as transboundary waters and she thought that she had sovereignty right on the water which situates in her borders; however, Syria defined these two as international waters, thus sharing of these waters, as a common resource, should be performed by sole mathematical formula between the riparian states and she claimed that she had acquired rights on these rivers. Consent was against sovereignty, but informing the lower riparian state about the significant harm and consulting on the matters were envisaged. Turkey did not accept the term international watercourses since it might force her to a water sharing agreement and characterized the Euphrates and Tigris as transboundary waters.

Another problem is the foundation of dams on the rivers. In 1983, the GAP project started and the water problem reached to top. Syria claimed that GAP would reduce her waters and claimed that the waters returning from irrigation and passing through power plants would reduce the water's quality and pollute the water; and it would reduce the amount of water Turkey obliged to give. Turkey kept her promise of releasing more than 500 m^3/s of water in the 1987 protocol, and released a minimum of 509 m^3/s of water between 23 November and 13 February. We should add here that the protocol is the first protocol that puts forth the connection between the terrorism issue and water issue as it deals with the Economic Protocol and the Security Protocol at the same time, although the security issue was handled generally and PKK was never mentioned. Inspite of the Turkey's positive attitude, Syria didn't stop sponsoring PKK. Syria handled PKK support and water problem together, on the other hand Turkey underlined in every turn that she wouldn't be in a solution for water unless Syria stopped sponsoring PKK. So that water problem placed in

the two countries' relations as a problem that was put into words in international platforms. With the developing relations after 1998 crisis to 2009 terror problem and water problem was dissociated. We should add here that there was a goodwill agreement signed in 2009 between parties which was about building a Friendship Dam on the Orontes River which has been an issue between Syria and Turkey and with respect to the construction of a pump station on the Syrian part of Tigris to irrigate Syrian land; increasing the water quality; and mutual supervising on joint-struggle against drought and the use of water. Also there are goodwill statements that parties made. Although there is no written agreement which put forth that the problem was disappeared except those goodwill agreements, because of the developed relations until 2009, water problem was put aside. But how the two countries who has water problem in their own territories will act in the future is a question mark. Because Golan Heights which is a big important water resource for Syria is still under the Israeli occupation and they don't want to withdraw. Infact water camed into question in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel and USA and Israel wanted Turkey to make a concession about water but Turkey refused this strongly. It isn't known that if the peace negotiaons which are stopped recently, starts again, the water will be a discussion subject or not. Because there is no written agreement about the problem between two, it isn't known that if the water will become a problem in the future or not.

Another issue between Turkey and Syria is the Orontes River issue. Since Syria does not accept Hatay being under Turkish sovereignty, she bans the negotiation of the Orontes River issue with Turkey. Turkey also thinks in 1990s that Hatay issue is one of the reasons underlying Syria's support in PKK, and thus seeks resolution for the Orontes River issue. Nevertheless, when Syria stopped suponsoring PKK, this problem also is put aside. Although the drought in Amik Plain which is irrigated by Orontes River isn't disappeared, because of the good relations, the parts don't revive this problem. There is a goodwill agreement between parts but if this issue would be a problem again isn't known.

Terror issue is the most important problem between Syria and Turkey and because of that issue two countries came to the verge of war. Syria adopted to weaken her opponents instead of getting stronger herself to achieve the Great Syria Ideal. So that, Syria especially during Hafez Al-Assad period preferred using terrorist organizations, which did not make

any impressions of relation with Syria, in order to accomplish her political and military aims. Syria continued this policy on Turkey and sponsored the terrorist organizations such as PKK and ASALA. There were three aims of the terrorist threat directed to Turkey from Syria: First, hindering the economical development of Turkey and thus preventing her to be a political and military power in the region. In addition to that, taking Hatay back was one of the primary goals of Syria. Second, Syria tried to export the Kurdish issue, by taking advantage of the Kurds living in Syria. The increase of the proportion of the Syrian Kurds in PKK to 30% can be given as evidence to this. By this way, both the power loss of PKK was prevented and the number of the Kurds in Syria was being reduced. Thirdly, Syria, who was against the GAP project, wanted to get concessions from Turkey about the water issue by using the terrorism card. Syria, who could not get the desired result from ASALA, started to sponsor PKK after 1980. PKK is a terrorist organization that defends Kurdish separatism. Syria, who had provided shelter to Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of PKK for long years, came to the verge of war with Turkey in 1998. We should add here that the Syrian support to PKK was the most with the beginning of GAP project. That proves the relation between water and terror issues.

The Persian Gulf War which began with the Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, Syria and Turkey took part on the same polar. Syria wanted to protect herself because she lost her most important ally after the collapse of the USSR and Turkey wanted to gain her strategic significance which she thought that she lost after the collapse of the USSR, in terms of the external dynamics. Of course we can add here that the prime minister of the period Turgut Özal wanted to reclaim Mosul and Kirkuk during the Persian Gulf War. As a result of their policies, Syria could protect herself for a short time with her attitude during the Persian Gulf War and normalized her relations with USA, but Turkey had a big problem: PKK.

