PERMANENT NEUTRALITY POLICY OF TURKMENISTAN:

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF

TURKMENBASHI AND BERDIMUHAMMEDOV ERAS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES OF

MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

GÖZDE DEMİREL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN

THE DEPARTMENT OF EURASIAN STUDIES

JANUARY 2019

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Tülin Gençöz
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ayşegül Aydıngün (METU, SOC)

Prof. Dr. Pınar Köksal (METU, ADM)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yuliya Biletska (Karabük Uni., ULS)

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Gözde DEMİREL

Signature:

ABSTRACT

PERMANENT NEUTRALITY POLICY OF TURKMENISTAN:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
TURKMENBASHI AND BERDIMUHAMMEDOV ERAS

DEMİREL, Gözde
M. Sc., Department of Eurasian Studies
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Pınar KÖKSAL

January 2019, 125 pages

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan, during the periods of the first and second presidents of the country (Saparmurad Niyazov Turkmenbashi, 1985-2006 and Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov, 2006-present) in a comparative way by using Efraim Karsh's neutrality model. In 1991, five Central Asian countries declared independence and seceded from the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that all of these states had more or less similar political and legal conditions back then, after 27 years they all ended up very differently. Among the five Central Asian countries, only Turkmenistan adopted this policy. Turkmenistan's neutral status has played an important role in establishing cooperation with many states in the political, economic, humanitarian and other spheres, and in implementing a multilateral foreign policy strategy. This thesis, by providing a comparative analysis of how permanent neutrality is implemented in the country looks at the regional dynamics and conflicts that shaped the foreign policy options as well as responses of the two presidents. To do this, first a general background information on Turkmenistan as well as the history of this country is given. This is followed by the post-Soviet era developments that resulted in the adoption of permanent neutrality in the

periods of the two presidents of Turkmenistan. The primary methodological tool of the work was qualitative analysis utilizing primary and secondary sources in Turkmen, Russian, English and Turkish on the topic, including academic books, articles, newspapers, magazines and relevant official websites were used.

Keywords: Turkmenistan, Foreign Policy, Permanent Neutrality, Turkmenbashi, Berdimuhammedov.

ÖZ

TÜRKMENİSTAN'DA DAİMİ TARAFSIZLIK POLİTİKASI:
TÜRKMENBAŞI VE BERDİMUHAMMEDOV DÖNEMLERİNİN
KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZİ

DEMİREL, Gözde
Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları Programı
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Pınar KÖKSAL

Ocak 2019, 125 sayfa

Bu tezin amacı, Türkmenistan'ın birinci ve ikinci devlet başkanları döneminde (Saparmurat Niyazov Türkmenbaşı, 1985-2006 ve Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov 2006'dan bu yana) uygulanan daimi tarafsızlık politikasını Efraim Karsh'ın tarafsızlık modelini kullanarak karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemektir. 1991 yılında, beş Orta Asya ülkesi bağımsızlığını ilan etti ve Sovyetler Birliği'nden ayrıldı. Bu devletlerin hepsinin aşağı yukarı benzer siyasi ve yasal koşullara sahip olmasına rağmen, 27 yıl sonra hepsi çok farklı bir şekilde sonuçlandı. Beş Orta Asya ülkesinden yalnızca Türkmenistan bu politikayı benimsemiştir. Türkmenistan'ın tarafsız statüsü, siyasi, ekonomik, insani ve diğer alanlarda birçok devletle işbirliğinin kurulmasında ve çok taraflı bir dış politika stratejisinin uygulanmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Daimi tarafsızlığın ülkede nasıl uygulandığının karşılaştırmalı bir analizini sunan bu tez, iki devlet başkanının dış politika seçeneklerini ve tepkilerini şekillendiren bölgesel dinamikleri ve çatışmaları gözden geçirmektedir. Bunu yapmak için öncelikle Türkmenistan ve ülkenin tarihi hakkında genel bir bilgi verilir. Bunu, Türkmenistan'ın iki cumhurbaşkanının dönemlerinde kalıcı tarafsızlığın benimsemesiyle sonuçlanan Sovyet sonrası dönemdeki gelişmeler izliyor. Türkmence, Rusça, İngilizce ve Türkçe basılmış olan kitaplar,

makaleler ve gazetelerin yanı sıra ilgili resmi internet sitelerinden de yararlanılan bu çalışmada kullanılan temel yöntem nicel analizdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkmenistan, Dış Politika, Daimi Tarafsızlık, Türkmenbaşı, Berdimuhammedov.

İSTANBUL ŞEHİR ÜNİVERSİTESİ

To My Family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Pınar KÖKSAL, for her guidance, patience and endless encouragement. Her stimulating questions and insightful comments have been an inspiration to me throughout my research. I also take immense pleasure in thanking the members of my thesis committee, Prof. Dr. Ayşegül AYDINGÜN and Assist. Prof. Dr. Yuliya BILETSKA for their invaluable advice and support.

I am highly indebted to all of the members at the Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA) for generously sharing their knowledge with me and encouraging my professional growth.

Last but not least, words are inadequate to express my gratitude to my parents, Mustafa and Aysun Demirel, and my brother, Aykut Demirel, who have had such great faith in me. They have always accompanied me on my journey of life with their heartfelt support, even if this process is arduous at times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM iii

ABSTRACT iv

ÖZ……...vi

DEDICATION vii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ix

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xii

LIST OF FIGURES xiii

CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION 1

1.2. The Concept of Neutrality and Its Two Main Types 4

1.2.1. Temporary Neutrality 7

1.2.2. Permanent Neutrality 8

1.3. Analytical Framework of the Thesis 11

1.4. Outline of the Thesis 14

1.5. Methodology of the Thesis 15

2. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TURKMENISTAN & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 16

2.1. General Information about Turkmenistan 16

2.2. The State Symbols of Turkmenistan: Flag and Emblem 20

2.3. Historical Background 22

2.3.1. Pre-Soviet Era 22

2.3.2. Soviet Era 27

2.3.3. Post-Soviet Era 31

2.4. Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan: Permanent Neutrality 32

2.4.1. The Constitutional Law on Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan35

3. THE PERIOD OF SAPARMURAT NIYAZOV TURKMENBASHI AND THE REGIONAL DYNAMICS 40

3.1. Development of and Contribution of the Policy of Permanent Neutrality for Turkmenistan 43

3.2. The Tajik Civil War 46

3.3. The Rise of Taliban 52

3.4. The Involvement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ..58

3.5. The Foundation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) 62

4. THE PERIOD OF GURBANGULY BERDIMUHAMMEDOV AND THE REGIONAL DYNAMICS 66

4.1. Turkmenistan's Changing Relations with International Organizations .71

4.1.1. Relations with the UN.....71

4.1.2. Relations with NATO 73

4.1.3. Relations with the SCO 75

4.2. Turkmenistan's Bilateral Relations with Regional Countries 78

5. CONCLUSION.....90

REFERENCES.....96

APPENDICES 113

A. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW OF TURKMENISTAN ON PERMANENT NEUTRALITY OF TURKMENISTAN 113

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET 116

C. TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM 125

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHS	Council of Heads of State - Highest Decision Body in SCO
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPT	Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan
ECO	Organization for Economic Cooperation
EU	European Union
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PfP	Partnership for Peace program
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TSSR	Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UTO	United Tajik Opposition
WTO	World Trade Organization

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Turkmenistan……15

Figure 2. Flag of Turkmenistan……19

Figure 3. Emblemb of Turkmenistan...……20

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan during the periods of the first and second presidents of the country in a comparative way by using Efraim Karsh's neutrality model. This policy is a unique example among the Central Asian countries of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The first president of Turkmenistan was Saparmurat Niyazov Turkmenbashi (1985-2006) and the second president of the country is Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov (since 2006) who is called *Arkadağ* (supporter).

In 1991, five Central Asian countries declared independence and seceded from the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that all of these states had more or less similar political and legal conditions back then, after 27 years they all ended up very differently. For example, Kazakhstan believes that Central Asian countries should develop cooperation with other countries, and in this context, it wants to be the leading power in the region.[1] In January 2018, the United Nations chose the country as the Security Council chairman. With this new responsibility Kazakhstan got a chance to bring the issues related to the Central Asian countries to the agenda of the United Nations. Uzbekistan has also pursued a similar policy. The country, after President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's coming to power in 2016, has been increasing its interaction with neighboring countries, especially the ones in Central Asia.[2] When we look at Tajikistan's foreign policy its seems that this country wants to enter into good relations with the European countries such as

[1] Kazakh Expert Weighs in on Central Asia's Top 10 Foreign Policy Events in 2018. (2018, February 1). *KABAR*. Retrieved March 21, 2018, from http://kabar.kg/eng/news/kazakh-expert-weighs-in-on-central-asias-top-10-foreign-policy-events-in-2019/.

[2] Zakirov, I., & Nevskaya, Y. (2017, September 18). Uzbekistan's New Foreign Policy Doctrine. *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*. Retrieved March 29, 2018, from https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13470-uzbekistans-new-foreign-policy-doctrine.html.

Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK) and Spain as well as its Central Asian neighbors.[3] Finally, when we look at the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan, we observe that it also wants to have good economic and social relations with the West in addition to Russia and other Central Asian countries.[4]

In this framework, Turkmenistan is an exception with its permanent neutrality policy, the main topic of the study. As is sometimes suggested, Turkmenistan has remained the most isolated country in the region for the last two decades due to its foreign policy. Turkmenistan's neutral status has played an important role in establishing cooperation with many states in the political, economic, humanitarian and other spheres, and in implementing a multilateral foreign policy strategy. All the activities of this strategically located country, are given as examples of a firm and consistent adherence to the postulates laid down in the philosophy of neutrality itself, such as non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and active assistance to peace processes.[5]

Turkmenistan's neutral status continues to be a focus of interest. For example, on March 5, 2015, the Embassy of Turkmenistan in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan together with the Institute for Peace Studies and the Pakistani Society of Civilizations, held the international scientific and practical conference entitled "Policy of Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan". At the beginning of the conference, the keynote address was delivered by Sapar Berdiniyazov, the Ambassador for Special Assignments of the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan. In his speech, he described in detail the basic principles of Turkmenistan's neutrality, and the implementation of major international projects aimed at

[3] Концепция внешней политики Республики Таджикистан. (Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan). (2015, January 27). Retrieved March 13, 2018, from http://tajemb.kiev.ua/kontseptsiya-vneshnej-politiki-respubliki-tadzhikistan/.

[4] Концепция внешней политики КР. (The concept of foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic). (2007, January 10). Retrieved March 13, 2018, from http://mfa-osh.kg/pravovayabase/1065-koncepciya-vneshney-politiki-kr.html#.WtH55IhuaUl.

[5] Karsh, E. (2011): 22-23. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

strengthening peace, cooperation, and stability in the region.[6] During the academic session, Muhammed Murat Aydogdyev, the rector of the International University for the Humanities and Development of Turkmenistan spoke about the international aspects of Turkmenistan's neutrality, which contributed to the strengthening of country's image and power in the international arena.[7] As such, the permanent neutrality status of Turkmenistan was portrayed as an important milestone not only for Turkmenistan but also for the entire world.

As of 2018, the country celebrates the 23rd anniversary of neutrality. On December 12, 1995 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the resolution on "Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan" at its 50th Anniversary Session.[8] The most important reason for giving this status to Turkmenistan by the United Nations (UN) was the desire to provide peace in this region which had a strategic geopolitical location.[9] It was also important for the UN that this newly independent country (which was rich in natural resources) has such a status to be able to take its place on national and international platforms without any outside intervention.[10] Neutral status of Turkmenistan enabled the country to find an effective way to realize its national interests as an independent subject of the international community. The model of Turkmen neutrality has been an important factor in ensuring regional stability. The historical choice on foreign policy in

---

[6] В Исламабаде состоялась Международная научно-практическая конференция: Политика постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана. (International Scientific and Practical Conference "Policy of Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan"). (2015, March 15). Retrieved February 24, 2018, from https://frankfurt.tmconsulate.gov.tm/ru/news/361.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan. (1995). *United Nations Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly.* Retrieved February 1, 2018, from http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/50/a50r080.htm.

[9] Zabortseva, Y. N. (2012): 170. From the "Forgotten Region" to the "Great Game" Region: On the Development of Geopolitics in Central Asia. *Journal of Eurasian Studies, 3* (2), 168-176. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2012.03.007.

[10] Dzardanova, S. (2015). Turkmenistan: Positive About Being Positively Neutral. *The Puls Research and Consulting,* (7). Retrieved May 16, 2018, from https://pulsofcentralasia.org/2015/03/31/turkmenistan-positive-about-being-positively-neutral-by-svetlana-dzardanova/.

many respects influenced the post-Soviet development of the county. This unique international legal status has become the foundation not only of the successful implementation of large-scale transformational state programs and socio-economic reforms, but also of the strengthening of world peace and security, as well as the expansion of cooperation with several countries and reputable international organizations.[11] Thus, neutrality, which played a significant role in establishing a widespread and fruitful cooperation in the political, economic, cultural, scientific, educational and other spheres, was recognized not only as being of great national value but also as an indisputable asset to all regional countries.

Taking into account all of these points, the main questions which this thesis tries to address are the following: What reasons forced the country to adopt permanent neutrality? By whom and why was this policy recognized? What are the similarities and differences in terms of the actual implementation of this policy under the two presidents of the country when the regional dynamics and conflicts are taken as the basic criteria of comparison?

1.2. The Concept of Neutrality and Its Two Main Types

The term neutrality is evaluated mostly in the form of a legal status and a concept of international law, to designate those states that are "ally free", that is, of equal distance to all countries.[12] While the traditional approach usually required the eruption of a war to declare a country as neutral, in current international politics the term is also assessed in the context of states adopting neutrality at peacetime.[13]

---

[11] Fifteen Years of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Brought Steady Realization of Nation's Aspiration to Become Force for Progress, Says Secretary-General. (2010, December 13). Retrieved March 22, 2018, from http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sgsm13316.doc.htm.

[12] Delupis, I. D. (2000): 169. *The Law of War*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

[13] Leonhard, A. T. (1988): 1. *Neutrality: Changing Concepts and Practices.* (N. Mercuro, Ed.). New York: University Press of America.

Having gained the status of a neutral state, a country is assumed to have a number of obligations, in particular, non-accession to political, economic, military alliances and blocs, renunciation of weapons of mass destruction, adherence to universal values, ensuring stability inside the country, having equal relations with all states of the world and developing close cooperation with humanitarian international organizations.[14]

According to Paul Seger, the status of neutrality comes from a desire to define the rights not only of non-participants in a war but also of belligerents. That is, the status of neutrality does not apply only to the impartial country but also to others. In other words, it is necessary for non-neutral countries to be aware of this policy and to acknowledge the rules of the neutral countries. Therefore, only if the countries respect each other's policies and rules, the impartiality (or neutrality) policy can proceed successfully.[15]

Neutrality is not related to the preference of states in economic or ideological terms. While a neutral state can be the member of the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the state which declared itself as neutral cannot be the member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Since organizations such as NATO correspond to military/strategic preferences, the member states belonging to these kinds of organizations automatically become "aligned".[16]

When we take a brief look at the concept of neutrality in terms of how it first came into being, it is possible to suggest that neutrality, and therefore, the neutral

---

[14] Karsh, E. (2011): 21. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[15] Seger, P. (2014): 251. The Law of Neutrality (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[16] Yalçıner, S. (2007): 9. *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Tarafsızlık, Daimî Tarafsızlık ve İsviçre Örneği. (Neutrality in International Relations, Permanent Neutrality, and Swiss Example).* Isparta: Süleyman Demirel University.

state in principle had emerged from the requirements of balance of Europe in the 19th century.[17] To explain this balance, Efraim Karsh distinguishes between two kinds of states as follows:

> The first kind of states is the big state who maintains the existing balance system and to prevent the exacerbation of existing disputes that could lead to war and the second kind of state is the small one who wants to stay away from a war that will cause tension between great states. When we look at this point the neutrality was the most suitable policy or the statue of the time for both the big and the small countries.[18]

In this sense for example, when the Belgian case is considered, it appears that the competition between the great powers paved Belgium's choice of neutrality. After the establishment of the kingdom of Belgium in 1831, the country was declared as neutral with the joint decision of five European countries of the UK, Austria, Russia, Prussia and France. The fact that Belgium was located on the international road connecting the Rhine Valley with Paris to Northern Europe (that is, the center of the West's most industrialized, densely populated and wealthy region) greatly increased the importance of the country for the big states.[19]

In addition to small states, the 1941 neutrality treaty between the Soviet Union and Japan can be given as an example of big states which become neutral according to Karsh's classification. During the Second World War, both of these countries wanted to feel safe against each other as well as other countries such as Germany and China. The Soviet Union felt more and more threatened by Germany despite the non-aggression pact it had signed with this country. As for

---

[17] Seger, P. (2014): 249. The Law of Neutrality (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[18] Karsh, E. (2011): 154. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[19] Hafner, G. (1992): 166. The Impact of Developments in the East European 'Socialist' States on Austria's Neutrality. *The European Neutrals in the 1990s: New Challenges and Opportunities.*San Francisco: Westview Press.

Japan, it was at war with China and its relations with the United States were becoming more strained.

The term neutrality has two main types: temporary and permanent. These types may have many different aspects such as international, economic, social and commercial. However, this thesis looks at the neutrality policy of Turkmenistan in terms of international relations and international politics. In the next part of the chapter the distinction between the two main types of neutrality is made.