PKK who has continued a guerilla war on Turkey since 1984 for establishing a state independent from Turkey, making use of the authority vacuum in Northern Iraq, started to build centers near the Turkish border and the post-Gulf War developments heightened the ethnic consciousness among Turkey's Kurdish citizens, especially those who live in the country's Southeastern regions. With this power which PKK gained slowly, this

organization became the most important issue of Turkey in her domestic and foreign policy.

In 1990s there was a big tension between Syria and Turkey because of Syria's sheltering Abdullah Öcalan who is the leader of PKK. So that Turkey needed an ally in the region and needed Israel's weapons plants for her battle against PKK. When the Turkey-Israel cooperation was to be investigated from Turkey side, probably the most important reason was to force Syria to stop sponsoring PKK. Turkey needed the deterrence of Israel in order to pursue a harsh politics against Syria in Hatay and water issues, in addition to the PKK issue. Also, Turkey thought of affiliation with Israel as a resolve against the possibility of Syria's acting more freely after a possible Israel-Syria peace. In addition to that, the agreements signed by Greece, Syria, Cyprus and Armenia, who were foes, and Russia's support in multi-containment policies forced Turkey to pursue affiliation with Israel.

There are several reasons for Israel to cooperate with Turkey. Any alliance with Turkey would help Israel to adapt the Middle East's political, social, intellectual and artistic culture. She could reduce the reactions that Arab states presented against her, and thus would ease her political and economic integration with West Bank and Gaza Strip. By diminishing the activity of Syria and Iraq, who felt themselves as contained by the Turkey-Israel alliance, it would be possible for the two countries to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel wanted to enter into relations with Central Asian countries especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, transcending the Middle East borders in order to increase her influence in global strategies to make her presence felt more, and wanted to make use of her alliance with Turkey that away. Also Israel felt the need of affiliating with Turkey due to ballistic missiles' becoming widespread in the region, the increase in their ranges and hit abilities, and their ability to carry chemical and nuclear war heads. Turkey and Israel alliance was important for USA for her multi-containment policy. Besides, armament of Iran disturbed the USA with respect to the order in the Gulf. So, USA wanted to balance Iran with Turkey.

The developing relations between parts came to top with MTCA. MTCA comprised of the cooperation areas such as training, information exchange on training, participation in other

parties training drills and port visits. This affiliation turned into a multi-faceted relation, not only an agreement including the security concerns, but also a relation improving in diplomatic and economic areas and envisaging cooperation in defense industry. As a proof, the Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement and FTA signed after the MTCA could be given. In April 1996, Turkish and Israeli warcrafts performed joint refueling manoeuvres in the air. These manoeuvres continued to be performed with the participation of the USA under the name of Reliant Mermaidin the Mediterranean in 1997, in the Aegean and the Marmara in 1999 and in 2001.

The timing of the MTCAs signement was interesting. We can say that Turkish viewpoint to Peace Process was two kindly. A Palestinian-Israeli Peace would make Turkey feel relieved in the region, but a Syrian-Israeli Peace would make Syria more aggressive against Turkey. So, Turkey had concerns about Israel-Syria Peace Talks. It can be said that this was an act of precaution and tactic for the Israel-Syria Peace Talks restarted in December 1995 with great expectations as well as a remedy for the PKK chagrin, a search for alternative to the West in weapons purchase, and an expectation of support from the Jewish lobby in the USA. Also, it can be said that it was thought that the agreement could be used by Israel, if necessary, as a trump card in the talks. Beginning with Tansu Çiller governments and continuing with Anayol, Welfare-Path, Anasol-D governments, there was no change in the relations of Israel and Turkey. Despite Necmettin Erbakan's anti-semitic discourse before his Prime Ministry and his opposition to the 23 February 1996 MTCA with the statement "We will unrip it and throw it", he signed the Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement in August 1996. This agreement was the second step of the military cooperation between two countries. According to the agreement, works would be started in information transfer about defense matters and in the area of exchange of technicians for training, and this principle was fulfilled.

Syria inspite of all the warnings of Turkey continued sponsoring PKK. Because of this, Turkey, with the confidence of being an ally with Israel, created a crisis in 1998 which began with the speech of General Atilla Ateş in Hatay. After that speech Syria and Turkey came to verge of war. The sessions between Egyptian President Hosni Mobarak and Minister of Foreign Affairs Amr Musa and Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, in the name of the Iranian President, brought a successful conclusion and Turkish and Syrian

committees met in Adana on 19 October 1998 and had discussed the matter for two days. In the end, the text of the Adana Agreement was disclosed on 20 October. Just before the Adana Agreement completed, Öcalan had left Syria for another place. The result obtained from the table Syrian and Turkish commitees had sat for discussing terrorism was Ankara's success. The government, the opposition, the military and the press had worked band together, been in a triple concert with the General Staff and Presidency, and the Syria policy had been supported by military resolution. As a result of this successful policy, Syria acknowleged, although covertly, on paper that she has supported PKK and promised that she would end this long lasting policy.