1.2.1. Temporary Neutrality

According to Paul Seger, temporary neutrality is one kind of foreign policy that a state has chooses and declares by its own will in the event of a war, reserving the right to change it.[20] As can be understood from this definition, temporary neutrality depends on a possible war scenario. The state, when/while adopting this foreign policy strategy, may declare its impartiality by means of some agreements made during peacetime, as well as by declaring its impartiality to states that are in war, during wartime.[21] This type of neutrality includes certain rules for the country which is not participating in any kind of war or not giving any economic or military aid or support to the countries which are involved in war. However, even if temporary neutrality is declared during the war based on the will of a state, this state can then join the war by leaving its neutral status with a unilateral declaration.[22] This policy may be used for a period of time or indefinitely and may not include any rights or obligations for other states in peace

[20] Seger, P. (2014): 251. The Law of Neutrality (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[21] Arı, T. (2011): 229-230. *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Dış Politika*. (*International Relations and Foreign Policy*). Bursa: MKM Yayınları.

[22] Seger, P. (2014): 252. The Law of Neutrality (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

time.[23] Of course, the countries which have neutrality status are subject to various rules and restrictions but it does not mean that countries that do not have neutrality status can act without any restrictions. According to Ingrid Delupis, while neutral countries are in a position to stay away from all conflicts regardless of their ability to provide military or economic assistance, the belligerents have to be careful not to interfere in the territory of neutral countries and not to violate their rights.[24]

The attitudes of the Netherlands during the First World War and the attitudes of Ireland and Switzerland during the Second World War would be good examples to this type of neutrality. After the Second World War, the changing situation in both the general structure of the international system (bi-polar) and the content of the concept of war (nuclear) had a negative impact on the freedom of choosing temporary neutrality.[25] So, in the new world order, it seems as if the line between peace and war gets blurred and avoiding war with a simple self-declaration of temporary neutrality has become only an optimistic idea. The scarcity of natural resources such as water, has led many countries to pursue their own interests. In addition to the threat of depletion of natural resources other tensions like cultural and religious conflicts make temporary neutrality not a very effective way of staying away from potential wars.

1.2.2. Permanent Neutrality

The second type of neutrality that is significantly different from the first type is permanent neutrality. Efraim Karsh describes permanent neutrality from a foreign policy perspective as follows:

---

[23] Yalçıner, S. (2007): 12. *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Tarafsızlık, Daimî Tarafsızlık ve İsviçre Örneği. (Neutrality in International Relations, Permanent Neutrality, and Swiss Example).* Isparta: Süleyman Demirel University.

[24] Delupis, I. D. (2000): 170-171. *The Law of War*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

[25] Ibid., 176.

> Permanent neutrality may be defined as a policy of consistent non-alignment in peacetime, overtly aimed at preparing the ground for neutrality in wartime.[26]

Legally speaking, this kind of neutrality is first declared by the state itself, then accepted by other countries with both official and mutual agreements to maintain this status.[27] In addition to these, the country which accepts permanent neutrality should obey all the relevant rules of this status. Unlike temporary neutrality, permanent neutrality is not a policy which can be declared unilaterally without any confirmation from other countries. It is also not only a policy to be adopted during war which the neutral country can change by unilateral declarations. Permanent neutrality is a specific type of foreign policy choice where certain agreements are signed with which neutral countries agree to obey specific international regulations and rules. Countries that have adopted a policy of neutrality cannot do anything other than acting according to the rules of this policy. For example, to interfere in any conflict, even in a neighboring country, is not allowed for neutral countries, although economic relations with other countries can be established.[28] However, if the policy of permanent neutrality is adopted within the framework of bilateral or multilateral relations, the neutral state may seek to either renounce such an agreement or go to an appropriate amendment on the agreement.[29] That is, a country may want to be neutral, but when it wants to give up its policy of permanent neutrality, it needs to get the approval of other countries. Therefore, the permanent neutral state is an independent state whose powers are limited.[30] As Paul Seger stated: "The

---

[26] Karsh, E. (2011): 27. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[27] Andisha, N. A. (2015, March 17). Neutrality in Afghanistan's Foreign Policy. Retrieved March 27, 2018, from http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/189080/pdf.

[28] Seger, P. (2014): 265. The Law of Neutrality. (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[29] Subedi, S. P. (1993): 242. Neutrality in a Changing World: European Neutral States and the European Community. *International & Comparative Law Quarterly, 42* (3). doi:10.1093/iclqaj/42.2.238.

[30] Kis, J. (2012): 321. State Neutrality. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199578610.013.0017. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

permanent neutral state … lacks of some rights such as starting a war, going to a war with a third state, guaranteeing the statue of permanent neutrality of another country and making military alliance agreements." [31]

Military neutrality is the most essential characteristic of a permanent neutral state which is obliged not to participate in a war taking place between other states, not to take part in alliance agreements in peacetime, not to arm itself more than the amount needed to defend itself and also not to give other states its bases that can be used for military purposes.[32] Therefore, it can be argued that even in the time of peace, permanent neutrality creates rights and obligations for both the neutral state and others. In the 19th century, the major states of Europe declared some countries which were bearing the risk of causing war as the permanent neutrals and obligated others through multilateral agreements to preserve the contemporary balance of power. Switzerland, at the Congress of Vienna in 1815; Belgium, with the Treaty of London in 1831 and Luxembourg, at the Conference of the Nations in 1867 can be given as examples.[33] Later, Austria gained the same status of permanent neutrality at the Vienna Memorandum of 1955.[34] Laos, part of France's former Indo-China colony, gained the status of permanent neutrality in 1962 at the Geneva Conference.[35] It must however be pointed out that Switzerland, Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg have lost their neutrality status

[31] Seger, P. (2014): 266. The Law of Neutrality. (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[32] Pazarcı, H. (2016): 102. *Uluslararası Hukuk. (International Law).* (15th ed.). Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi.

[33] Arı, T. (2011): 231. *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Dış Politika. (International Relations and Foreign Policy).* Bursa: MKM Yayınları.

[34] Ibid., 231.

[35] Seger, P. (2014): 267. The Law of Neutrality. (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

by the 1914 German occupation. Likewise, Laos also lost this status by placing military forces on Vietnam's territory during the Vietnam War.[36]

As mentioned above, soon after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan has also gained the status of permanent neutrality with the decision of UN General Assembly in 1995.[37] The rights and obligations of permanent neutrality status have been included in the constitution of the country and the principle of permanent neutrality has become the basic pillar of its internal and external policy.[38] It must also be emphasized that Turkmenistan is the first and only country to adopt neutrality after the Cold War. This development is also related to the strategic location of the country as well as its rich oil and gas reserves. The neutrality policy of Turkmenistan is important because it is a product of recent history and as emphasis above, is the only example in the region.

1.3. Analytical Framework of the Thesis

This thesis aims to analyze the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan in a comparative way under the two presidents of the country, Turkmenbashi and Berdimuhammedov. To that end, Efraim Karsh's model which is explained in his book Neutrality and Small States will be used to evaluate this policy. Karsh's model has been used by other scholars but not for Turkmenistan.[39]

---

[36] Arı, T. (2011): 234. *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Dış Politika. (International Relations and Foreign Policy)*. Bursa: MKM Yayınları.

[37] Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan. (1995). *United Nations Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly.* Retrieved February 1, 2018, from A/RES/50/80 A.

[38] Erol, M. S. (2001): 136. Türkmenistan Devleti'nin Dış Politikasının Temel Sacayağı: Daimî Tarafsızlık Statüsü. (The Main Principle of The Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan: Permanent Neutrality Status). *Avrasya Dosyası Türkmenistan Özel Sayısı, 7* (2). Retrieved December 10, 2017, from http://www.21yyte.org/assets/uploads/files/124-142%20Mehmet.pdf.

[39] Karsh, E. (2011): 27. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge. This model is also applied in the following articles: Dreyer, J. and Jesse, N. G., (2014). "Swiss Neutrality Examined: Model or Exception or Both". *Political Science Faculty Publications. 21.* Sasikornwong, N. (2015). EC/EU Membership and Austria, Sweden and Finland: Neutrality redefined with European Norms? *Master's thesis. Palacký University Olomouc, Faculty of Arts.*

According to Karsh, a successful neutrality policy should have two components: positive and negative. These components are explained as follows:

> Positive components are those in which countries with neutrality status are in a position to protect and maintain this status whatever the circumstances. The positive component of neutral policy involves persuading the belligerents of the advantages they might derive from the continued existence of the neutrality in question. The negative component, on the other hand, implies deterrence of the belligerents from violating the neutrality as a result of their conviction of the disproportionate cost of such a step.[40]

This means that the environment of peace created by positive components must first be approved by the non-neutral countries. Negative components however, should not mislead other countries regarding the neutral country's potential military power that may be used to intervene when and if necessary, to protect its own interest.

As for small states (such as Turkmenistan) and their choice of permanent neutrality Karsh states the following:

> The small state's decision as to which component to base its policy upon determines the precise pattern of neutrality it adopts. In general, it may be posited that the more the neutral state relies on the positive component, the greater the probability of its deviating from the framework of traditional neutrality to the point of internal violation; whereas successful reliance on the negative component reduces the state's need to compromise the framework of traditional neutrality.[41]

Moreover, Karsh argues that the positive and negative components complement each other and cannot be considered separately, as they may be interdependent. In this sense, an increment of one in some cases will lead to a decrease in the

---

[40] Karsh, E. (2011): 34. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[41] Ibid.

other.[42] Thus, on the basis of the positive components, a neutral state seeks to emphasize the humanitarian and political (or at least non-military) aspects of its policy, while the negative ones are more military oriented. Positive components tend to attribute the country that follows the neutrality policy with all the good aspects in the eyes of other countries, while negative components create a different image for the neutral country to show its deterrent power in a potential conflict. Success in finding the right balance between these two components, which is heavily influenced by the environmental awareness of the neutral state and its ability to respond effectively and flexibly to changes in its external environment, determines the fine line between political success and failure.[43] As it will be shown, those states that have understood the international environment better and have evaluated the international circumstances correctly, could maintain neutrality, while the less skilled states have been drawn into a war against their will.[44]

Karsh further argues that positive components of the neutrality policy is related to being accepted by the other states. The acceptance of the policy by the other countries and its success is directly proportional to the consistency of the state in the pursuit of this policy.[45] In other words, the neutrality policy is not abandoned under any circumstance in order to preserve regional stability. Another element of success in positive component is the ability of the country, which remains neutral in military matters, to organize some conferences within its borders to contribute to peace. It is very difficult for a non-neutral country to realize these types of conferences for its neighbors who have internal or external problems.[46] One final

[42] Karsh, E. (2011): 38. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[43] Karsh, E. (2011): 38-39. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[44] Ibid., 33.

[45] Ibid., 34.

[46] Laruelle, M., Peyrouse, S., & Axyonova, V. (2013, February): 6. The Afghanistan Central Asia relationship: What role for the EU? *EUCAM-Security and Development Project, 13*. Fifteen Years of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Brought Steady Realization of Nation's Aspiration to Become Force

important condition for the success of neutrality policy is that the neutral country never sends or receives military help from another country.

According to Karsh, in order for a country to continue to be neutral, it has to have success in the negative components in addition to positive components. The negative components of neutrality policy have the dimension of defensive negative strategy.[47] Defensive negative dimension is defined as the "readiness of a military force within the country against any internal disturbance." It is important to establish domestic order in this way because the size of the army and the number of troops of neutral countries are limited to some extent. Having a strong army ready against a possible internal insurgency is actually a way of showing to the outside world that the country is ready to defend itself against any possible conflict which can come from outside.

As will be analyzed in the thesis, the model developed by Karsh to evaluate the success of permanent neutrality policy with its positive and negative components can be applied to the case of Turkmenistan. The country, over the course of the years in which it continued to be neutral, constitutes an interesting example when regional dynamics and conflicts in the last two decades are taken into account.

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis examines the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan as a foreign policy choice of the country during the periods of first and second presidents in a comparative way. This work has three main chapters other than the Introduction and Conclusion. In the second chapter general information about Turkmenistan and the historical background of the country are given. This chapter also analyzes when and how the permanent neutrality policy of the country was adopted and recognized by the international community. In addition,

---

for Progress, Says Secretary-General. (2010, December 13). Retrieved March 22, 2018, from http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sgsm13316.doc.htm.

[47] Karsh, E. (2011): 34. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

in this chapter both the constitutional amendment on permanent neutrality adopted in 1995 and the debates around neutrality status are included. In the third chapter, the period of Turkmenbashi, the main figure behind the neutrality policy of Turkmenistan, is given. Then, in the fourth chapter the period of Berdimuhammedov, who has been president of the country since 2006 and has maintained the neutrality status, is explained. These two chapters analyze the actual implementation of the permanent neutrality policy by looking at the regional dynamics and conflicts in the Turkmenbashi and Berdimuhammedov eras. In the Conclusion, the study is briefly summarized, results of the research are discussed and an analytical comparison between the two presidents is given.

1.5. Methodology of the Thesis

The primary methodological tool of the work will be qualitative analysis based on documentary research. First of all, primary and secondary sources in Turkmen, Russian, English and Turkish on the topic, such as academic books, articles, newspapers, magazines, online sources and official web sites are used. Among such sources, the first copy of the major work of Turkmenbashi (*Ruhnama* written in Turkmen), the official online newspaper of the country (www.turkmenistan.ru) and websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan can be cited. For the purpose of the study, the constitutional and legal framework of Turkmenistan as well as the international treaties that the country is a part of are also examined. Finally, the presidential speeches, made by both Turkmenbashi and Berdimuhammedov on the topic are utilized.[48]

[48] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Russia and Turkmen sources to English are made by the author.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TURKMENISTAN & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. General Information about Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan is a Central Asian country whose neighbors are Kazakhstan in the northwest, Uzbekistan in the north and east, and Afghanistan and Iran in the south. Approximately 90 percent of Turkmenistan is covered with deserts. For instance, Garagum (Karakum), one of the largest sand deserts in the world, covers the central part of Turkmenistan and extends towards Kazakhstan. Turkmenistan also has a series of low mountains and hills. The Köýtendag (Kugitang) and Kopet mountains in the south are extensions of the Pamir-Alay mountain range. There are frequent earthquakes in and around the Kopet Mountains, which is a geologically young area. Turkmenistan, being located in the inner parts of Asia, has a hard land climate.[49]

The territory of Turkmenistan is divided into 5 large territorial and administrative regions (in Turkmen *velayats*) which are Akhal, Balkan, Dashoguz, Mary and Lebap. The capital of the country, Ashgabat, is within the boundaries of the Akhal *velayat*.[50]

[49] Abbott, L. (2016): 12. *Turkmenistan History: Origins and Early History, Society, Social Structure, the Economy, Government and Politics, Tourism*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

[50] Turkmenistan: Geography, Climate and Population. (2014). Retrieved May 16, 2018, from http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/TKM/.

Figure 1: Map of Turkmenistan [51]

Turkmenistan has a strategic geographical location. First of all, it shares a border with Iran and lies as a gateway to the world for other Central Asian countries. In other words, the country is on the route to regions such as the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Asia. Furthermore, as will be elaborated below, Turkmenistan is very rich in underground resources.

According to the July 2018 Central Intelligence Agency data, the population of Turkmenistan is 5,893,161. The country is made up of different ethnic groups and the distribution of the population is as follows: Turkmen 85 percent, Uzbek 5 percent, Russian 4 percent and others 6 percent.[52] The official language of the country is Turkmen, but Russian and the other languages such as Uzbek and Kazakh are also used in the country. As for religion, as in other Central Asian countries, the Turkmen people also professed Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity in the pre-Islamic era. Starting with the Arabic conquest of the 7th and 8th centuries, the dominant religion became Islam. Today, Turkmenistan has a population with different beliefs. According to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the vast majority of the population, 95 percent,

[51] Turkmenistan: Geography, Climate and Population. (2014). Retrieved May 16, 2018, from http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/TKM/.

[52] The World Factbook: Turkmenistan. (2018, March 16). Retrieved March 23, 2018, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html.

profess Islam while 5 percent of the population profess other religions.[53] However, according to the constitution of Turkmenistan, the country is a secular state. What is to be mentioned within the framework of the law on freedom of religion and religious organizations of Turkmenistan is that all people living on the territory of the country and having different beliefs are equal before the law.[54] Islam has a very old and important place in the historical past of Turkmenistan. In this sense, law on freedom of religion and religious organizations of Turkmenistan is seen by the Turkmen government as a guarantee of religious freedoms and social harmony. The permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan is also related to this understanding as the Turkmen leaders do not want any internal conflict coming from minority religions which may damage the image of the country being a peaceful one and cause it problems in the global arena.[55]

Following the declaration of independence on October 27, 1991, the constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan was adopted in 1992 and Saparmurat Niyazov (Turkmenbashi) was elected as the first president of the country. According to Article 1 of the constitution of Turkmenistan, "Turkmenistan is a democratic, legal and secular state in which the government take the form of presidential republic."[56] Article 2 emphasizes the issue of independence and national sovereignty. In Article 3, it is stated that "Sovereignty is exercised by the people of Turkmenistan, the people are the sole source of the state power. The people of Turkmenistan shall exercise their power directly or through representative bodies." In addition, according to Article 5, "Turkmenistan is a state ensuring social security of each person."