There is no written agreement that proves that water and Hatay problems are disappeared but there is a written document that proves terror problem is disappeared. Adana Agreement is a written document which underlines that Syria will never give support to PKK again. Infact, the other terrorist groups which Syria supported in Turkey had lost their effectiveness so that Syria stopped sponsoring them. When we look to the developments until 2009, we can say that terror problem disappeared with Adana Agreement.

Turkey and Syria relations that came to verge of war with 1998 crisis, entered to a new period with sending of Abdullah Öcalan out of country. The participation of the 10th President of Turkey, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, to the burial service of Syria's former president Hafez Al-Assad in 2000 was the first high-level relation after a very long time and this was the first step in developing relations. The relations between parts developed more in Bashar Al-Assad's reign. The relations developed slowly but stably. Turkey started to put forth the approach of removing the complications and improving the relations around these dates. In the conjuncture after 1998, it is possible to state that both the Kemalists and the pro-Islamists in Turkey wanted this convergence. When we look at the situation until 2009, we can say that the atmosphere after Second Persian Gulf War and AKP's coming to power after 2002 election and their new Middle East policy carried the relations to the top.

2000s were a landmark for both countries. The lock in Israel-Syria peace talks became a milestone for Syria. The conjuncture after 9/11 attack to USA had gone worse for Syria. Although Syria cooperated with USA against Al-Qa'ida, the criticisms of USA did not end. Neo-conservatives under Bush administration accused Syria of sponsoring the radical

Palestinian groups and Hezbollah. But Syria did not help USA in this issue, since, for Syria, Hezbollah was not at the same category as Al-Qa'ida. This situation forced Syria to reinforce her relations to some countries, by balancing. Syria continued her good relations with countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran; decided to develop relations with Jordan, the Saddam regime in Iraq and Turkey; and in order to balance the USA pressure, she tried to improve relations with the EU and this was also depending on a new liberalization strategy that would enable Syria to make a smooth and cautious entering to the World System. In this context, the Syrian elites made a critical decision on developing the relations with Turkey.

USA determination to invade Iraq was the immediate catalyst of deterioration in USA-Syria relations which enabled the Neo-cons to get the upper hand over the official moderates. Bashar Al-Assad made a conscious selection and ignored USA reaction against the arms shipment from Syria to Iraq, and she placed her chips on Iraq border as soon as she understood that the Iraqi regime would be overthrown by USA. Syria started a diplomatic campaign against USA forces and prompted Arabic support against the change of regime in Iraq.

In 1990s inspite of all the tension about PKK, Syria and Turkey had a common point: both two countries wanted territorial integrity of Iraq. Since 1990s the problem between USA and Turkey was the territorial integrity of Iraq and Turkey's rejection of founding a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. Sometimes Turkey seemed to make concession but she never wanted a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq because of her own PKK problem and went against with USA and Israel. Syria also was against a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq because of her own Kurdish problem and because she didn't want an ally of USA and Israel in the region. Also she was afraid of being the second target after Iraq. Turkey's attitude in Second Persian Gulf War and the regression in USA and Turkey's relation after the rejection of 1st March Momerandum, effected the development in the Syrian and Turkish relations.

The crisis in Iraq produced common interest threat fields for Syria and Turkey and the politics of USA against Syria caused Syria to become closer to Turkey. With the change in Syria in 2000, Bashar had a little relief in foreign relations and could develop relations

with some countries that Hafız Al-Assad stoped. Turkey is on of those countries. But in that period the international pressure on Syria was increased. So that Syria reviewed her relations with Turkey, she determined the cultural environment, and most of the Syrian elites began to underline the importance of Turkey for Syria. The Turkish foreign policy for Middle East which is shaped by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was built on the cultural and geographic resemblance of Turkey with other Middle East states which was named by some observers as the source of soft power and built on transforming these resemblances comman profits and cooperation with the help of diplomacy. He thinks that Turkey's route slipped to West extremely and that West doesn't esteem Turkey and sees her as a torn country. For him, Turkey has to find an alternative to West. Also he thinks that by this way Turkey can fill the strategic spaces in the region and so that Turkey can put out of sight the potential crisis in those spaces. Some people think that Turkey goes away from West and becomes closer to the pole that is not supporter of West. To me, this is a conscious choice. If Turkey wants to be active in Middle East, she has to leave her West supporter image and has to give Middle Eastern countries the impression of being trustworthy. So that Turkey chose to stand close to Iran-Syria-Hezbollah-HAMAS association which is not supporter of West, instead of Egypt-Saudi Arabia-Jordan association. But she doesn't turn her back on West completely. Turkey has never behaved contradictory to West except the artificial crisis with Israel which generally come up to the elections in Turkey. But because a religious origined party came to power in Turkey and because they became close to the pole that isn't supporter of West, Turkey's Western pawn image changed and Middle Eastern countries began to trust Turkey, so that Turkey eased in her attitudes in the region. In AKP policies leaning towards the Middle East this much, the hitches in the EU membership played an important role. The EU has been the major actor of political developments in Turkey since the grant of candidate status in 1999. However, the EU states took a dim view of Turkey's membership due to immigration, unemployment and enlargement factors. These problems with the EU caused AKP to lean towards the Middle East policies more and more. Of course AKP's Middle East policies are effected by USA's. USA's Great Middle East Project paved the way for AKP and with the help of this project, Turkey can act in the region more easily. In addition to this, Turkey was really less problematic with her neighbors in 2002 with the AKP government, most of the problems, which limited the operation area of Turkey in the

Middle East and which caused Turkey to approach the region with a security-oriented perspective, had disappeared. For last nine years Turkey has been intending to disappear common security problems and the fields of crisis, put forth diplomatic efforts, and tried to reduce the foreign interference to the region. She was partly successful. Turkey began to make feel her efficiency in the region as an active player. Davutoğlu put the process which he took from Ecevit to good use and improved zero problems with neighbors policy which was first put forth by Ecevit government. But while the relations with Middle East were developing, there was a decrease in the relations with West. In fact, this was a desirable thing for USA, unless they lost the thread. Because a Turkey which was appeared as an ally of Israel was useless for USA. But Davutoğlu and Erdoğan partly because of their domestic policy, partly because of their aim to be a leader in Middle East, gave very hard reactions to Israel and as a result, in Israel-Turkey relations we can observe a tension. This tension became more visible in one-minute event and the diplomatic crisis experienced after Blue Marmara.

It should be remembered that, the continuity of the mutual cooperation and solidarity which are built with the other states in the region determines the limits of the Turkey's influence and economic and political power in the region. The dynamic structure of the international system has positive and negative effects on Ahmet Davutoğlu's political theory which is based on regional cooperation and diplomacy. That dynamic structure and indefiniteness, if leaded well, can bring to light important opportunities for Turkey's foreign policy and can help Turkey to spread her power. It is a correct attitude for Turkey to make a right diplomatic contact and to be active and constructive in solution search. On the other hand, the dynamic international atmosphere and indefiniteness can raise the regional conflicts and bilateral crisis in the region, so that, Turkey's manoeuvre field can be contracted. This is the weak point of Ahmet Davutoğlu's zero problems with neighbors policy. And Kurdish problem is another weak point which contracts Turkey's manoeuvre field as we remember the developments in Iraq.

When we look at the relations of Turkey with Middle Eastern countries until 2009, Turkey's foreign policy was successful in Syria the most. The tension between Syria and Turkey was passed over in large after 1998 crisis, positive atmosphere was built, with the

visit of Ahmet Necdet Sezer both two countries laid the foundation of the good relations, and AKP managed the process and developped the relations more. Civil and military elites were also eager to develop the relations with Syria. Relations with Syria were important for Turkey, because the development of relations with Syria would be an important echelon for Turkey's relations with Arab World to develop and her power in the Middle East to increase. Also, developing good relations with Syria was an important tier of the foreign policy of Ecevit government, which was aimed at developing good relations with all regions, independently from the West. Turkish elites also began to underline that with the help of the good relations with Syria Turkey could have a more active role in the regional problems. The good relations with Syria were effective in the mediation role in Syria-Israel Peace negotiation, the constructive role played in Lebanon presidential crisis, the communication with HAMAS to be active in Israel-Palestine problem. For Turkey, with the support taken from Syria, Turkey could play an active role in solving the problems in the region. USA, although she looked like objecting the good relations between Syria and Turkey, took a bright view of Syria's relations with Turkey instead of Iran.

The continuance of the regime is the most important issue in countries like Syria. The regime shift discourse of the Bush administration posed a danger with regard to the security of the regime, especially when Bashar Al-Assad tried to secure his power. Syria followed two strategies against this danger: band-wagoning and balancing. On one hand, Syria tried to block resistants infiltrating to Iraq, in order to calm USA, and tried to retreat from Lebanon by making a call for the restart of peace talk; on the other hand, she tried to reinforce her relations with friend countries such as Iran or with countries such as Turkey, which could be a link to the West to balance the USA pressure. According to Syria, Turkey, as a country who had international ties with USA and the EU, and who had been an ally to Western powers for many years, could lend assistance to Syria in establishing constructive dialogue with these actors and in reducing the level of the tension. Syria and Turkey shared similar concerns about Iraq and Syria was encouraged with the rejection of the Memorandum on 1 March 2003, which prevented Turkey's cooperation with USA on Iraq war. Syria thought that Turkey could help Syria to make peace with Israel and be of great importance in her relations to international societies; and believed that the