---

[53] Freedom of Religion in Turkmenistan. (2017): 1. OSCE Report. doi: https://www.osce.org/.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Newton, S. (2017): 262. Honour in the Breach: Rights, Courts and Justice. *The Constitutional Systems of the Independent Central Asian States.*

[56] Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan (as of 2016). (2016). Retrieved June 1, 2018, from http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/constitutions/country/51. Unless otherwise stated, all references to the Constitution are taken from this webpage.

Regarding the system of government and administrative bodies in Turkmenistan, Article 66 states the following: "The highest state authority and government in Turkmenistan shall be exercised by the President of Turkmenistan, the Mejlis (Parliament) of Turkmenistan, the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, and the Supreme Court of Turkmenistan." The Constitution also clarifies lines of authority and responsibility among the legislative, executive and judicial powers. However, when we look at the political system in the country, it is clearly seen that the President is the dominant and most important political actor. In Turkmenistan, all power centers are attached to the president. According to Article 68 "The President of Turkmenistan shall be the head of the state and the government, the highest official of Turkmenistan, acting as guarantor of the state independence and the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan, its territorial integrity, compliance with the Constitution, rights and freedoms of people and citizens and fulfilment of international obligations." According to Article 69, all Turkmen citizens who are forty years old and above and whose nationality are Turkmen can become president. According to Article 70, the president is elected by the people for seven years and starts his term after taking presidential oath.

As for the economic conditions of Turkmenistan, the country has rich natural gas deposits. Especially oil and natural gas make a great contribution to the economy of the country. In terms of natural gas reserves, it ranks sixth in the world and 44th in terms of oil reserves. The quality of the extracted oil is very high. Natural gas production, which is Turkmenistan's largest source of income, is realized by "Turkmengaz", a state-owned enterprise.[57] According to the BP Statistical Review, proven natural gas reserves are at 8 trillion cubic meters, and oil reserves at 600 million barrels. Turkmenistan aims to raise its annual production capacity

[57] Olcott, M. B. (2013). Turkmenistan: Real Energy Giant or Eternal Potential? *James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy Rice University*. Retrieved June 1, 2018, from https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/360e14e8/CES-pub-GeogasTurkmenistan2-121013.pdf.

to 240 billion cubic meter of natural gas and 100 million tons of oil by investing 60 billion USD in the energy sector by 2020.[58]

Due to the fact that most of the country is covered with deserts, agricultural activities are limited to the small amounts of arable land. Turkmenistan is the second largest producer of cotton in Central Asia after Uzbekistan. Despite the fact that only three percent of the lands are suitable for agriculture, production continues to increase. 10 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) come from such activities. Cotton production is subsidized by the state, and 50 percent of the producers' seed, fertilizer and machinery costs are covered by the state. Manufacturers, on the other hand, have to sell the cotton which they collected to the state at a certain price.[59]

The country's currency is manat (introduced on November 1, 1993). All transactions are made in manat as the use of another currency is officially prohibited.[60]

2.2. The State Symbols of Turkmenistan: Flag and Emblem

Figure 2: Map of Turkmenistan [61]

[58] *World Energy Resources*. (2013). England: World Energy Council. doi: https://www.worldenergy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/09/Complete_WER_2013_Survey.pdf.

[59] *Turkmenistan Agricultural Sector Review*. (2012): 19. Report 7. Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

[60] The World Factbook: Turkmenistan. (2018, March 16). Retrieved March 23, 2018, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html.

The flag of Turkmenistan was adopted on February 19, 1992. It has a rectangular panel of green color with a vertical red stripe, and depicts five national gels, with a white crescent moon and five stars. Each of the gels is framed with a carpet ornament, the outer edge of which is combined with the edges of the strip. In addition, these gels represent both the five regions and the main five tribes of the country which are Tekke, Yomud, Ersary, Choudur and Saryq.[62] In the lower part of the red strip there are two olive branches intersecting at the bases and directed upwards in different directions, symbolizing the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan. The most important national holiday in the country is February 19, also representing the day of the flag.[63]

Figure 3: Emblem of Turkmenistan [64]

The state emblem of Turkmenistan was adopted on August 15, 2003 and is an octahedron of green with an orange border, in which the circles of blue and red

[61] Central Commission for Holding Elections and Referendums in Turkmenistan: State Symbols. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from http://saylav.gov.tm/en/national.

[62] Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005): 209. *Ruhnama*. Ashgabat: Türkmen Döwlet Neşiryat Gullugy.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Central Commission for Holding Elections and Referendums in Turkmenistan: State Symbols. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from http://saylav.gov.tm/en/national.

colors are inscribed. Circles are separated by orange stripes of the same width. The main elements of national wealth and symbols of the state are depicted on the green background of the octagon around the red circle: at the bottom seven open boxes of white cotton with green leaves; in the middle part yellow wheat arms on both sides; at the top a half-moon with five white pointed stars.[65]

On the ring band of the red circle there are again five main carpet gels like the ones on the flag of the country and these gels again represent the five main tribes. This is a symbolic expression of unity and harmony among these five tribes, although it is commonly known that the Tekke tribe is dominant. The blue circle shows *Yanardag*, the Akhal-Tekke horse that is considered to be a very important characteristic of the country and in which great pride is taken.[66]

2.3. Historical Background

2.3.1. Pre-Soviet Era

The history of the Central Asian region continues to be a topic of interest among scholars. It is generally pointed out that, the eastern parts of the Caspian Sea indicate the first human settlement to the region.[67] In addition, the findings which belong to Bronze and Iron Ages support the existence of developed civilizations in the region.[68] From the 8th to the 6th century BC, today's Turkmenistan was inhabited by some tribes such as Khazars[69] Massageta[70], and the Parthians who invaded the northern slopes of the Kopetdag Mountains.[71]

---

[65] Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005): 211. *Ruhnama*. Ashgabat: Türkmen Döwlet Neşiryat Gullugy.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Baumer, C. (2014): 46. *The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Silk Roads*. New York: I.B.Tauris.

[68] Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex [BMAC]. (2014, March 3). Retrieved May 6, 2018, from https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/history-bmac.htm.

[69] Turkic tribes that in the 6th-8th centuries BC lived in the territory between the Caspian and the Black sea. (Golden, P. B. (2015):21. *Dünya Tarihinde Orta Asya (Central Asia in World History).* (2nd ed.) (Y. K. Taştan, Trans.). İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.).

In 334 BC, the Macedonian Emperor of Alexander the Great came to the country of Bactria which is the ancient name of the region lying between the Hindu Kush range and the Amu Darya-Oxus.[72] In 330-329 BC he conquered the western parts of the territory of Turkmenistan and Parthia.[73] Alexander the Great was faced with resistance from the nomadic tribes and there were some rebellions as a result of which he built many fortresses called "Alexandria".[74] When his domination on the territory of today's Turkmenistan came to an end with his death, the Macedonian Empire collapsed.[75]Seleucid, one of Alexander's commanders, tried to maintain control after his death. Both Alexander and Seleucid, wanted to spread the culture of Macedonia in these lands but they were met with great resistance of local population. After the reign of Macedonia ended, in 247 BC the Parthian State was created.[76] The capital of Parthia was the castle of Nisa, near the village of Bagir, located 5 kilometres west of today's Ashgabat. This fortress was destroyed by a strong earthquake.[77] Only a few of the restored relics of the castle have survived to the present time.[78]

---

[70] A name used by ancient authors to refer to the Iranian-speaking nomadic people that lived on the territory of Scythia. (Golden, P. B. (2015): 21. *Dünya Tarihinde Orta Asya (Central Asia in World History).* (2nd ed.) (Y. K. Taştan, Trans.). İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.).

[71] Abbott, L. (2016): 12. *Turkmenistan History: Origins and Early History, Society, Social Structure, the Economy, Government and Politics, Tourism*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

[72] Baumer, C. (2014): 46. *The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Silk Roads*. New York: I.B.Tauris.

[73] An ancient Kingdom located to the south and south-east of the Caspian Sea on the territory of modern Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Golden, P. B. (2015): 21. *Dünya Tarihinde Orta Asya (Central Asia in World History).* (2nd ed.) (Y. K. Taştan, Trans.). İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.) Abbott, L. (2016): 45. *Turkmenistan History: Origins and Early history, Society, Social Structure, the Economy, Government and Politics, Tourism*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

[74] Baumer, C. (2014): 46. *The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Silk Roads*. New York: I.B.Tauris.

[75] Ibid., 46.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Parthian Fortresses of Nisa. (n.d.). Retrieved January 30, 2018, from http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1242.

As mentioned earlier, in the 7th and 8th centuries, the territory of Turkmenistan was conquered by the Arabs who brought Islam to the region. Later, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the Turkmen lands were part of the states of the Takhirids and Samanids.[79] Between 11th and 13th centuries the region became part of the Seljuk Empire. Seljuks paid much attention to agriculture and cattle breeding and introduced a system of rents to provide a more productive use of land.[80] They established discipline in the army, which was constantly in motion, as well as a solid basis for economy and trade. In the 13th century, the country was captured by Mongolian troops led by Genghis Khan, who included the today's territory of Turkmenistan as part of his great empire.[81]

By the beginning of the 16th century, the northern Turkmen tribes had occupied and widely settled in the entire eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, the peninsula Mangyshlak, Ustyurt and the Balkans, the north western outskirts of the Khorezm oasis, the banks of the Sarykamysh Lake, and the Garakum desert.[82] They also seized the lands in the oases of southern Turkmenistan. During this period, most of the Turkmen tribes led a semi-nomadic way of life, combining agriculture with irrigated lands with cattle farming.[83]

---

[78] In the years when I first moved to Turkmenistan with my family between 1997-1998 our first home was very close to the remains of this castle. These remnants were visible from our home which was on the 8th floor of an old buildings from the Soviet times.

[79] Bosworth, C. E. (1990): 90. The Tahirids and Saffarids (R. N. Frye, Ed.). *The Cambridge History of Iran, 4*. Cambridge University Press.

[80]Shahmiri, C. (n.d.). History of Iran. Retrieved February 1, 2018, from http://www.iranchamber.com/history/samanids/samanids.php.

[81] Bregel, Y. E. (1961): 50. *Khorezmskie Turkmeny v XIX veke. (Khorezm Turkmen people in the XIX century).* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi literatury.
[82] Bregel, Y. E. (1991): 415. *Manghishlak*. The Encyclopedia of Islam, eds., P.J. Bearman, T.H. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs, vol. VI. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

[83] Edgar, A. L. (2004): 21. *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton University Press.

In the 17th and 19th centuries, the territory of Turkmenistan was the subject of a dispute between the Persian Shah, Khiva Khan and Bukharian Emir.[84] Thus, the Turkmen tribes were divided among these three states (Iran, Khiva and Bukhara). Most of the territory of Turkmenistan was in the hands of the Iranian Shah Nadir.[85] He had met with a great resistance by Turkmens and fought with them.[86] In 1747 Nadir Shah was killed, his state collapsed, and the Turkmen tribes temporarily left the region and first went to the north, then returned to southern Turkmenistan.[87]

2.3.1.1. Turkmenistan as Part of the Russian Empire

It should be noted that before being part of the Russian Empire, some Turkmen tribes were under the rule of the Khiva Khanate and Bukhara Emirate as well as Persia, but in reality, the Turkmen ethnos developed autonomously and isolated largely from the outside world.[88] To certain extant due to this reason, among the Turkmens (a predominantly nomadic people), Islam has not taken root as deeply as among the settled peoples of Central Asia such as the Uzbeks. The social structure of the Turkmen tribes was largely different. For example, while some Turkmen tribes have managed to stay at one point and settled down, others were still living in the dry steppes, raised animals and changed their living places constantly. All these however, would start to change once Russia became interested in the region.

---

[84] Burton, A. (1994): 43. Bukharan Jews, ancient and modern. *Jewish Historical Studies, 34*, 43-68. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/29779953.

[85] Ibid., 43-44.

[86] Baumer, C. (2014):46. *The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Silk Roads*. New York: I.B.Tauris.

[87] Ibid., 46.

[88] Annanepesov, M., & Moshev, M. (2005).: 307. (C. Adle, M. K. Palat, & A. Tabyshalieva, Eds.):308. Turkmenıstan. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (Vol. VI). Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Since the 15th and 16th centuries Russia had maintained trade relations with Muslim centers of Central Asia, and mediators in these relations were Central Asian merchants and Volga Tatars. Separate military expeditions of Russia against Khiva from the shores of the Caspian Sea had been carried out since 1717.[89] Travel of merchants and embassy missions in the first half of the 19th century helped to expand contacts, but until the middle of the 19th century, Central Asian states and people remained unknown for Russia.

The territory of modern Turkmenistan was the last region in Central Asia conquered by the Russian Empire. In 1869, on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, there were some Turkmen tribes which had already been under Russian rule since 1802.[90] After the port of Krasnovodsk (today known as Turkmenbashi) was built a large-scale conquest began in ten years. In 1879, Russian troops suffered a serious defeat in their fight with the Tekke-Turkmens.[91] Later, a large and well-equipped detachment under the command of General Mikhail Dmitriyevich Skobelev stood against the Turkmens and in January 1881 stormed the fortress of Geok-Tepe. Resistance of the Turkmen tribes was suppressed. In 1884, Russian control was established over the Merv oasis.[92] The seizure of Merv, considered a "key" to Afghanistan, caused fear in the United Kingdom that Russian expansion would spread further towards British India.[93] The Anglo-Russian rivalry created a real threat of a military clash between the two empires, but pragmatic considerations prevailed resulting in the signing of several treaties on the

[89] Kurat, A. N. (2014): 351. *Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917'ye Kadar (History of Russia: From the Beginning to 1917).* (6th ed.). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

[90] Abazov, R. (2005): 19. *Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press.

[91] Kurat, A. N. (2014): 351. *Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917'ye Kadar (History of Russia: From the Beginning to 1917).* (6th ed.). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

[92] Ibid., 351.

[93] Ibid., 352.

delimitation of borders. These Anglo-Russian agreements were concluded with the Pamir Accord in 1895.[94]

At the heart of the expansion of the Russian Empire into Central Asia lay mainly military-strategic factors and considerations. The construction of the Trans-Caspian railway starting from the Caspian Sea to Merv (1886), then passing through the land of the Bukhara Emirate and reaching to Samarkand (1888), Tashkent (1898), and Andijan in the Fergana Valley (1899) is an indication of such considerations.[95] With the introduction of the Trans-Caspian railway, the Russian influence on the economic structure of Turkestan (including Turkmen lands) became much more noticeable.[96] In the fertile lands adjacent to the rivers, cotton crops were expanded (although not to the extent in the Uzbek territories, in particular in the Fergana Valley), old ones were restored or new irrigation facilities were built.[97] Furthermore, in 1895 oil production began. In general, in the Trans-Caspian region, the Russian administration was able to stop the outbreak of feuds between tribes but the ancient social orders of the Turkmens could not be destroyed.[98]

2.3.2. Soviet Era

The revolution of the Bolsheviks in 1917[99] was at first met without any resistance neither in Turkmenistan nor in Tashkent, the center of Turkestan. When however,

---

[94] Kurat, A. N. (2014): 352-353. *Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917'ye Kadar (History of Russia: From the Beginning to 1917).* (6th ed.). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

[95] Ibid., 308-309.

[96] Ibid., 309.

[97] Annanepesov, M., & Moshev, M. (2005): 310. (C. Adle, M. K. Palat, & A. Tabyshalieva, Eds.). Turkmenıstan. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia.* (Vol. VI). Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

[98] Peimani, H. (2009): 178. *Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus*. California: ABC-CLIO.

[99] The Bolshevik Revolution is more commonly known as the October Revolution. The causes of the revolution can be listed as follows: The autocratic regime in the Russian Empire, the negative effects of World War I, the repressive rule of the different nations in the empire, the worsening of the economy and the

the 4th Congress of the East Caspian Council, held between November 30, 1917 and December 27, 1917 was renamed by the Russian as the Council of People's Commissars of the Eastern Caspian Region,[100] and when the Council abolished the old institutions of state, an uprising started in Ashgabat on July 11, 1918.[101]

In the early years of the revolution, however, the Turkmens living in Khiva and Bukhara joined the Bolsheviks in large numbers in their struggle with the Mensheviks. Junaid Khan who was one of the leaders of the Basmachi uprising in Central Asia against the Soviet rule took advantage of this conflictual situation.[102] Together with the Uzbeks, Turkmen and Karakalpaks, Junaid Khan was later forced to retreat into the desert of Garagum, as the local rulers joined the Bolsheviks and he could not find any financial support. Finally, on February 2, 1920 the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic, and on September 2, 1920 the Bukharan People's Soviet Republic were established.[103]

After the Bolshevik Revolution, it was decided that every Soviet nation should be given a federal administrative unit of its own. Between 1924 and 1936, 5 separate Central Asian republics were established although eventually they were all under the control of Moscow.[104] On October 27, 1924, as a result of this national delimitation policy, the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (TSSR) was formed.

---

worsening of the living conditions. (Smith, S. A. (2017): 37. *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928* (1st ed.). United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.)

[100] Clark, L., Thurman, M., & Tyson, D. (1996): 305. Turkmenistan (G. E. Curtis, Ed.). *Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan Country Studies.*

[101] Hero, D. (2011): 21. *Inside Central Asia: A Political and Cultural History of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Iran* (1st ed.). New York: The Overlook Press.