developing relations would play a positive role in both countries' welfare by creating new opportunities, economically, for Syria and would be effective in preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq. Although Syria had concerns about the limits of Turkish support in case she confronted USA and the EU; the Syrian elites were very willing to develop relations with Turkey. The Pan-Arabic Ba'athist system was changed with the idea of establishing relations with the regional and international atmosphere which did not seem hospitable. The decision Turkey took on 1 March, AKP's Muslim and Arab harmony and its anti-Israel discourse changed Turkey's image in the eyes of Syria.

In a period, in which the pressure about Lebanon was very intense, in December 2004, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a two-day visit to Syria. The claims that Syria was behind the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, increased the USA pressure on Syria to its highest level. At that moment, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's visit to Syria was criticized by USA and the EU. Turkey's support to Syria in 2004 and 2005 played an important role in changing the Syrian policies against Turkey, and created sympathy among Syrian people. This visit put forth the irreconcilableness of Turkish and American policies concerning Syria. USA acknowledged the Turkish-Syrian convergence, which she had criticized for some time, and leaned towards making use of this convergence for her own interests. Ahmet Davutoğlu's visit to Syria during July 2006 Lebanon crisis and his meeting in Lebanon to prevent the crisis from deepening, upon USA's request was an example of USA's using Turkey as an echelon in Syria relations.

When we look at the reletions with Israel we can say that these harmonious relations were for the benefit of Turkey in her mediation between Syria and Israel. According to some observers, Turkey had been preparing for this role since 2004. Turkey's role as a mediator started with Israel's acceptance in March 2007. Turkey's influence on Syria was seen in 2005-2006 Lebanon incidents, and the possibility the peace talks between Syria and Israel to start under the mediation of Turkey emerged. Both parties' accepting Turkish mediation proved the improvement of Turkey in regional politics, and also the mediation initiative should be interpreted as efforts of USA and Israel to solve problems with Syria making use of their influence on Turkey. Nevertheless, the talks were distrupted in January 2008

because the harshest reaction to the Operation Cast Lead on 27 December 2008 came from Erdoğan. Although the negotiations have stopped, Turkey's playing the mediator role between Syria and Israel is one of the most important evidences for the development in the relations of two countries who came on the verge of war in 1998.

When we look at the developments since 1990s to 2009, we can see that Adana Agreement was a milestone in Syria and Turkey relations. After the problem of Abdullah Öcalan solved, two states became closer slowly. As we mentioned before, Turkey and Syria relations became to develop with occupation of Iraq, Lebanon crisis and USA pressure, the dialogue period redounded, and two countries became to the level of High Level Strategic Cooperation. The AKP government which had built its relations with the neighbors on the slogan zero-problems with neighbors, started to carry the relations with Arab states beyond zero-problem after Ahmet Davutoğlu's assignment as Minister of Foreign Affairs. If we look at the developments until 2009, the improvements in relations with Syria were the best indicators of this situation. The High Level Strategic Cooperation Council Agreement and both parties' citizens to have the right to travel free from visas, limited to 90 days, were important developments for both near periphery countries and the Middle East in general. After the Turkey-Syria Border Units Exchange Manoeuvre organized on 27-29 April 2009 for the first time, in-depth joint security and defense manoeuvres were anticipated between the Land Forces of two countries. Israel's removing from the Anatolian Eagle Exercise at the last moment is remarkable. We can say that there was a regression in Israel-Turkey relations, while there was a deepening in Syria-Turkey relations. It was thought that this was caused from the Gaze attacks.

When we look at the situation in 2009, we can see that inspite of all the good relations and common interests between Syria and Turkey, there is no written document which proves that Hatay and water problems were solved. So that, it was uncertain if this problems would appear again or not. In addition to that, although the mutual mistrust groundwork between the states which comes from Ottoman Empire reign tried to be overcome, it is a wound that is ready to bleed. Also Syria's general politics which is to support terrorist groups in countries hasn't changed. So that, if she would give support to PKK or another terrorist group in Turkey, in the event that her interests are contradictory with Turkey, is a

big question mark. The point that is come in 2009, is a good point in relations of course, but the mistrust between parts is a big problem and two states have to put the international dynamics to good use and have to lead their relations conveniently and have to find permanent solutions to the other problems, to continue good relations. Also when we look at the recent developments between two countries since the second part of 2011, we can say that these good relations can't be continued and the mistrust groundwork can't be overpassed.

Our study's subject is the Turkey-Syria relations after Cold War to 2009. But recently new events occurred in Middle East. Turkish-Syrian relations also effected from those events. So we want to touch those events briefly and their effects on Turkey-Syria relations.

While the good relations between Syria and Turkey continue, the civil commotions and protests which started in Tunisia and Egypt are spread over all the Arabic states. Those civil commotions and confusions started in Syria in 15 March 2010. (Zaman Dış Haberler, 2011) When Syrian army interfered with the civil commotions in Deraa in April, the confusion in the region increased. In the demonstrations the demonstrators shout slogans against Hezbollah and Iran in adition to the freedom and reform slogans and to the view of sectarians, the demonstrators are against Shi'ism. The reactions of demonstrators which is against Shi'ism incerased when Iran and Hezbollah explained that they are supporting Syrian administration, but the same slogans were heard in the Deraa demonstrations which is made in March. (Atlıoğlu, 2011) The opposing groups can be analysed in three banners. The first one is the Muslim Brethren which is supported by Sunni Arabs. The second is the El-Parti which is a Kurdish party leaded by Dr. Abdulhekim Beşar, Kurdish Democracy Development Party leaded by Hamid Derveş and Kurdish Equality Party leaded by Aziz Davut. It is said that those Kurdish groups are supported by Northern Iraq. And the last one is the young people who want democracy, job and freedom. (Semin, 2011) But the slogans against Hezbollah and Shi'ism which take aim at Alawite administration are redolent that those demonstrations are against the Al-Assad administration and that those groups are mostly constituted of Sunnite Arabs.

The demonstrators want to abrogate the state of emergency, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the other government foundations to be civilian, to redefine the security units' mission fields, to configure lagislation executive jurisdication, to make jurisdication independent, individual rights to be defined. Also they want Syrian administration to make changes in the laws of opposition political parties and the effect of Ba'ath party to be restricted. On the other hand if Syria did those reforms, that would mean the change in order which has been continuing for years. Recently Syrian administration neither has got ahead in reforms, nor has stopped the influence on society. (Semin, 2011) For the regimes like in Syria, to produce afraid and influence on society is the most important necessity for continuity of the regime. If Bashar Al-Assad makes those reforms, his administration would be limited. This situation could danger the existance and future of Al-Assad administration. So that Bashar Al-Assad doesn't want to make those reforms.

Turkey comprehended lately the seriousness of those demonstrations in Arab world and Turkey had a paradox for how to act against those demonstrations. Those paradox appeared firstly for Libya. At the begining of the demonstrations Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan explained that Turkey was against for a foreign interference to Libya but after a while, he decided to support the decision of NATO to bomb Libya. Whereat Turkey couldn't lead diplomacy which is her most important point of her foreign policy and her reliability was wounded. As a result of that, Turkey started to act in allience with the big powers in international system and shelved her own perceptions and her own political strategies. The change in Turkey's political manner gave harm to her image of being an independent and effective actor in the region, and caused to turn back to her image of acting in the region as a piece of foreign power's policies.(Atlıoğlu, 2011)

Syria is another state that we can see Turkey's uneasiness and inconsistency against the demonstrations in Arab world. While the demonstrations continue in Egypt, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan joined a opening ceremony named Turkey-Syria Friendship Dam in Idlib, and gave sincere pictures with his colleague Muhammed Naci Otri. This situation was commented by some people as if there were a situation that would danger the security of Syria, Turkey would give support to Syria and this was welcomed as natural because Syria was very important for Turkey's security. Nevertheless, when the demonstrations first started in March, Turkey avoided from giving an instant reaction but after a while she

tried to work for giving countenance to reforms. The occurences in Syria came up to the elections in Turkey, so Turkey couldn't focus on the situation in Syria. In addition to that, the Syrian members of Muslum Brethren made a press release in Turkey with the help of some non-governmental organisations and that gave a big harm to the confidence between two states. (*ibid)* Because of that, the speculation that Ankara sought to push Al-Assad to reach an accommodation with the Brethren began to rise. Turkey was trying to extend her mediation role into the domestic Syrian arena, but Al-Assad wasn't accepting. The Syrian ambassador of Turkey publicly critisized Erdoğan, stressing that true friendship meaned unconditional support. He added, "For us, the Muslim Brethern is like the PKK is for Turkey". (Bardan, 16 August 2011) In adition to those, after the opponent groups in Syria explained that they organized a meeting in Antalya, some semiofficial newspapers and the Syria supporter groups is Lebanon began to write articles which critisized Turkey. On the first days of June, 120 security officier were killed in Cisr eş-Şugur which is situated at the northern part of Syria, and the masses of people began to immigrate to Turkey. In a very short time more than 10000 people passed to Turkey from Hatay borderline. As a result of that, Turkey had to be included in the occurances in Syria. (Atlıoğlu, 2011)