[102] Thrasher, Matthew J. (2010): 9. How to Make a Colony: Reform and Resistance in Russian Turkestan, 1865-1917. *German and Russian Studies Honors Projects.*

[103] Hero, D. (2011): 28. *Inside Central Asia: A Political and Cultural History of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz stan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Iran* (1st ed.). New York: The Overlook Press.

[104] Ibid., 33.

Thus, a unified Turkmen state was created for the first time in the history of the Turkmen people. On May 12, 1925, the TSSR became one of the federal republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).[105]

In the 1920s-1930s, large-scale reforms were implemented in Turkmenistan, as in other Soviet republics, including collectivization, industrialization, combating illiteracy and secularization.[106] Agricultural policies such as confiscation of land and livestock, undermined the nomadic way of life of the Turkmen. The response to these changes would be periodic uprisings against the Soviet rule in the southern and western parts of TSSR. One of the leaders of the resistance movement, Junaid Khan, after a long struggle, was forced to leave the country and he died in Afghanistan in 1938.[107] A similar situation was observed in the zones of irrigated agriculture, where any manifestations of discontent were characterized as anti-Soviet and eventually suppressed.

After the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, the Turkmen, along with the peoples of other republics took part in the defense of their country. More than 200.000 young Turkmens fought at the fronts of the "Great Patriotic War" together with Russians and other Soviet people, resulting in cost of lives.[108] Furthermore, soon after the war, on October 6, 1948 a devastating earthquake destroyed Ashgabat and its surroundings killing about 110.000 people and

---

[105] Yıldırım, E. (2012): 414. Türkmenistan: Aşiretten Ulusa. (Turkmenistan: From the Tribe to the Nation). (Ç Balım & A. Aydıngün, Eds.). *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler. (Central Asian Republics in the Twentieth Year of Independence and the Turkish Language Peoples-Turkey Relations).* Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi.

[106] Rakhimov, M. (2017): 10. The Paradoxical Soviet Experience (M. Laruelle, Ed.). *Uzbekistan Political Order, Societal Changes, and Cultural Transformations.* Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University. Retrieved from http://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Uzbekistan_f.pdf.

[107] Abazov, R. (2005): 28. *Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press.

[108] Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Setting. (2006): 181. *Library of Congress – Federal Research Division: Country Profile: Russia*. Retrieved January 24, 2018, from http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/Russia%20Study%20and%20Profile.pdf.

destroying all buildings.[109] However, during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s several economic and cultural developments such as constructions of collective farms, railways and theaters took place. As such it is not surprising that in the late *perestroika* period[110] the independence movement in Turkmenistan was less strong and radical than in other Central Asian republics. This movement initially had a cultural and ecological orientation, resulting in the creation of the *Agzybirlik* movement in 1989[111] which did not have a clear of anti-Soviet orientation.[112]

In March 1985, Saparmurat Niyazov was appointed as the chairman of the Council of Ministers of the TSSR. In December of the same year, Niyazov became the first secretary of the Communist Party (CP) of the TSSR. In January 1990, he was elected as the chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic, and in October of the same year he became the president. In March 1991 referendum, the people of the republic voted to preserve the USSR. Niyazov, who also initially supported the preservation of the Soviet Union, later adopted a more pro-independence attitude. In a referendum in October 1991, the overwhelming majority of the population (94 percent) voted for independence.[113]

---

[109] Stevens, K. (2011): 19. Ashgabat Earthquake (1948) (B. Penuel & M. Statler, Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Disaster Relief*. California: SAGE Publications.

[110] Restructuring and reform movements of the economic and political system in the USSR which started in 1980s. (Hewett, A., & Winston, V. H. (Eds.). (2010): 42. *Milestones in Glasnost and Perestroyka; Politics and People*. Brookings Institution Press.)

[111] Beissinger, M. R. (2002): 231. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[112] Yıldırım, E. (2012): 421. Türkmenistan: Aşiretten Ulusa. (Turkmenistan: From the Tribe to the Nation). (Ç Balım & A. Aydıngün, Eds.). *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler. (*Central *Asian Republics in the Twentieth Year of Independence and the Turkish Language Peoples-Turkey Relations).* Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi.

[113] Clark, L., Thurman, M., & Tyson, D. (1996): 305. Turkmenistan (G. E. Curtis, Ed.). *Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan Country Studies.*

2.3.3. Post-Soviet Era

In order to evaluate the post-Soviet conditions in Turkmenistan, it is very important to understand how the formation of an independent Turkmen state has been realized since 1991. Equally important is the position of Turkmenistan in regional and global politics. In this new era, as an independent state, Turkmenistan, just like the other post-Soviet republics, tried to establish its own state institutions as well as its own foreign policy, which has basically been conducted on a bilateral basis.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan has been commonly accepted as the most authoritarian post-Soviet state. Saparmurat Niyazov Turkmenbashi, the last leader of the TSSR and the first leader of independent Turkmenistan, created a political system based on repression and an economic system based on the wealth of the country.[114] In other words, the revenues from the export of natural gas have been used to finance the internal security apparatus and propaganda machine as well as to provide a certain level of material well-being to the population through subsidizing essential goods.[115] His successor, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov is reported to faithfully follow Niyazov's footsteps.[116]

However, due to the deteriorating security situation in the region and financial problems inside the country, Turkmenistan, faces serious problems. On the border with Afghanistan, the Turkmen security forces are in a very difficult situation to repel attacks by radical Islamic militants who are trying to break into

---

[114] Burke, J. (2014, June 9). Post-Soviet world: what you need to know about the 15 states. Retrieved January 28, 2018, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/09/-sp-profiles-post-soviet-states.

[115] Bohr, A. (2016): 11. Turkmenistan: Power, Politics and Petro-Authoritarianism. *Russia and Eurasia Programme.* Retrieved January 23, 2018, from https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-03-08-turkmenistan-bohr.pdf.

[116] Burke, J. (2014, June 9). Post-Soviet world: what you need to know about the 15 states. Retrieved January 28, 2018, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/09/-sp-profiles-post-soviet-states.

the country. In addition, the fall in raw material prices has negative consequences for all oil and gas exporters of Eurasia, including Turkmenistan. Such developments had a negative impact on the Turkmen people, who, despite repression have engaged in certain protest movements over the course of last couple of years. [117]

In the next part of the chapter the basic characteristic of the foreign policy option of the country, permanent neutrality, which has shaped most of the domestic as well as external developments of Turkmenistan in the post-Soviet era is described.

2.4. Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan: Permanent Neutrality

As mentioned in the Introduction, among the states in the world, countries such as Austria, Finland, Switzerland and Malta had the status of neutrality. But Turkmen neutrality is unique from several perspectives. Firstly, the state declared its neutrality status at the international level in the first years of gaining its independence. Secondly, the first time in the history of the United Nations (UN), this status was delegated by a special UN Resolution (Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan" adopted on December 12, 1995.) Thirdly, the fundamental principles of neutrality were set forth in the special constitutional law on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan.[118] However, the recognition of the status of neutrality for Turkmenistan has not been immediate and easy. In order to achieve this status, a certain period of time had to pass and Turkmenistan had to engage in a serious effort both domestically and internationally.

[117]Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. (n.d.). Retrieved February 14, 2018, from http://www.understandingwar.org/turkmenistan-and-afghanistan.

[118] Ахмедова, Ш. (2014, December 12). Статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана – фундамент устойчивого развития. (The status of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the foundation of sustainable development). *Золотой век*. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=7841.

Undoubtedly, on October 27, 1991, the adoption of the constitution of independent Turkmenistan and the establishment of the new state by the Turkmen parliament was the first phase of adopting the neutrality status, and as stated in the first section of this constitution, Turkmenistan was "independent" in its foreign policy, that is, it would determine this policy without outside intervention.[119] In May 1992, at the meeting of the heads of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Turkmenistan did not sign the joint defense treaty as it was found to be contrary to the foreign policy understanding specified in its constitution. This attitude could be seen as a sign and that the country was moving towards neutrality as early as 1992.[120]

In the early years of independence Turkmenistan's foreign policy priorities were addressed under three main headings: first one was about the cautious efforts to open up to the world, second one was security concerns and the last one was establishing good relations with neighbors. The most prominent features of Turkmenistan's foreign policy were at the time shaped by Turkmenbashi, the first president of the republic.[121] He was famous with his cautious attitude against both multilateral or regional initiatives. One of the main reasons for this concern was the fear of being swallowed as a small state with abundance of natural resources.[122] All these concerns eventually resulted in the foreign policy choice of permanent neutrality.

---

[119] Ахмедова, Ш. (2014, December 12). Статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана – фундамент устойчивого развития. (The status of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the foundation of sustainable development). *Золотой век*. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=7841.

[120] Dally, J. C. (2014, February 26). Despite Proclaimed Neutrality, Turkmenistan Increases Border Defenses. *Eurasia Daily Monitor, 11* (37).

[121] Zongze, R. (2015, December 20). Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Powerful Example in Divided World. Retrieved March 2, 2018, from http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/959553.shtml.

[122] Schmidt, H., Langbein, J., & Seidelmann, R. (2004): 71. Turkmenistan-Nation Building and Economic Development since Independence (E. Giese, Ed.). *Cooperation and Conflict Management in Central Asia,* 69-86. Berlin: P. Lang Publishing.

On December 12, 1995, the year in which the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the UN was celebrated, Turkmenbashi underlined the following important reason for the application of his country for having the status of permanent neutrality as follows:

> This step of ours will contribute greatly to peace in Turkmenistan and the region. This issue is very important to us. Because Turkmenistan is located in one of the most important regions of the world where natural resources are the richest. This inevitably necessitates the policy of permanent neutrality from our point of view. Turkmenistan is at a geographically important and critical location … and being aware of its geographical importance, has agreed to act accordingly in the international arena. For this reason, Turkmenistan has tried to pursue an impartial foreign policy. After this, Turkmenistan wants to carry out its foreign and domestic policy as a permanent neutral country. In this regard, we request the approval of both the president and the member states of UN.[123]

The justifications given by the President were seen by the UN as logical and Turkmenistan's request was approved without any opposition. From the perspective of the UN, the reasons for the approval are not much different than the reasons of Turkmenbashi. It was one of the missions of the UN to ensure the integration of 15 newly independent countries into the existing world order. Possible conflicts in the region surrounding these new countries as well as within these countries could turn into unpredictable problems. Furthermore, being a country with critical natural resources in a geographically strategic location, Turkmenistan's request seemed sound.[124] According to the UN, there had to be a neutral state in the region that would create a peaceful atmosphere and at times be a buffer zone. After the approval of the UN on Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality status, the country passed "The Constitutional Law on Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan" in an attempt to integrate this status within its own

[123] Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005): 282. *Ruhnama.* Ashgabat: Türkmen Döwlet Neşiryat Gullugy.

[124] Anceschi, L. (2008): 27. *Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: Positive Neutrality and the consolidation of the Turkmen Regime*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

constitutional framework.[125] This law is analyzed in more detail in the next part of the chapter.

2.4.1. The Constitutional Law on Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan

The law on permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan, consists of 12 articles and it determines the "political, economic and humanitarian grounds" for this policy in accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan.[126] According to this law, the permanent neutrality policy constitutes the basis of the country's foreign and domestic policy. It primarily aims to develop the friendly and mutually beneficial relations not only with the states of the region but also the whole world. As such, as stated in Article 12, Turkmenistan aims to guarantee the conformity of its domestic and foreign policy orientations with the permanent neutrality status and agrees to be abided by international obligations of this status. Likewise, as declared in Article 11, there is an emphasis on obedience to international legal acts regarding humanitarian and environmental security issues. Turkmenistan also guarantees (Articles 4, 5, 6) not be a part of blocs, alliances and conflicts that would start wars and/or threaten the security of other states. Furthermore, with this law Turkmenistan also pledges not to be involved in the production and distribution of any kind of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction.

In addition to these, the permanent neutrality law identifies the main principles of peaceful foreign policy as equality of rights, mutual respect and non-interference to internal affairs of other states. As Article 7 and Article 8 state, Turkmenistan prioritizes international economic cooperation with neighboring states as well as others, and international organizations are seen as important tools of both strengthening trust between countries and regions and maintaining peace and stability at regional and global levels. As part of this understanding, Turkmenistan declares to stand against and avoid any attempt that would use economic superiority as a leverage on any state. As pointed out in Article 10,

[125] For the full text of this document see Appendix 1.
[126] 90th Plenary Meeting, Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan. Retrieved May 11, 2018, from A/RES/50/80.

Turkmenistan admits the importance of improving cultural relations with other states as a means of deepening mutual understanding, developing relations of friendship and co-operation, and overcoming prejudices and historical memories, thereby leading to further cooperation at economic and political levels. In short, with this law Turkmenistan aims to gain international recognition from the world community, to create an image of a country that abides by basic democratic rights and liberties as well as international law. Turkmenistan's declaration of staying in conformity with these moral and legal principles is expected to give the country a prestigious place in world community.

Once the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan was accepted by the UN, this policy also became critical in terms of the harmony between Turkmenistan's domestic and foreign policies. According to the authorities, neutrality would give the country the freedom to create the necessary state institutions, to carry out democratic reforms, to dynamically develop its national economy, and to consolidate the society by strengthening stability and harmony.[127] Furthermore, the status of permanent neutrality would allow Turkmenistan to have an active international peacekeeping position. With this status, the country could now build relations with other states based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in domestic affairs and the implementation of international norms that ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms.[128] In this way, Turkmenistan became a country that does not create any tension in the region but rather a country that prevents such tensions. As such, the main goal of the country has been pointed out as "development in a peaceful environment".[129]

---

[127] Ахмедова, Ш. (2014, December 12). Статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана – фундамент устойчивого развития. (The status of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the foundation of sustainable development). *Золотой век*. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=7841.

[128] Shikhmuradov, B. O. (1997): 1. Positive Neutrality as the Basis of the Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan. *Journal of International Affairs, 2* (2).

[129] Ахмедова, Ш. (2014, December 12). Статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана – фундамент устойчивого развития. (The status of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the foundation of

The status of neutrality, therefore, is further expected to contribute to the dynamic development of the national economy as well as its regions by attracting foreign investment, by developing of small and medium-sized enterprises, by increasing production, and by the introduction of new technologies and the results of scientific and technological progress.[130] The idea here is that permanent neutrality would bring both international confidence and domestic stability to Turkmenistan.

It can be stated that during the post-independence transition period, Turkmenistan has preferred to act in accordance with the requirements of *realpolitik*, without focusing primarily on religious, ethnic and cultural values but aiming to develop economic relations with the outside world. At the same time, with this policy, Turkmenistan aimed to maintain security and stability both within the country and in the region.[131] In general, it is possible to suggest that from the perspective of Turkmen officials the status of permanent neutrality increased the significance and visibility of Turkmenistan in the region. In a recent interview Bahar Berdiyeva, the third secretary of the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Azerbaijan, stated the following on the issue:

> The decision of United Nations clearly demonstrates the high prestige of neutral Turkmenistan on the world stage and the universal recognition of its significant contribution to global peace, security and sustainable development … The national policy of neutrality can contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in the region and at the global level and can play an

---

sustainable development). *Золотой век*. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=7841.

[130] Нейтралитет Туркменистана: новая эпоха в миротворческой истории человечества. 8 (The neutrality of Turkmenistan: a new era in the peacekeeping history). (2017, December 24). Retrieved March 2, 2018, from https://www.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/2826160.html.

[131] Ahmadov, Anar Kamil. (2011): 135-136. *A Conditional Theory of the 'Political Resource Curse:' Oil, Autocrats, and Strategic Contexts*. London School of Economic and Political Science.

> important role in the development of peaceful, friendly and mutually beneficial relations.[132]

Likewise, the neutrality of Turkmenistan is also seen to have contributed to the success of the efforts of the international community for developing regional partnership for peace, security and sustainable development. Neutrality became the optimal model for the implementation of such international goals. In the same interview Bahar Berdiyeva further stated that:

> This is especially evident today, in the modern era, when under the leadership of President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov, our state was widely opened to the world as a peacekeeping, dynamically developing country with a steadily rising standard of living, actively integrating into the world community on the principles of mutually beneficial partnership, based on humanistic and democratic values.[133]

Evidence of such growing influence of Turkmenistan as a recognized regional peacekeeping center on the Asian continent was suggested as the election of Ashgabat as a venue for various international peacekeeping and humanitarian events. This is presented as a constructive feature of Turkmen neutrality, which focuses on ensuring not only internal but also external stability, as well as the readiness to contribute to any peacekeeping processes and dialogue.[134] In short, the policy of permanent neutrality has been one of the most important legal and political frameworks of post-Soviet Turkmenistan that is considered as a major achievement by the Turkmen political elites.

In the next two chapters, the extent to which Turkmenbashi and Berdimuhammedov applied the policy of permanent neutrality will be elaborated

---

[132] Нейтралитет Туркменистана: новая эпоха в миротворческой истории человечества. 8 (The neutrality of Turkmenistan: a new era in the peacekeeping history). (2017, December 24). Retrieved March 2, 2018, from https://www.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/2826160.html.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

within this legal and political framework by looking at regional developments as well as how Turkmenistan responded to these developments.