Turkey hardened her language to Syria day by day. Turkish President Abdullah Gül critisized Syria's behaviour harshall towards civilians throughout Ramadan, and invited Syria to stop the violence and he added that Turkey couldn't be quiet against that violence. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2011) Also Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan said that the Turkey's patience comed to an end and he sent Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu to Syria to send the messages from Turkey. In return, Syrian President's Chief Advisor Buseyna Şaban said that Davutoğlu would take a more stable answer about the Turkish manner that didn't condemn the murders of the civilians and the soldiers. (Zaman Dış Haberler, 07 August 2011) Before Davutoğlu went to Damascus USA Foreign Minister Hillary Clinton telephoned to Davutoğlu and wanted him to send their messages. (Salam News, 9 August 2011) Even though, Davutoğlu underlined that they conveyed only Turkey's messages upon his return from Damascus, Turkish opposition leaders joined with the Iranian and Syrian media in criticizing the AKP government for supposedly following USA, European, and Israeli marching orders. (Weitz, 15 August 2011) We can never know which is true but it is visible that Turkey acted in Syrian politics in cooperation with USA. Also, in the negotiations some diplomatic crisis were lived. Davutoğlu was welcomed by

not his collegue Velid Muallim but his advisor Abdülfettah Ammura. This showed the uneasiness of Syria. In addition to that Syria started an operation in the Biniş village which is near Turkey. This was also commented as an answer of Syria to Turkey. (Haber 365 Gündem, 9 August, 2011)

Turkey's policies toward Syria are also threatening Turkey's improved relations with Iran. Most of the Iranians have been denouncing Turkey's policy toward Syria. For Turkey the Syrian protests are movements that want engagement and reforms from the regime, and they can stop only if regime gives them what they wanted. On the other hand, for Iran and Al-Assad the protests are a product of Western or Israeli scheming. According to the reported sources, Iran has delivered $5 billion in emergency aid to shore up the Al-Assad regime. Also there are rumours that Syria's military is being coached by the Iranians. (Karon, 15 August 2011)

Turkey and Iran are Syria's most important foreign allies, but they have very different relationships with Syria. Tehran is a long-established strategic ally, while Ankara is an ally which is based on trade and investment that is critical for Syria. Turkey didn't join to USA strategy of isolating and pressuring Iran over its nuclear program, but on the other hand Tehran and Ankara are also rivals for influence in the Middle East. (*ibid*) Both Iranian and Turkish leaders want stability in Syria, but they disagree about the method. Turkish leaders see the disorders as resulting from mass discontent with Syrian government policies and believe that the Al-Assad regime could stabilize the situation through reforms. On the other hand, Iranian leaders think the protests are foreign instigation and she doesn't want a USA-European-Saudi-Israeli attempt to overthrow the Al-Assad regime. Iran believes that the Syrian government must forcefully suppress the protests. Turkey doesn't call for Al-Assad's overthrow and keeps lines of communication open with him, but also she is developing ties with opposition groups. (Weitz, 15 August 2011)

The demise of the Al-Assad reign may open a new avenue for the Sunni Turkish Islamic AKP. The Middle East historically has five power centers. These are three Arab countries Egypt, Syria, and Iraq and two non-Arab countries Iran and Turkey. Since Syria undergoes a meltdown, and Egypt and Iraq are very weak, the remaining two non-Arab centers would have to compete. (Cohen, 7 August 2011) But in my opinion Turkey and Iran won't want

to be in against poles. First of all they have increased the trade with eachother. This increase is seen mostly in the period that USA's efforts to isolate Iran's economy is seen. And if Al-Assad regime will be seemed like to collapse, Iran can abondon Al-Assad and can begin her relations with successor regime in Syria. Syria is very important for Iran in her Middle East policies and if Syrian support disappeared, Iran can try to fill the blanks left from Syria with Turkey in the region. Also there is a Muslim Brethren problem between Syria and Iran. If Sunni and anti-Shi'ite Muslim Brethren comes to power in Syria, Iran would have to have a close friend in the region. So this tension between Turkey and Iran would change in return to the developments in Syria.

USA President Barack Obama's main policy in Middle East is to reduce the USA enemity in the Middle East, engage Iran and Syria, and start a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. He seemed to have decided early in his administration that Turkey would be the USA's primary gateway to the Middle East. (Bardan, 16 August 2011) We can give the TBMM speech of Obama in April 2009 which subjected Turkey's place in Middle East Peace and crisizing terror and Iran. Also he was saying clearly that he visited Turkey to give a massage to world. (Hürriyet, 7 April 2009) He seemed to think that Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would be the leader who could help him. Ahmet Davutoğlu's "zero problems with neighbors" foreign policy seemed to dovetail perfectly with Obama's strategy. This policy centered on Turkey's increasing leadership role across the region, improving her relations with Iran and Syria, and mediating Arab-Israeli peace talks, which is mentioned before. Also Erdoğan's close personal relationship with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad was seen as an opportunity by Obama. He thought that Turkey could reduce the Iran's influence in the region by pulling Syria away from Iran and by starting the Arab-Israeli peace process. But in my opinion Erdoğan and Davutoğlu began to act as independent regional leader and an alternative to USA's policies. This policy was also seen in Syria problem. In the begining Turkey was silent to the Al-Assad's acts against the demonstrations, different from USA. After a while Turkey began to call Al-Assad to make reforms although USA wanted him to go. But his efforts largely failed. Rather than reform, as Turkey wanted him to do, Bashar Al-Assad became increasingly violent, laying bare the limits of Turkish power and the problems with Obama's dependence on her. Yet Al-Assad did not reform, and the Syrian military became ever more emboldened. (Bardan, 16 August 2011)

In the public opinion, Syria's disintegration is mentioned greatly. If Syria disintegrates there will be very important results in Middle East. Because Syria has a strategic importance for Arab world and Middle East. She is neighbour with Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq and Jordan. So that, a disintegrated Syria can change the balances in the region. A disintegrated Syria will be controled by whom is a big question for all of those neighbours. In addition to that Syria has a key role in solving most of the problems in Middle East. The other Middle East countries give importance to the manner of Syria in Israel-Palestine problem and the domestic problems of Palestine. Syria has a big influence on Hezbollah in Lebanon. The manner of new government about this situation is very important for the future of Lebanon. In addition to that, the involution in Syria can effect Israel-Syria Peace process badly. (Yıldızoğlu, 1 August 2011)

If Syria who is the key of Turkey for her Middle East policy, disintegrates or later on other political actors penetrate Syria, Turkey will be the most effected country. First of all, the slogans show us that Muslim Brethern has a big role in the demonstrations. If the demonstartions don't stop Muslim Brethren which doesn't countenance the temperate Muslim policies of AKP, and the other Islamist groups can take courage. This would be a difficulty for Turkey's foreign policy. Because Turkey's mission is to cause Arab states to take pains over temparate Islam and democracy and in that policy, Syria is the key for Turkey in her relations with other Arab states. A disconnection with Syria would be a disconnection with others. Also an Islamic power in Syria can give countenance to the radical Islamist groups in Turkey and that would be a danger for Turkey's domestic policy. In addition to that, Turkey has a long border with Syria and if Syria disintegrates, two things will have a vital importance for Turkey; Syria will be controlled by whom and Syria's new controllers' manners. If new regimes appear in Syria and this new regime becomes united with the de facto government in Northern Iraq, a new political geography which starts with Iraq and continues from Turkey's South until the Medeterranean can appear. This redounds Turkey's worries much. Turkey has a big weakness for her foreign policy and security: Kurdish problem. Syria's possible new regime's view about an independent Kurdish state and the Kurdish problem has a vital importance for Turkey. The Al-Assad administration is against an independent Kurdish state and this is a groundwork for the relations. A positive manner of possible new regime to Kurdish state can limit Turkey's relations with Syria.

The zero- problem foreign policy aimed to bring Turkey strategic depth through improved ties with regional governments. But there is a weakness in that policy: In undemocratic states like Syria, a bit because of the structure of the domineering regime and a bit because of the Davutoğlu's and Erdoğan's wrong policy, Ankara was expanding her relationships with the brutual regime, but not with people. But from now on, Turkey must not only take into account her relationships with dictators, but also the popular uprisings that challenge these rulers. Otherwise, Turkey can lose her influence. If Turkey loses her influence on Syria, this will mean that Ahmet Davutoğlu's zero problem with neighbours policy lost its effect and will show that Turkey is dragged from a zero problem to many problems. In addition to that, if there is a disintegration or civil war, this will mean that Turkey's foreign policy collapsed. A Syria which is out of Al-Assad administration can be a big danger for Anatolia and East Mediterranean. A sectarian rooted civil war can trigger the sectarian conflicts of this kind in Turkey. In addition to those, if those demonstrations continue Turkey can encounter with refugee problem coming from Syria border. Turkey-Syria border which is a center of friendship, cooperation and trade can be a conflict area of PKK and the other terrorist organizations. The Kurdish opponents in Syria can align with the Kurdish opponents in Turkey and can unit under KCK. So that Turkey should take precautions in her Southerneast border. We can say that Syria with the developments in her relations with Turkey and Iran became a quiet power in the region. But if the possible new regime will be desirable to continue this relations is a question mark. If there is an event occurs in Turkey-Syria-Iran area, can effect all the region. So that, Turkey should be careful about Syria, and should have active role in the solving period, so that she can turn events in her favour. In addition to that, the events in Syria redound the importance of Turkey for the West. Turkey's manner is very important for them like it was in Iraq's occupation. So that Turkey should put her cards in good use, and turn the evebts in Syria in favour of her. She has this possibility.

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