CHAPTER 3

THE PERIOD OF SAPARMURAT NIYAZOV TURKMENBASHI AND THE REGIONAL DYNAMICS

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Turkmenistan is one of the five independent countries of Central Asia which aims to find a new place for itself after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. After a long period of Soviet rule, it is not an easy task to rebuild a newly independent country in short time. In the post-Soviet era, Saparmurat Niyazov Turkmenbashi appeared as the creator of this new country, which had to be rebuilt in all areas of life and in every sense of the word. In this context, he described everything he did in order to establish a new order in the newly independent country in his first book *Ruhnama*. Therefore, in order to understand the period of Turkmenbashi, especially in terms of what he expected from the policy of permanent neutrality as well as how successful this policy was during his rule, *Ruhnama* needs to be referred to in addition to other official governmental documents. It is possible to point out that in his foreign policy line Turkmenbashi generally acted in accordance with the principles laid out in this book. Both this book and his actions as the president of the country are in accordance with the policy of permanent neutrality, which was in a way put to test under a variety of different pressures coming from some of the most significant regional dynamics of the 1990s and 2000s. However, before looking at the regional dynamics and permanent neutrality policy, it is necessary to give a brief biography of Turkmenbashi, the founder of both this policy as well as independent Turkmenistan.

Turkmenbashi was born in Gypjak, a small town near Ashgabat on February 19, 1940. His father was killed during World War II and other members of his family lost their lives in the Ashgabat earthquake in October 1948.[135] After Turkmenbashi lost all of his immediate family members, he was first sent to an orphanage and then to his relatives who were living outside the city-center. After

[135] Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005): 31-32. *Ruhnama.* Ashgabat.

graduating from high school in 1959, he began his career as an instructor of the Turkmen Territorial Committee of the Trade Union of Workers and Employees of Geological Exploration. In 1962, he became a member of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU). In 1965 he started to work as a moulder at one of the enterprises in Leningrad.[136] In 1967, he received his diploma in energy engineering from the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. In 1970, he became the Deputy of the Chief of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan (CPT). Around this time, he started to become more involved in political activities and training programs organized by CPSU. In 1976 he graduated from the correspondence department of the higher party school of the Central Committee of the CPSU.[137]

In, 1980, Turkmenbashi became the first secretary of the Ashgabat City Committee of the CPT. Between 1980 and 1984 he has worked as an instructor of the Department for Organization of Party Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Later, on December 1985 he was appointed as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPT, and on January 13, 1990 was elected as the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the TSSR. Six months later, the Supreme Council adopted the Declaration on the State Independence of the TSSR. After the declaration of independence, the new post of presidency was introduced in Turkmenistan and Turkmenbashi became the first president of the country. Soon after that, the 1992 Constitution was adopted by a referendum on May 18, 1992 with an approval rate of 99.5 percent of the votes.[138]

After the adoption of the new constitution, Turkmenbashi proposed new elections which took place on June 21, 1992. The only candidate was himself and he was

---

[136] Горак, С. (2007): 155. Портрет Туркменбаши как мифологическая основа его режима. (Portrait of Turkmenbashi as the Mythological Basis of His Regime). *Вестник Евразии, 2*. Retrieved July 12, 2018.

[137] Ibid., 141.

[138] Панфилова, О. (2006, December 21). Умер Туркменбаши: Биография (Turkmenbashi Died: Biography). Retrieved July 12, 2018, from https://newdaynews.ru/inworld/97388.html.

again elected the president of the republic by an overwhelming majority of 99.5 percent of the votes.[139]

In the second half of 1993, the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (the former Communist Party of Turkmenistan) proposed to extend the presidential term of Turkmenbashi for a second five-year term without re-election. In January 1994, in a nationwide referendum, the overwhelming majority of voters supported this idea. Same year, the name Turkmenbashi was given to him officially by a decree of the Mejlis.[140] In addition, it was decided that Turkmenbashi should be the lifelong president of the country in the meeting of Halk Maslahaty held on 28 December 1999.[141]

As a result of these developments, Turkmenbashi consolidated his powers and ruled the country until his death in 2006. It is generally accepted that Turkmenistan has been the most conservative and isolated Central Asian republic in terms of transition to democracy and international influences. Turkmenbashi aimed to establish a stable political system which would provide the opportunity to create an economically developed and independent Turkmenistan. For Turkmenbashi, the main condition for achieving this was the policy of permanent neutrality, which he saw as the basic prerequisite for all post-Soviet era goals of his country. In other words, Turkmenbashi saw neutrality as the first and most important policy goal of the new country.

---

[139] Панфилова, О. (2006, December 21). Умер Туркменбаши: Биография (Turkmenbashi Died: Biography). Retrieved July 12, 2018, from https://newdaynews.ru/inworld/97388.html.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Grotz, F., & Hartmann, C. (2001): 475. Turkmenistan (D. Nohlen, Ed.). *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook: Volume I: Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press.

3.1. Development of and Contribution of the Policy of Permanent Neutrality for Turkmenistan

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, when the development of the policy of permanent neutrality in Turkmenistan is analyzed, it is possible to argue that even before independence, Turkmenbashi actually gave the signals that he had this policy in his mind and he tried to achieve it with setting various targets. According to Turkmenbashi, with the permanent neutrality policy, Turkmenistan would be able to independently resolve all matters related to internal and external security issues. Furthermore, its territory would be free from radiological, chemical, biological weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

It was clear that Turkmenbashi wanted to stay away from all wars outside the borders of his country. However, he also believed that in the case of a possible attack, the country should be able to protect itself for defense purposes only. Therefore, as stated in Article 13 of the Constitution of 2008, which is the amended version of the 1992 Constitution, the army of Turkmenistan would only be used to protect the sovereignty of the country in case of an outside attack.[142]

Such ideas were also emphasized among the principles declared in the Military Doctrine of Turkmenistan (adopted right after independence) according to which the country would not enter into any collective military alliances and possess military forces within its own borders.[143] Similarly, the Law on Turkmenistan's Defense, adopted on October 1, 1993 stipulated that Turkmenistan would adopt internationally accepted rules regarding its defense. The law also stated that the country would be bounded by international agreements and treaties regarding

[142] Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan (as of 2008). (2008). Retrieved July 26, 2018, from http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/constitutions/country/51.

[143] Marat, E. (2009): 77. *The Military and the State in Central Asia: From Red Army to Independence*. London: Routledge.

collective defense as well as military and technical assistance with other states.[144] This law was an indication that Turkmenistan would not on its own enter into any military alliance that would jeopardize its future foreign policy goal of permanent neutrality.

As a direct reflection of permanent neutrality policy, Turkmenbashi was careful in choosing the institutions and organizations that his country would become a member. For example, Turkmenistan did not sign the Collective Security Treaty, adopted at the Tashkent Summit of the Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Heads of State on May 15, 1992.[145] Similarly, Turkmenistan did not sign the Treaty of Military Observers and Common Peacekeeping Agreement in the CIS,[146] which was adopted at the meeting of the Council of Presidents held in Kiev on March 20, 1992, as well as the Treaty of the Protection of the Outside Borders of the Member States adopted by the Council of Presidents on May 26, 1995.[147]

It can be argued that Turkmenistan did not sign defense agreements because they contradicted with Turkmenbashi's vision of foreign policy that he wanted to adopt in the near future. But later, on August 26, 2005, with the decision of the CIS Heads of State, taking into consideration its status of permanent neutrality, Turkmenistan decided to reduce its ties from full membership to associate membership of the CIS.[148] As it is understood from all these, Turkmenbashi was

---

[144] Закон Туркменистана о воинской обязанности и военной службе (The Law of Turkmenistan on Military Duty and Military Service). (2002, March 12). Retrieved July 27, 2018, from http://www.turkmenbusiness.org/content/zakon-turkmenistana-o-voinskoi-obyazannosti-i-voennoi-sluzhbe.

[145] Kembayev, Z. (2009): 71. *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*. Berlin: Springer.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Kembayev, Z. (2009): 62. *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*. Berlin: Springer.

[148] Ibid., 44.

trying to take the necessary steps to move towards the goal of creating a permanently neutral state.

In line with such an attitude, Turkmenistan became a member in organizations that had only economic goals. For example, the country joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation (ECO) in February 1992 in the Tehran Summit. In addition to ECO, it became a UN member on March 2, 1992, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) member on August 17, 1993, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) member in 1995, and World Health Organization (WHO) member in November 1995.[149] All the institutions and organizations that Turkmenistan was a member in this period were passed through the filter of neutrality policy, a choice made by Turkmenbashi in early 1990s. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the approval of the permanent neutrality status demanded by Turkmenistan took place on October 22, 1995, on the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the UN.

It must however be pointed out here that Turkmenbashi did not see permanent neutrality important only as a foreign policy goal for independent Turkmenistan. He also believed that this policy would have a positive impact on the domestic developments of the country. According to him, certain domestic problems that may potentially threaten stability such as unemployment, tribalism and regionalism may be more effectively dealt with a neutral status.[150] His main domestic goals of providing national unity (*Ağzybirlik*) and economic wealth and prosperity (*Abadançylyk*) for the purposes of integrating with world economy[151] could be more easily achieved with this policy. According to Turkmenbashi eliminating outside threats or attacks as well as having good neighborly relations

[149] Panova, E. (n.d.). United Nations Country Team of Turkmenistan. Retrieved June 9, 2018, from http://tm.one.un.org/content/unct/turkmenistan/en/home/about-us/un-resident-coordinator-system.html.

[150] Liu, G. (1998): 74-76. Ethnic Harmony and Conflicts in Central Asia: Origins and Policies (Y. Zhang, and Azizian, R. Ed.). *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

[151] Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005): 167. *Ruhnama.* Ashgabat.

would provide him a more conducive environment to focus intensively on domestic issues.[152]

The next part of the chapter will analyze on four of the most important regional developments that took place during the Turkmenbashi period and the implementation of the policy of permanent neutrality. These four developments are the Tajik civil war, the rise of Taliban, the involvement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the region and the foundation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

3.2. The Tajik Civil War

The Tajik civil war and the attitude of Turkmenistan during this war can be considered as the first important regional conflict in the period of Turkmenbashi after independence.

The five-year civil war in Tajikistan was a direct consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The situation in the country began to heat up after the declaration of policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in late 1980s. At the time, the republic was suffering from several negative factors such as unemployment, a demographic explosion and the emergence of some criminal groups. In order to control the situation, the authorities declared a state of emergency. Around this time several opposition movements such as the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, the Islamic Revival Party and the "Rastokhez" (the "Renaissance") started to be organized.[153]

In March 1992, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in the country. Communists received more than 50% of the votes, Democrats 35% and Islamists

---

[152] Anceschi, L. (2008): 150. *Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: Positive Neutrality and the Consolidation of the Turkmen Regime*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

[153]Tajikistan first half of 1990s. (2012, December 28). Retrieved July 10, 2018, from http://csef.ru/en/politica-i-geopolitica/423/tadzhikistan-pervoj-poloviny-1990-h-godov-3877.

10%, representing deep splits among the regions of Tajikistan. Pamir, Kurgan-Tube and Dushanbe voted for the Democrats. The Islamists received the greatest support in Garm. Kulyab and Khujand turned out to be the key regions supporting the Communists. Right after the elections in Kulyab there were mass killings of supporters of democracy. The opposition, parties claimed that the officially announced election results were fraudulent.[154] Under such conditions, the civil war in Tajikistan became almost inevitable.

After the attacks in Kulyab significant numbers of refugees came to Dushanbe. In April 1992, they organized a protest in the Shakhidon Square located across the palace of the newly elected president of the country, Rahmon Nabiyev who was a communist. Soon, the number of the participants to the protest increased. Every day more residents of Dushanbe joined the protestors. Islamists from Garm also arrived to the Shakhidon Square. Around the same time, however, the authorities and the officials of the Committee of State Security decided to organize a pro-government demonstration in the neighboring Ozodi Square. Participants of this demonstration were taken to Dushanbe from Kulyab.

There were at that moment two opposing groups of demonstrations. However, when the supporters of the government were distributed weapons, attacks on the democratic and Islamic protestors began. Although the demonstrations turned bloody, the opposition forces eventually got what they wanted. Rahmon Nabiyev agreed to form a coalition government, including democrats, communists and independent representatives of a number of regions. However, this development was not enough to ease the tensions, especially in the southern regions of the country. In Kulyab, power was transferred to local communists, whose troops began to attack the oppositional groups in Kurgan-Tyube. Opponents of Nabiyev started to arm themselves.[155]

---

[154] Jonson, L. (1998): 34. *The Tajik War: A Challenge to Russian Policy*. Royal Institute of International Affairs.

[155] Epkenhans, T. (2016): 11. *The Origins of the Civil War in Tajikistan; Nationalism, Islamism and Violent Conflict in Post-Soviet Space.* (M. Laruelle, Ed.). London: Lexington Books.

In the summer of 1992, armed conflict escalated in the Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyab regions resulting in devastation. The opponents had heavy weapons and armored vehicles. The events immediately showed that the coalition government was simply incompetent. The country was in a total chaos resulting in a civil war which continued between 1992 and 1997. The bloody war affected large segments of Tajik society. Almost all young men found themselves at the front.[156] From the early stages of the war, both Russia and Uzbekistan supported the Tajik government. The 201st division of the Russian army also got involved in the conflict. Likewise, Uzbek president Islam Karimov started to supply weapons to the pro-government groups in Kulyab and sent Uzbek troops to Tajikistan.[157]

In December 1992, Rahmon Nabiyev was forced to leave power and replaced by Emomali Rahmanov who by the end of the year, started to take control of the situation in Dushanbe and stopped the turmoil in the city. In June 1993, the Supreme Court of the country banned the activities of opposition groups. After that, the opponents of the government of Rahmanov were united in what would be named the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) composed basically of democrats and Islamists. UTO was headed by Said Abdullo Nuri, who was one of the most influential figures of the oppositions both during the war and in the process of signing peace agreement with Rahmanov.[158]

During the civil war, efforts for the peaceful settlement of the conflict were actively supported by Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, now the OSCE, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Organization the Islamic Conference, the World Bank, other

---

[156] Akiner, S. (2001): 29. *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

[157] Freiré, M. R. (2009): 144. Russian Policy in Central Asia: Supporting, Balancing, Coercing, or Imposing? *Asian Perspective, 3* (2), 125-149. Retrieved July 12, 2018, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/42704675.

[158] *Tajikistan an Uncertain Peace*. (2001): 2. Osh/Brussel: ICG Asia Report No 30.

international organizations and other countries including the United States (US), Japan, Germany. Eight rounds of inter-Tajik talks under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of representatives of interested countries were held during a period of four years.[159]As a result of these negotiations, On June 27, 1997, the civil war in Tajikistan finally ended when the government and the opposition signed the peace agreement. Emomali Rahmanov remained the president.[160] The opposition received representation in the parliament. When the ethnic conflict in Tajikistan ended, refugees began returning to the country from the neighboring states.[161] It is estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 people died in the war, while 1.2 million people migrated.[162]

When we analyze the attitude of Turkmenistan during the Tajik civil war in terms of its neutrality policy, it is clearly observed that the country remained loyal to this policy and did not engage in any contradictory activity. As is expressed by an expert, during the war the country demonstrated a peaceful attitude and fulfilled the responsibilities that neutrality policy imposed on it.[163] There are two specific areas of activity that need to be mentioned which indicate Turkmenistan's clear attitude of neutrality: its contribution to the peaceful resolution of the conflict by hosting conferences in its capital and the of opening its doors to refugees.

---

[159] In Moscow (5-15 April 1994); in Tehran (18-25 June 1994); in Islamabad (October 20 - November 1, 1994); in Almaty (May 22-June 1, 1995); in Ashgabat (3-24 November 1995, 26 January - 18 February 1996, 8 - 21 July 1996); in Mashhad and Tehran (5 January -19 February 1997); in Moscow (February 26 - March 9, 1997); in Tehran (April 9 - May 28). Pannier, B. (2017, June 27). The Many Agents of Tajikistan's Path to Peace. Retrieved July 11, 2018, from https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-end-of-civil-war/28581673.html.

[160] Since then he won all presidential elections and remains the head of Tajikistan as of 2018.

[161] *Tajikistan an Uncertain Peace*. (2001): 3-4. Osh/Brussel: ICG Asia Report No 30.

[162] Epkenhans, T. (2016): 11. *The Origins of the Civil War in Tajikistan; Nationalism, Islamism and Violent Conflict in Post-Soviet Space.* (M. Laruelle, Ed.). London: Lexington Books.

[163] Pannier, B. (2017, June 26). The Many Agents of Tajikistan's Path to Peace. Retrieved June 4, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-civil-war-peace-20th-anniversary-rahmon-nuri/28579612.html.

During the civil war in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan did not get involved in the conflict and did not help the Tajik government either militarily (such as sending troops) or financially. Furthermore, Turkmenistan refused to be part of any military bloc or alliance. It however, contributed to process of conflict resolution by hosting the fifth round of negotiations held between the Tajik government and opposition forces in three separate periods in Ashgabat between 3-24 November 1995, 26 January - 18 February 1996 and 8 - 21 July 1996. This round of inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation would be organized after the visit of Dmitry Rurikov, the assistant of the Russian President Yeltsin, to Turkmenistan. Rurikov held meetings with the Tajik President and the Turkmen President as well as the leaders of the delegation of the Tajik opposition in the Ashgabat.[164]

Before the start of the fifth round of negotiations President Turkmenbashi accepted the Tajik delegation and the opposition forces and encouraged both sides to engage in a constructive dialogue. Turkmenbashi officially announced that:

> Turkmenistan would not exert any pressure on either side and would maintain its neutral position. In addition, the country would not send military assistance to the Tajik Government.[165]

In the fifth round of negotiations hosted by Turkmenistan, the main emphasis was on peace-building between the two sides of the conflict. It has been suggested that in these three consecutive negotiations the discussions revolved around ceasefire options and creating a peaceful environment to protect regional stability and balance.[166]

---

[164] McAuliffe, C. (2006): 4-5. Tajikistan Peace Negotiations. *Al Nakhlah*.

[165] Соибназаров, Х. (2006). Межтаджикские Переговоры В Ашхабаде (Inter-Tajik Negotiations in Ashgabat). Retrieved September 5, 2018, from http://igpi.ru/monitoring/1047645476/1050412225/Tadjkistan0196.htm.

[166] Vukovic, S. (2015): 76. Tajikistan. *International Multiparty Mediation and Conflict Management: Challenges of Cooperation and Coordination*. New York: Routledge.

The second area in which Turkmenistan remained neutral during the civil war was related to the issue of refugees. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the number of people displaced in the country was calculated as 800.000 out of a total population of approximately 5.6 million.[167] During the civil war, there were people who had escaped outside Tajikistan as well as people who had to go to other areas within the country. Asylum seekers who escaped abroad were looking for safe places in neighboring countries, particularly in Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. UNHCR reported that 27.500 people were placed in the UNHCR camps in the Balkh province near Mazar-i-Sharif. 25.000 people were placed in four camps in Afghanistan, one in Konduz and three in Takhar.[168]

During the Tajik civil war, Turkmenistan also opened its doors to the Tajik refugees who were granted citizenship right after their arrival to Turkmenistan. Accommodations have also been provided for them in the Akhal, Lebap and Mary provinces.[169] Moreover, they were given employment opportunities. Niyazov explained this process with the following words:

> More than 16,000 Tajik refugees came to our country during the Tajik civil war, which continued between 1992 and 1997. 16,298 of them were granted citizenship rights. And they are given an environment where they can live in peace and prosperity under the roof of our neutral country [and] they enjoy the benefits of being citizens of Turkmenistan.[170]

---

[167] Tajik Refugees in Northern Afghanistan: Obstacles to Repatriation. (1996, May 1). Retrieved October 17, 2018, from http://www.refworld.org/docid/45c9a5272.html. This figure includes both internally displaced people and refugees migrating to other countries.

[168] Tajik Refugees in Northern Afghanistan: Obstacles to Repatriation. (1996, May 1). Retrieved October 17, 2018, from http://www.refworld.org/docid/45c9a5272.html. This figure includes both internally displaced people and refugees migrating to other countries.

[169] Tajik Refugees Await Naturalization. (2004, August 30). Retrieved October 1, 2018, from http://www.irinnews.org/report/26003/turkmenistan-tajik-refugees-await-naturalisation.

[170] Turkmenistan Grants Citizenship to 16,000 Refugees. (2005, August 5). Retrieved August 6, 2018, from https://reliefweb.int/report/tajikistan/turkmenistan-grants-citizenship-16000-refugees.

It is possible to argue that the attitude of Turkmenistan during the Tajik civil war was noticed and appreciated by the international community. For example, at a UN meeting held on December 11, 2010, during which the 15th anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality policy was being discussed, Lynn Pascoe, speaking in the name of General Secretary Ban Ki-moon, said the following:

> Turkmenistan's neutrality policy is one of the greatest and most important achievements of the country and that this policy allows Turkmenistan to establish peaceful relations with neighboring countries in every sense. For example, the Tajik civil war has become one of the most important events in the region. However, during this civil war, Turkmenistan has remained faithful to its neutrality policy and has never been involved in any military aid or encouragement. On the contrary, Turkmenistan has allowed the negotiations for a peaceful atmosphere to be held in the country.[171]

3.3. The Rise of Taliban

The rise of Taliban in Afghanistan will be examined as the second regional problem that influenced Turkmenistan and presented a challenge in terms of acting as a neutral country during this period as well as trying to contribute to the stability of the region.

Taliban is an Islamist movement that ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001. It was created by Mullah Mohammad Omar in the province of Kandahar in the spring of 1994 during the Afghan civil war of 1992-1996. Since autumn 1994 it was mostly composed of Pashtun students from Pakistani religious schools and received assistance from Pakistan (weapons and military training). In the winter of 1994 the Taliban began to struggle for more power within various groups of Afghan mujahideen. In 1995, they established control over southern and western Afghanistan and in the winter of 1995 besieged Kabul. In March 1996, the mujahideen groups under the leadership of Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbeddin

[171] Fifteen Years of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Brought Steady Realization of Nation's Aspiration to Become Force for Progress, Says Secretary-General. (2010, December 13). Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sgsm13316.doc.htm.

Hekmatyar formed a coalition against them, but on 26 September 1996 the Taliban drove them out of the Afghan capital and proclaimed the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under Mullah Mohammad Omar. In May 1997, they tried to take Mazar-i-Sharif under their control but failed. However, in August 1998 they managed to take this city as well as most of northern Afghanistan. There remained only a small region in the north-west of the country, which was under the control of the anti-Taliban forces. However, although 90% of the Afghan territory was under the control of the Taliban, their government was officially recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.[172]

Talib means an Islamic student, and the Taliban is the plural of the term. The Taliban's goal was to create the ideal Islamic society that had existed during the time of Prophet Muhammad.[173] A such, they established an Islamist regime in Afghanistan based on strict implementation of the Shariah norms, in the interpretation of which radical Wahhabism was connected with a local ethical-disciplinary religious tradition. There was a ban on television, the internet, fine arts, musical instruments, white shoes (as white was the color of the Taliban flag). Men were required to wear a beard of a certain length. Women were not allowed to work, to be treated by male doctors, to appear in public places with an open face and without a husband or a male relative; their access to education was significantly limited (in 2001 girls accounted for only 1% of those attending school). In addition, medieval types of punishments were widely practiced. For example, for theft, one or two hands of the thief would be cut off. The Taliban were marked by extreme religious intolerance. As adherents of the Sunni form of Islam, they persecuted the Shiites, which is why their relations with neighboring Iran deteriorated sharply. In March 2001, they blew up two giant Buddha statues carved into the rocks of Bamyan in the 3rd and 6th centuries, which caused

[172] Coll, S. (2005): 14. *Ghost Wars*. New York: Penguin.

[173] Crews, R. D. (2008): 63. *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* (A. Tarzi, Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

condemnation throughout the world. In short, the Taliban did not respect or tolerate any different views in the country.[174]

The Taliban regime's reputation for cooperation with terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaeda, was especially troubling. On the Afghan territory, training camps of militants interfered. In August 1998, the US Navy inflicted a bomb strike on some of these camps in retaliation for the bombings of American embassies in East Africa. In 1999 and 2000, the UN Security Council adopted two resolutions calling on the Taliban to stop supporting terrorism, but these resolutions were completely ignored.[175]

The day after the terrorist attacks on the September 11, 2001, organized by Al-Qaeda, the US accused the Taliban leadership and threatening to use force, demanded that its leader Usame bin Laden should be extradited.[176] Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates severed diplomatic relations with the Taliban. On October 7, 2001, US troops and their allies, together with the Northern Alliance, began a military operation in Afghanistan. After the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif on 9 November, the anti-Taliban coalition started to gain more power. On November 12, the Taliban were forced to leave Kabul, and by 9 December retreated to the border areas with Pakistan. Part of the moderate leaders of the Taliban recognized the new government of Hamid Karzai, and a significant part of its rank-and-file members abandoned the armed struggle. Today many radical Taliban are in prison, in exile or underground. For a long time, Mullah Mohammad Omar could not be caught.[177] However, it was later reported that he died in 2003.[178]

---

[174] Johnson, T. (2018): 74. *Taliban Narratives: The Use and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[175] 9/11 Commission Report. p. 66. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf.

[176] Johnson, T. (2018): 219. *Taliban Narratives: The Use and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[177] Crews, R. D. (2008): 62. *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* (A. Tarzi, Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

For Turkmenistan, the rising of Taliban and the turmoil in Afghanistan also posed a danger, and at this point Turkmenistan again preferred to remain neutral in the direction of its foreign policy. However, the direct border between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan in the region made it quite difficult. Turkmenbashi stated that the situation in Afghanistan should not be underestimated:

> It would be wrong to say that the Taliban is a great danger to the Central Asian region. But still Afghanistan is a source of extremism and drug trafficking for our countries.[179]

Until 2001, Turkmenistan was the only country in Central Asia to establish good neighborly relations with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. During the Taliban period, there were two consulates of Turkmenistan, one in Kabul and the other in Mazar-i-Sharif. Probably there was no other choice for the Turkmen authorities, since no military force could protect the Turkmen-Afghan border and Turkmenistan could not become a member of any military bloc in accordance with its neutrality policy.

Also, during the turmoil in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan adopted a very moderate attitude to the refugees who escaped from the conflict as was the case in Tajikistan. The official entry of Afghan refugees to Turkmenistan as well as their registration were conducted by the two consulates. According to the information given by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan had a very positive attitude to the refugees who came from Afghanistan, as did the refugees from Tajikistan.[180] As Ruven Mendikdivela, the chief of the UNHCR's Ashgabat office stated:

---

[178] Bergen, P., & Hanna, J. (2015, July 30). Taliban's Mullah Omar died in 2013, Afghan Government Says. Retrieved July 20, 2018, from https://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/29/asia/afghanistan-mullah-omar/index.html.

[179] Najibullah, F. (2009, June 12). Threat of Taliban Incursion Raised In Central Asia. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/Threat_Of_Taliban_Incursion_Raised_In_Central_Asia__Again/1752944.html.

[180] Afghan Refugees Want Third-Country Resettlement. (2003, July 3). Retrieved September 12, 2018, from http://www.irinnews.org/fr/node/189706.

> Turkmenistan fulfils its humanitarian obligations towards international refugees in every way by supporting them in terms of education, job and health care.[181]

As for Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), the good relationship between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan in the direction of Turkmenistan's neutrality policy can be explained as follows:

> Turkmenistan became the only country among all Soviet republics that achieved universal recognition as a neutral state. There were no [unnecessary] military expenses, they were not fighting with anyone, and there were even excellent relations with Afghanistan.[182]

After the fall of the Taliban in 1996, Turkmenistan actively helped the antiterrorist coalition, allowing free passage of humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan. In this rather critical period of turmoil, Turkmenistan was the first country to provide such an opportunity when UN's World Food Program (WFP) organized the transport of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. The first international aircraft carrying humanitarian supplies took off from Brindisi, Italy and landed in Turkmenistan on September 28, 2001. After that the Turkmen government and representatives of the UN in Turkmenistan have cooperated to ensure that such supplies are properly transported to Afghanistan.[183]

In the post-Taliban period, several countries including Germany and Turkey wanted to contribute to the process of establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan. However, from the perspective of Afghan officials, the role played

---

[181] Afghan Refugees Want Third-Country Resettlement. (2003, July 3). Retrieved September 12, 2018, from http://www.irinnews.org/fr/node/189706.

[182] Morokova, A. (2006, December 21). Владимир Жириновский: символично, что мой лучший друг Туркменбаши умер в день рождения сталина (Vladimir Zhirinovsky: Symbolically, My Best Friend Turkmenbashi Died on Stalin's Birthday). Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://newdaynews.ru/moskow/97542.html.

[183] Начались поставки гуманитарных грузов в Афганистан через территорию Туркменистана. (Deliveries of Humanitarian Cargoes to Afghanistan Begin Through the Territory of Turkmenistan). (2001, September 28). Retrieved from http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/14358.

by Turkmenistan was much more constructive and credible. According to a member of Afghan High Peace Council, Mulla Jora Akhund, Turkmenistan was the most appropriate country to hold peace meetings as compared to other countries. Akhund stated that:

> Turkmenistan had a significant advantage to host peace meetings. Due to its neutrality policy, Turkmenistan did not send any troops to Afghanistan like other NATO member countries.[184]

In this context, according to him, this country was their number one choice.

On October 21, 2002, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan made a trip to Turkmenistan. During this trip, Annan met with Turkmenbashi and congratulated him for the peaceful stance of the country regarding Afghanistan with the following words:

> I congratulate you for the attitude of Turkmenistan in terms of regional security and peace in the face of the turmoil in the region … I [also] congratulate Turkmenistan for its support of the treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.[185]

As mentioned earlier, one of the most important features of being a neutral country is the non-existence of any kind of nuclear weapons. Article 6 of Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality law ensures that no nuclear weapons will be kept within the borders of Turkmenistan.[186] As such, Kofi Annan's remarks, creating and even supporting a region free from nuclear weapons during the Afghan conflict, is in fact what the neutrality policy required.

---

[184] Tahir, M. (2011, May 27). Peace Talks with the Taliban in Turkmenistan? Retrieved July 13, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/peace_talks_taliban_turkmenistan/24207460.html.

[185] Annan Hails Turkmenistan's Contribution to Peace in Afghanistan. (2002, October 22). Retrieved August 10, 2018, from https://news.un.org/en/story/2002/10/49122-annan-hails-turkmenistans-contribution-peace-afghanistan.

[186] 90th Plenary Meeting, Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan. Retrieved May 11, 2018, from A/RES/50/80.

3.4. The Involvement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

With the end of the Second World War in 1945, Western European countries were faced with the challenge of economic reconstruction as a result of the devastation caused by the war. They now had to diminish their defense expenditures and create a stable society. Furthermore, the Soviet Union had emerged as a superpower with a strong military base. It has also become clear that the ideological objectives of the Soviet state in terms of spreading communism would pose additional threats. Western European countries were now worried about the developments taking place in Central and Eastern European countries where Soviet style regimes were established. From the perspective of the Western world here that were significant problems in terms of suppression of fundamental human rights and freedoms.[187]

Developments such as the February 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia which brought the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to power and the blockade of Berlin by the USSR in 1948 increased such worries. Western European countries such as Belgium, France, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and the UK wanted to establish a common defense system in response to these military threats. Established by the Brussels Treaty signed in March 1948, the Western European Defense Organization constituted the first step towards restructuring Western Europe's security. This was also the first step in the process of signing the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949.[188]

The signatories of the Brussels Treaty started negotiations with the United States and Canada to establish a North Atlantic Alliance based on security guarantees and reciprocal commitments. Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Portugal were invited, and as a result, the North Atlantic Treaty that established NATO was

[187] Collins, B. J. (2011): 26. *NATO: A Guide to the Issues*. USA: Praeger.

[188] Ibid.

signed by 12 countries on April 4, 1949 in Washington. In 1952 Greece and Turkey, in 1955 Germany and in 1982 Spain became members of the alliance.[189]

According to the Washington Treaty, NATO's primary task was to protect the freedom and security of member states. The alliance aimed to spread the common values of its members, such as democracy, individual freedoms, rule of law and peaceful solution of disputes. It was a transatlantic forum where member states would consult on security issues of common interest and act jointly. By its nature, it symbolized the indivisibility of the security of North America and Europe. According to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO is an organization that commonly defends its members in case of attack.[190]

After the end of the Cold War, NATO had to redefine its general mission and goal as well as its strategies regarding cooperation with different countries and/or the regions of the world, including Central Asia. In this context, cooperation between NATO and the Central Asian republics focused mostly around the "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) program. The purpose of this program was to cooperate with the former Eastern Bloc countries for promoting peace in the world, especially in Europe. The participating countries to PfP adopted the principles in the UN Charter, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, they also declared to respect principles such as the immunity of borders, the independence of countries, territorial integrity and the peaceful means of resolving problems. The program can be described as the most important policy of NATO's rapprochement and cooperation towards the ex-republics of the Soviet Union as well as Eastern Europe.[191]

---

[189] Following the end of the Cold War, NATO had three expansion waves: Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 1999, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in 2004 and Croatia and Albania in 2009 became members. Collins, B. J. (2011): 27. *NATO: A Guide to the Issues*. USA: Praeger.

[190] Collins, B. J. (2011): 92. *NATO: A Guide to the Issues*. USA: Praeger.

[191] Şilibekova, A. (2007): 118. Yeni NATO ve Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri. *Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi, 10*.

Turkmenistan, at the beginning of its independence was not strong enough to meet its defense needs on its own. There were still Soviet troops located on its territory. This was the main reason behind the July 31, 1992 agreement with the Russian Federation on joint measures to establish the armed forces of Turkmenistan. Between 1992 and 1994, an operational group of the Russian Defense Ministry acted in Ashgabat to coordinate the activities of the two states in the military sphere. The protection of the borders of Turkmenistan was also important taking into account the geographic location of the country between Iran and Afghanistan. On December 23, 1993, the Russian-Turkmen agreement on the joint protection of the state borders of Turkmenistan and the status of servicemen of the Russian border troops on its territory was signed. However, around the same time, Turkmenistan also took in a different direction. In 1994, it became the first post-Soviet country to join the NATO's PfP program.[192] Turkmenbashi, who aimed for a neutral country wanted to promote peace in the region and this program allowed the Turkmen soldiers to receive professional training for the purpose of protecting peace.[193]

After September 11, 2001, the US government sought to intensify its military cooperation with Turkmenistan by deploying military bases in the country. However, Turkmenistan's attitude towards the US was different from other Central Asian countries. Turkmenistan in this case, again in accordance with the rules of the policy of neutrality, did not allow such military bases to be established on its territory. However, during the US-led operation against the

[192] Four of the five republics of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) joined the PfP Program. This cooperation, which started on paper in early 1990s took a different turn and active cooperation with Central Asia began with September 11, 2001 attacks. NATO established military bases and sent military personal and vehicles to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Şilibekova, A. (2007): 118. Yeni NATO ve Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri. *Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi, 10*.

[193] Nichol, J. (2009): 3. Foreign Policy and Defense. *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*. Washington: Congressional Research Service.

Taliban, Ashgabat provided land and air corridors for the delivery of humanitarian supplies to Afghanistan.[194]

In mid-2000's, Turkmenistan entered into a new stage of cooperation with NATO. President Turkmenbashi approved the Individual Partnership Program of Turkmenistan within the framework of the NATO's PfP program for 2004-2005. According to one of the Turkmen correspondents, during the meeting in which the document for this program was signed, Turkmenbashi said the following:

> This decision was dictated by the interests of cooperation to strengthen security and to maintain peace and stability in the region.[195]

According to Turkmenbashi, however, Turkmenistan could only be affiliated with NATO within the framework of humanitarian issues and training of military personnel.[196]

Vladimir Zhirinovsky, in his speech made after the death of Turkmenbashi explained the attitude of the late President towards NATO as follows:

> I know Turkmenistan, I lived there and I think that Saparmurat Atayevich [Turkmenbashi] chose the most suitable form of government that corresponds to the conditions of all those who live in this country. It is impossible to lead Turkmenistan in any other way! And there is no need to be part of the US occupation forces, that is NATO, and impose their democracy on [the Turkmen people]. There are no military bases, no conflicts. The country itself does not pose any danger to anyone - a quiet, calm, sunny and neutral country.[197]

---

[194] Curtis, G., & Meditz, S. (2007): 13. Country Profile: Turkmenistan. *Library of Congress – Federal Research Division*.

[195] Новому этапу партнерства Туркменистана с НАТО (Starting of the New Stage of Partnership of Turkmenistan with NATO). (2004, March 30). Retrieved July 27, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/15709.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Morokova, A. (2006, December 21). Владимир Жириновский: символично, что мой лучший друг Туркменбаши умер в день рождения сталина (Vladimir Zhirinovsky: Symbolically, My Best Friend

3.5. The Foundation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

After the dissolution of the USSR and the loss of the validity of the Warsaw Pact, many regional and global countries have turned their eyes to Central Asia basically for economic and strategic reasons. In this general framework two regional countries, the Russian Federation (RF), which emerged as the successor of the USSR, and China, which started to closely monitor the newly independent post-Soviet republics, soon adopted a policy of rapprochement.[198] Both of these countries aimed to guarantee regional stability, border security and economic development. In addition, they both opposed US presence in the region. The RF perceived NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe as a threat and China was disturbed by US pressure on human rights within its borders. Such concerns opened the way for progress towards co-operation between Moscow and Beijing in the post-Soviet era. The rapprochement between the RF and China were closely followed by independent but weak countries Central Asian countries. They believed that this rapprochement would be an advantage for them.[199]

In 1996, the Shanghai Five was formed on the basis of agreements on strengthening confidence in the military field and on the mutual reduction of armed forces in the border areas between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia and Tajikistan. The heads of the five countries came together in Shanghai and Moscow to sign the "Increasing Military Confidence in Border Areas" and "Reducing Military Powers in Border Areas" agreements. Between 1998 and 2000, the summit meetings were held in Almaty, Bishkek and Dushanbe and member countries began exchanging views on areas such as politics, economy

---

Turkmenbashi Died on Stalin's Birthday). Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://newdaynews.ru/moskow/97542.html.

[198] Petreski, D., Percinkova, E., & Iliev, A. (2015): 317. USSR-China Relations in the Cold and Post-Cold War Era. *Wulfenia Journal, 22* (3). doi:10.13140/RG.2.1.1896.6241.

[199] Ibid.

and security, as well as ways to increase confidence in border regions.[200] At the summit of heads of states held in Shanghai on June 14-15, 2001, it was decided to transform Shanghai Five into a regional organization in order to cooperate more effectively in the fight against terrorism, separatism and fundamentalism. The joint declaration on participation of Uzbekistan to "Shanghai Five" was now also adopted at the summit. The organization was now officially renamed as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).[201]

The SCO's secretariat is located in Beijing, China and its Terrorism Fighting Organization is located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Today there are 6 members, 6 observers and 6 dialogue partners. Observers are Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan and dialogue partners are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey.[202] The highest decision-making body in the SCO is the Council of Heads of State (CHS). They meet once a year to discuss the strategy of multilateral cooperation and priority areas within the organization, address fundamental and pressing issues of economic and other cooperation, and approves the organization's annual budget.[203]

In addition to the sessions of the CHS, there are meetings at the level of heads of parliaments, secretaries of security councils, foreign ministers, heads of law enforcement agencies, supreme and arbitral courts and prosecutors general. The coordination mechanism within the SCO is the Council of National Coordinators. The organization has two standing bodies the Secretariat in Beijing under the

---

[200] Cheng, J. Y. (2011): 635. The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's Initiative in Regional Institutional Building. *Journal of Contemporary Asia, 41* (4). doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2011.610618.

[201] Ibid., 637.

[202] Ibşd., 633.

[203] Шанхайская Организация Сотрудничества (ШОС): история и цели создания. (Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): History and Goals of Creation). (2013, October 13). Retrieved July 11, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20120606/664859152.html.

leadership of the Secretary General and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in Tashkent.[204]

While Turkmenistan became a member of various organizations in the post-Soviet era, Turkmenbashi preferred not to be a member of the SCO.[205] As mentioned earlier, soon after Turkmenistan gained its independence, President Turkmenbashi would start to express his goal of neutrality as the foreign policy line of his country. As he repeatedly stated in *Ruhnama*, he preferred to be able to act independently without any foreign intervention.[206] The idea of being a member of the SCO meant to act together with the other member countries of this organization. In other words, being a member of such an alliance could potentially limit the domestic as well as external freedom of Turkmenistan.

In an environment in which regional balances and dynamics were changing rapidly among neighboring and non-neighboring countries, internal and external security and stability were the most important priorities for Turkmenbashi. He did not want any country to interfere in its domestic and foreign affairs. As is suggested in a report, neutrality policy, although it could be seen as isolation or regression, actually made the country stronger.[207] While Turkmenistan gave importance to regional cooperation in terms of issues such as trade and transportation, it remained highly cautious to other issues that could jeopardize its neutral status. It has been suggested that SCO was seen as an organization that

---

[204] Шанхайская Организация Сотрудничества (ШОС): история и цели создания. (Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): History and Goals of Creation). (2013, October 13). Retrieved July 11, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20120606/664859152.html.

[205] Haas, M. D. (2016): 206. Security Policy and Developments in Central Asia: Security Documents Compared with Security Challenges. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. doi:10.1080/13518046.2016.1168123.

[206] Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005): 4-27-34-256. *Ruhnama*. Ashgabat.

[207] Kuchins, A. C., Mankoff, J., & Backes, O. (2015): 2. *Central Asia in a Reconnecting Eurasia: Turkmenistan's Evolving Foreign Economic and Security Interests*. Washington: Center for Strategic & International Studies.

could potentially force Turkmenistan to act against its main foreign policy goal of permanent neutrality.

According to an expert, Turkmenbashi's speech made at the UN back in 1995 about the acceptance and recognition of the status of permanent neutrality of his country gave clues about why Turkmenistan did not become a full member of SCO. In this speech Turkmenbashi said the following:

> The positive permanent neutrality, non-interference into internal affairs of other states, non-alignment with any military blocks and other international obligations envisaged in the country's Constitution are the basis of Turkmenistan's relations with all world states.[208]

According to this expert, the main reason why Turkmenistan is not a member of this organization is that it is seen in contradiction with the neutrality policy.[209]

In the next chapter, Turkmenistan's changing relations with some international organizations as well as its biletral relations with some of the regional countries in the period of the second President of the country, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov will be analyzed within the framework of the neutrality policy of Turkmenistan.

[208] Roy, M. S. (2011): 662. Strategic Importance of Turkmenistan for India. *Strategic Analysis, 35* (4), 661-682. Retrieved August 5, 2018, from https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2011.585791.

[209] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

THE PERIOD OF GURBANGULY BERDIMUHAMMEDOV AND THE REGIONAL DYNAMICS

This chapter analyzes the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan in the period of the second president of the country, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov in terms of how this policy is applied within the context of two main topics. The first is Turkmenistan's changing relations with international organizations with a specific emphasis on the United Nations (UN), The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The second is the importance given by the new president to expand bilateral relations with regional countries, such as Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Russia, China and Iran. As is explained below, although the general foreign policy orientation of Turkmenistan, that is permanent neutrality, did not change during the Berdimuhammedov era, the country is observed to be more active in its relations with both certain international organizations and other countries. In other words, as compared to the Turkmenbashi era, the Berdimuhammedov era witnessed a slight change in Turkmenistan's foreign policy attitude, influencing and being influenced by regional dynamics.

Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov was born in 1957 in the village of Babarap of the Geok-Tepe district of Ashgabat, the capital city of Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (TSSR). He completed his primary and secondary education in this region. In 1979 he graduated from the Dental Faculty of the Turkmen State Medical Institute. Starting from 1979, Berdimuhammedov worked in Ashgabat and its villages as a dentist. In 1987, he went to Moscow where he received the graduate degree of medical science in 1990. Between 1990 and 1995, Berdimuhammedov held the positions of research assistant at the Department of

Therapeutic Dentistry, and then associate professor and dean of the Dental Faculty of the Turkmen State Medical Institute.[210]

On May 28, 1997, Berdimuhammedov was appointed as the Minister of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan. In 1998 he became the head of the Saparmurat Niyazov International Medical Center. On April 3, 2001, in addition to his ministerial position, Berdimuhammedov became the vice-president of Turkmenistan, responsible from areas of health, education and science. Starting from August 2004, he also became responsible for culture and media.[211]

When Turkmenbashi died of a sudden cardiac arrest on December 21, 2006, Berdimuhammedov became the acting president of Turkmenistan. According to the constitution of Turkmenistan, the powers of the president of the country had to go to the chairman of parliament (Mejlis), and he had no right to participate in the new elections which were to be held two months later. However, the chairman of the parliament, Ovezgeldy Atayev, was taken into custody, and the acting president of the Turkmen Security Council appointed Berdimuhammedov, who was also appointed head of the commission for organizing the funeral of Turkmenbashi which took place on December 24, 2006. Two days later, in an extraordinary session, the *Halk Maslahaty* was convened to determine the probable successors to the late president.[212]

On December 26, 2006, Berdimuhammedov was elected as the chairman of the *Halk Maslahaty*, which had the constitutionally given right of determining candidates in the next presidential elections which would be held on February, 11, 2007. Ten candidates were nominated in total from the five *velayats* (regions)

---

[210] Биография Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова (Biography of Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov). (2012, June 29). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20120629/686805863.html.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Kimmage, D. (2008): 16. Security Challenges in Central Asia: Implications for the EU's Engagement Strategy (N. J. Melvin, Ed.). *Engaging Central Asia, the European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia. Brussels:* Centre for European Policy Studies.

of Turkmenistan and the capital city Ashgabat. Berdimuhammedov became the eleventh candidate nominated by the second secretary of the ruling Democratic Party. The *Halk Maslahaty* approved five of these eleven candidates, including Berdimuhammedov[213], who won the elections by 89 percent of the votes.[214]

Soon after Berdimuhammedov was elected president, he was given the nickname *Arkadağ* (supporter) by the Chairman of the Central Election Commission[215], which became a commonly used expression among the Turkmen people.

The new president pursued a more relaxed policy in domestic issues as compared to Turkmenbashi, especially in the fields of education and social life.[216] Berdimuhammedov, introduced certain changes that would bring Turkmen education more in line with international systems.[217] Furthermore, the Academy of Sciences, which had been closed down during the Turkmenbashi era was reopened. In addition, ban on some artistic activities (such as music, ballet and theater) would be removed. Media channels would include the speeches of all candidates during presidential election campaigns. The suspended pension payments started to be paid again.[218]

---

[213] Denison, M. (2008): 86. Turkmenistan and the EU: Contexts and Possibilities for Greater Engagement (N. J. Melvin, Ed.). *Engaging Central Asia, the European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia. Brussels:* Centre for European Policy Studies.

[214] New Turkmen President Sworn In. (2007, February 14). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1074693.html.

[215] Turkmenistan Country Profile. (2018, February 26). Retrieved October 20, 2018, from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16094646.

[216] Erol, S. M., & Musaoğlu, N. (2009): 477. Orta Asya'da Demokrasi Söyleminden Otoriter Rejimlere Geçiş (E. Efegil, Ed.). *Yeni Büyük Oyun*. Ankara: Platin Yayınları.

[217] Gaynor, K. L. (2017): 475. Transformations in Turkmen Higher Education: Current Opportunities and Challenges at a New University. *Central Asian Survey, 36* (4). Retrieved July 20, 2018, from https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2017.1367645.

[218] Malashenko, A. (2013): 178. *The Fight for Influence: Russia in Central Asia*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In terms of foreign policy, Berdimuhammedov affirmed his commitment to the policy of permanent neutrality right from the beginning, although it has been predicted that the country would give up this policy which resulted in the isolation of the country.[219] The newly accepted constitution of the country (the 2008 Constitution) clearly stated that the foundation of foreign policy of Turkmenistan would be based on the policy of permanent neutrality.[220]

In addition, in 2010, during the 15th anniversary celebrations of the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan, Berdimuhammedov made a speech under the title of "Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan: Cooperation for Peace, Security and Development." In this speech he stated that:

> These days we celebrate a big holiday - the 15th anniversary of the international recognition of the neutrality of Turkmenistan. This is a truly significant date for our people and also an important event in the independent history of the Turkmen state…We chose a model that we called positive neutrality, and formulated its fundamental principles: peacefulness, non-interference in the affairs of other states, respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-participation in international military organizations and treaties. What dictated us such a choice? Of course, first of all, we were guided by national interests. The young Turkmen state wanted to live in peace and harmony with its neighbors, maintain friendly, equal relations with all countries, and develop mutually beneficial economic and trade relations with them. We were convinced that only under such conditions would it be possible to ensure our people peace and tranquility, to fulfill plans for economic and social development.[221]

---

[219] Bandyopadhyay, L. (2013): 163. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: A Comparison of the Niyazov and the Post-Niyazov Regimes (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

[220] Sarma, A. S. (2013): 179. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy After Niyazov: Looking Beyond 'Positive Neutrality'? (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

[221] "Постоянный нейтралитет Туркменистана: сотрудничество во имя мира, безопасности и развития". ("Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan: Cooperation for Peace, Security and Development.") (2010, December 14). Retrieved November 1, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/articles/35485.html.

This general foreign policy framework that Berdimuhammedov adopted would not change over the course of the next 10 years. In his presidential inauguration speech on 17 February 2017, Berdimuhammedov would present his 7-Year Foreign Policy Plan[222], which indicated a clear continuity of the permanent neutrality policy of the country. Berdimuhammedov began his speech by pointing out the importance that he gave to the neutrality policy:

> The world today is rapidly changing, all sorts of new political and economic structures are emerging. New threats and challenges are also emerging. Such conditions require a responsible and deeply thought out foreign policy which our country builds on the basis of clearly defined principles and basic provisions of permanent neutrality, relying on the historical experience of the people, incorporating the values, traditions and customs accumulated over the centuries. Neutrality allowed us to pursue our expectations with determination. Respecting other people's culture, tradition, worldview and religion is our most important goal. All this helps us to build fruitful and equal relations with all of our partners, creates conditions for thorough negotiations on any issue, find mutually acceptable solutions, and actively involve in new forms of international cooperation.[223]

When the Berdimuhammedov period is analyzed in terms of the general foreign policy orientation of Turkmenistan, it is possible to suggest that as compared to the Turkmenbashi era more active steps have been taken in several areas.[224] In one of his speeches Berdimuhammedov said that although being permanently

---

[222] At the end of his speech on this document Berdimuhammedov said the following: I instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement all the tasks in this document. Heads of ministries, departments and other state bodies, in drawing up daily and long-term plans for their activities, are also instructed to follow this document. In whatever direction our foreign policy is conducted, it should always be the measurement. It should pursue one main goal - the creation of favorable international conditions for the internal development of Turkmenistan as well as contribute to ensuring the legitimate interests of our neutral state in the world space, to serve to enhance its credibility as a reliable and stable partner.

[223] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

[224] Bandyopadhyay, L. (2013): 159. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: A Comparison of the Niyazov and the Post-Niyazov Regimes (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

neutral, Turkmenistan attaches importance to moderate relations with international institutions and regional countries.[225]

The next part of this chapter will analyze how Turkmenistan strengthened its ties with the above-mentioned international organizations as well as regional countries.

4.1. Turkmenistan's Changing Relations with International Organizations

As mentioned above, as compared to the Turkmenbashi era, in the Berdimuhammedov era, Turkmenistan adopted a more active attitude in terms of developing its ties with international organizations. In this era, the country became more involved in the activities of the UN, the NATO, and the SCO although it continued to remain within the general framework of its neutrality policy.

4.1.1. Relations with the UN

Since he has come to power Berdimuhammedov has accepted the UN to be a leading and supreme organization of international politics. The country hosted some seminars and conferences organized by the UN, such as the one in 2012 held in Ashgabat. This was a seminar, organized by the UN Economic Commission for Europe, entitled Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Policy and Legal Issues for Ministers and Agencies of Turkmenistan.[226]

Another example of Turkmenistan's developing relationship with the UN is the speech Berdimuhammedov made at the regular UN meeting in New York in 2015. This speech was about the reasons why the president considered the UN an

[225] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

[226] *Seminar on ICT Policy and Legal Issues for The Heads of Ministers and Agencies of Turkmenistan*. (2012). Ashgabat: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

important and successful organization in global politics. Berdimuhammedov expressed his gratitude especially to the president of the organization because according to him the UN realized positive achievements in the international arena, sometimes under difficult conditions. Berdimuhammedov also stated that:

> Turkmenistan has applied the knowledge and guidance of the UN in everything it did and in all decisions it took since the day it has become independent. Cooperation with the UN will successfully be continued and new areas of collaboration will be developed.[227]

Berdimuhammedov, when he was making his speech about the 7-Year Foreign Policy Plan drew attention to his determination to continue this collaboration. Making a reference to the first article of the plan, he stated that Turkmenistan would give priority to the UN in its foreign policy. He mentioned that neutral Turkmenistan would always accept the UN as a guiding organization and that the recognition of Turkmenistan's neutrality policy by the international community made his country very proud, although bringing in many responsibilities. Berdimuhammedov also mentioned about the second article in which it is stated that Turkmenistan will act together with the UN in those issues that will negatively affect the region, such as environmental problems and epidemic diseases.[228]

Berdimuhammedov further made a reference to Article 4 of the 7-Year Foreign Policy Plan which states that Turkmenistan must strictly and unswervingly carry out the provisions of the resolutions of the General Assembly on the reliable and sustainable transit of energy resources. In this direction Turkmenistan must

---

[227] Türkmenistanyň Prezidenti Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedowyň Birleşen Milletler Guramasynyň Baş Assambleýasynyň 70-njı Mejlisinde Sözlän Sözi. (Speech of the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammeodv, in the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations). (2015, September 26). Retrieved November 2, 2018, from http://www.mfa.gov.tm/tk/articles/40.

[228] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

continue to build active cooperation with the UN member states in order to create favorable conditions for the work of a group of international experts in the preparation of the multilateral international legal instruments of the UN to ensure energy security and create a sustainable energy system. Article 5 stated that a transport system should also become one of the key areas of cooperation with the UN and its specialized agencies. In this regard, Berdimuhammedov stated that:

> It is necessary to actively implement the initiatives of our country to create transport corridors with the help of UN. We need to work to transform Central Asia into a major transportation and transit center on a continental scale.[229]

4.1.2. Relations with NATO

In the post-Turkmenbashi era, Turkmenistan also started to increase its cooperation with NATO. Considering the policy of permanent neutrality, the relations between the two sides continued in a limited framework but in a stable manner. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Turkmenbashi did not allow his country to engage in any activities with NATO except the PfP. In the period of Berdimuhammedov however Turkmenistan began to participate to the meetings of the organization, such as the NATO meeting held in Romania on 2-4 April, 2008. Berdimuhammedov participated to this meeting upon being invited. This participation was seen as a sign of gradual softening of the uncompromised attitude of Turkmenbashi.[230]

It has been reported that Turkmenistan's relationship with the West changed after Berdimuhammedov and George W. Bush met with each other in this NATO meeting. According to Michael Laubsch, an expert on Central Asia, who spoke to Turkmen service of RFE / RL:

---

[229] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

[230] Pannier, B. (2008, May 30). Turkmenistan: NATO Finds New Partner in Central Asia. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1144519.html.

> I think the negotiations between the Turkmen government and NATO were finalized already and I think that we can expect in the nearest future that more NATO forces will be located in Turkmenistan, definitely.[231]

In another report published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* Laubsch talked about the military base which NATO wants to establish in Turkmenistan and the various contacts it has for it.[232] At the same time, this report mentions Berdimuhammedov as the new president who tries to get his people out of isolation, attract foreign investors, and at the same time stabilize the regime.[233]

Same as Niyazov, Berdimuhammedov has also undertaken various initiatives within the framework of the neutrality policy for the provision and continuity of peace in the region. In this context, NATO's Secretary General Andres Fogh Rasmussen's special representative for South Caucasus and Central Asia, James Appathurai, has been in contact with Turkmenistan.[234] Meeting with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov, Appathurai noted that Turkmenistan has provided considerable support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan's social and economic infrastructure. Moreover, he added that they attach great importance to their relations with Turkmenistan, indicating that Ashgabat played a key role in the Central Asian region. Bearing in mind that Turkmenistan is open to positive co-operation with international organizations in the framework of the neutrality

---

[231] Pannier, B. (2008, May 30). Turkmenistan: NATO Finds New Partner in Central Asia. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1144519.html.

[232] Geheime Allianz (Secret Alliance). (2008, May 9). Retrieved August 16, 2018, from http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-57038097.html.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Merkezi Aziýadaky Hyzmatdaşlar. (Cooperation in Central Asia). (2014): 2. *NATO: Backgrounder*. Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20140416_140416-Backgrounder_CentralAsia_tkm.pdf.

status of the country, President Berdimuhammedov noted that they would support all kinds of cooperation in the name of peace, security and stability.[235]

4.1.3. Relations with the SCO

Although permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan continues to be the general foreign policy of the country, as compared to the Turkmenbashi era, in the period of Berdimuhammedov relations with the SCO too has increased and intensified.

Soon after Berdimuhammedov became president in 2007, he was invited as a guest of honor to the SCO meeting held in Bishkek on 16, August 2007.[236] Unlike Turkmenbashi who did not participate to the meetings of the organization but sent representatives instead, Berdimuhammedov accepted this invitation and went to Bishkek. In this meeting, ensuring the sustainability of world economy, reducing poverty, leveling socio-economic development, ensuring economic, environmental, energy, information security, as well as protecting the population and territories of the organization's member states from natural and environmental problems were discussed.[237]

After this first meeting, Berdimuhammedov continued to participate to the subsequent meetings of the organization held in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. In all of these meetings, Berdimuhammedov would engage in a constructive dialogue with the leaders of member states and express his positive

---

[235] Relations with Turkmenistan. (2018, September 28). Retrieved August 1, 2018, from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50317.htm.

[236] Anceschi, L. (2008): 139. *Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: Positive Neutrality and the Consolidation of the Turkmen Regime*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

[237] На саммите ШОС в Бишкеке подписана совместная декларация (At the SCO Summit in Bishkek, a Joint Declaration was signed) (2007, August 16). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://regnum.ru/news/871475.html.

comments about the organization. In addition, he would focus on peace and stability in the region.[238]

In the usual SCO meeting held in Tashkent on June 11, 2010, Berdimuhammedov stated that Turkmenistan was closely following the activities of the SCO and added that in the face of the security problem which Afghanistan has created in the region, Turkmenistan would act together with the SCO to keep the peace environment stable.[239]

On September 12, 2014, the next summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held in Dushanbe. At the end of the summit, the participants signed a new Dushanbe Declaration, identifying in it the main problems and tasks facing the organization. Berdimuhammedov again participated as the guest of honor to the summit on behalf of Turkmenistan which was both a dialogue partner and an observer in the organization.[240] Before the summit, Berdimuhammedov met with China's President Xi Jinping in Dushanbe. The two presidents stated that they will continue to deepen cooperation in the field of energy and will improve their cooperation in trade, manufacturing industries and agriculture.[241]

Berdimuhammedov also attended the SCO summit held on June 24, 2016 in Tashkent. In this meeting which also corresponded to the SCO's 15th anniversary, Berdimuhammedov stated that:

---

[238] Turkmenistan Speaks for Expansion of Capacity Building of World Economic Relations. (2016, June 24). Retrieved August 17, 2018, from http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/_eng/?id=6051.

[239] SCO Summit is Held in Tashkent Hu Jintao Attends and Delivers an Important Speech to the Summit. (2010, June 11). Retrieved November 15, 2018, from http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zgyw/t708530.htm.

[240] Kuchins, A., Mankoff, J., & Backes, O. (2015): 14. Turkmenistan's Foreign Economic and Security Policy. *Central Asia in a Reconnecting Eurasia: Turkmenistan's Evolving Foreign Economic and Security Interests*. Washington: Center for Strategic & International Studies.

[241] Си Цзиньпин встретился с президентом Туркменистана Гурбангулы Бердымухамедовым (Xi Jinping Meets with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov). (2014, September 12). Retrieved November 30, 2018, from https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/rus/zxxx/t1191244.shtml.

> SCO is a product of a great partnership that considers every country's agenda. Turkmenistan supports the elimination of any kind of confusion that will be experienced in the region. Also, it is important that current problems are solved quickly without lingering. Our country keeps its relations with all organizations working for security and sustainable development at this point.[242]

In this summit, Berdimuhammedov focused on possible areas of cooperation between his country and the SCO especially in terms of modernizing the industry, increasing trade technology, developing the volume of trade and diversifying imports and exports.[243] Furthermore, he expressed his opinion on being invited to the summit as follows:

> Thank you very much for your invitation. SCO is doing important work in our region and we are proud to be a part of it. We are always open to collaborations in the fields of energy, transportation, communication and commerce.[244]

Berdimuhammedov again attended as the guest of honor to the SCO meeting held on June 10, 2018 in Qingdao, China. He participated to this meeting as a special guest of the Chinese President Xi Jinping who had sent an official letter of invitation to Berdimuhammedov.[245] The most important issue of this meeting was regional security. The member states reaffirmed their readiness to increase cooperation with observer states and partners of the SCO, to engage in a dialogue on a mutually beneficial and equitable basis and to enhance the contacts and

---

[242] Turkmenistan Speaks for Expansion of Capacity Building of World Economic Relations. (2016, June 24). Retrieved August 17, 2018, from http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/_eng/?id=6051.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Ibid.

[245] China Ready to Mull Prospects of Strategic Partnership with Turkmenistan. (2018, March 23). Retrieved November 13, 2018, from https://www.azernews.az/region/129137.html.

interaction of the SCO with the UN and its specialized bodies, as well as with other international and regional organizations.[246]

4.2. Turkmenistan's Bilateral Relations with Regional Countries

As mentioned earlier, expanding bilateral relations with regional countries and building new ones in a new capacity was another important development which took place during the Berdimuhammedov era. In order to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with regional countries and to have good relations with them was an issue that was frequently emphasized by the new president.[247] As such, soon after his coming to power, Berdimuhammedov started a series of top-level meetings with several regional countries in a relatively short period of time,[248] an effort highly appreciated by these countries.

One such example is Azerbaijan. Back in 2001, due to a conflict regarding exploration of oil in the Caspian region, the embassy of this country had been closed. The problem was solved on June 12, 2007 with the opening up of the Azerbaijan Embassy.[249] In addition, in an agreement signed between these two countries on March 5, 2008, both sides stated that they would not make any exploration until a fair share is made for both countries in the Caspian Sea.[250]

---

[246] *Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*. (2018). Shangai Cooperation Organization Information Report. doi: eng.sectsco.org/load/297146/.

[247] Bandyopadhyay, L. (2013): 159. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: A Comparison of the Niyazov and the Post-Niyazov Regimes (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

[248] Aris, S. (2011): 163. *Eurasian Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

[249] Sarma, A. S. (2012): 184. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy after Niyazov: Looking Beyond "Positive Neutrality" (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia: Performance in Local and Global Arenas: Performance in Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

[250] Ibid., 184.

On May 19-20, 2008 Berdimuhammedov made his first official visit to Azerbaijan. Following this, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev organized an official visit to Turkmenistan on November 28, 2008. In both of these official visits, good relations between the two countries were emphasized. On November 18, 2010, Berdimuhammedov went to Azerbaijan on a business trip. During this visit, Berdimuhammedov participated the 3rd Summit of the Heads of States of the Caspian littoral countries held in Baku.[251]

Most recently, on August 8, 2018, Berdimuhammedov made very positive statements regarding Azerbaijan during his official visit to this country. Thanking the leader of the "friendly country" for the invitation to pay an official visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan and the warm welcome provided, Berdimuhammedov stressed that the development of fruitful relations with neighboring countries is one of the priorities of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. According to him, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan make a significant contribution to the efforts of the international community to ensure peace, security, stability and prosperity. In this context, Berdimuhammedov expressed his sincere gratitude to Azerbaijani partners for supporting Turkmenistan's permanently neutral status. In addition, President Ilham Aliyev stressed that the visit of the Turkmen leader to Azerbaijan was an important step towards further strengthening and expanding the traditionally friendly interstate dialogue.[252]

The case of Afghanistan is one of the best examples of the importance given by Turkmenistan to the expansion of bilateral relations in a peaceful environment. As mentioned earlier, Turkmenistan has been in cooperation with the UN and other organizations against any danger that can from Afghanistan. Due to the measures that it took, Turkmenistan has always been moderate in its economic and trade relations with Afghanistan. In order to solve the problems of

[251] Azərbaycan Respublikası Xarici İşlər Nazirliyi. (Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan). (2015, March 01). Retrieved November 12, 2018, from http://mfa.gov.az/content/37.

[252] Туркменистан-Азербайджан: на новом витке конструктивного диалога. (Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan: At the New Period of the Constructive Dialogue). (2018, August 8). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://ukraine.tmembassy.gov.tm/ru/news/4827.

extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking coming from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan has increased its bilateral relations with this country as well as entered into close cooperation with the UN and NATO countries about several issues regarding Afghanistan. Berdimuhammedov has also proposed various solutions to overcome problems in Afghanistan to the extend allowed by the policy of neutrality. For example, at the 65th General Assembly of the UN held on September 20, 2010, Berdimuhammedov said that peace conferences could be held in Turkmenistan to discuss ways of reconciliation in Afghanistan.[253] In this meeting he also made a proposal regarding assistance of Turkmenistan in training Afghan personnel in management structures in various sectors under UN supervision and programs in Afghanistan.[254]

In another meeting, he made similar remarks:

> We will promote the development of trade, economy and humanitarian partnership [in the region]. We will pay special attention to Afghanistan. Under the patronage of the United Nations, we stand for the stabilization of the situation in this country for a political settlement. We call upon the world community to assist in the socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan.[255]

On August 30, 2015, Turkmen President made an official visit to Afghanistan where he met with President Ashraf Ghani and Prime Minister Abdullah Abdullah. The visit served as a guarantee in strengthening bilateral relations. The heads of state held discussions on a number of key issues, including major

[253] Readout of the Secretary-General's meeting with H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan, on the Margins of the 65th General Assembly. (2010, September 20). Retrieved October 19, 2018, from https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/readout/2010-09-20/readout-secretary-generals-meeting-he-mr-gurbanguly-berdimuhamedov.

[254] Sarma, A. S. (2012): 185. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy After Niyazov: Looking Beyond "Positive Neutrality" (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia: Performance in Local and Global Arenas: Performance in Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publisher.

[255] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

economic projects, further expansion of trade and transit across the territories of states and security issues.[256] If we look at the more recent relations between the two countries, we see further developments. For example, on October 11, 2018, a new gas agreement was signed between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. According to this agreement, Turkmenistan will build a natural gas line in Afghanistan.[257]

Tajikistan is another country with which Turkmenistan has expanded its bilateral relations during the period of Berdimuhammedov. As a result of the invitation of the Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, an official visit to this country took place on 5-6 May, 2014. The heads of state in a warm and friendly atmosphere comprehensively discussed prospects of development of Tajik-Turkmen relations and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. In order to bring bilateral trade and economic cooperation to a new level of development, the presidents noted the need to increase the effectiveness of control over the full implementation of decisions taken by the Joint Tajik-Turkmen Intergovernmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation which was established in this meeting. At the end, Berdimuhammedov expressed deep gratitude to President Rahmon, as well as to the entire Tajik people for their friendly welcome. He, in turn, invited president Rahmon to pay an official visit to Turkmenistan at a convenient time.[258]

After that, on August 20, 2015, a Turkmen-Tajik summit was held in Ashgabat, during which the prospects of bilateral relations, regional and international policy issues of mutual interest and specific areas for further cooperation were

[256] Королева, Е. (2015, August 31). Афганистан и Туркменистан: от дружеских к братским взаимоотношениям (Afghanistan and Turkmenistan: From Friendship to Fraternal Relationships). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://www.gumilev-center.af/archives/555.

[257] Turkmen – Afghan Agreement on the Project of TAP Power Line is Signed. (2018, October 11). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://tdh.gov.tm/news/en/articles.aspx&article15028&cat29.

[258] Совместное заявление президентов Республики Таджикистан и Туркменистана. (Joint Statement of the Presidents of the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). (2014, May 5). Retrieved November 2, 2018, from http://www.prezident.tj/ru/node/6657.

discussed. Following the summit, a package of bilateral documents on the development of cooperation in the political, trade, economic and humanitarian fields was signed.[259]

7-Year Foreign Policy Plan of Berdimuhammedov also puts a specific emphasis on Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan. According to the president, in order to strengthen peace and security in Central Asia, mutual understanding and mutual trust need to be enhanced:

> To support the creation of better geopolitical and economic conditions in Central Asia, it is important to broaden cooperation. Proceeding from this, Turkmenistan will continue to cooperate with the states of the region, both bilaterally and within the framework of international organizations.[260]

Russia is one other country with which Turkmenistan increased its cooperation in the Berdimuhammedov era. Diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkmenistan were established on April 8, 1992. The basic document that continues to regulate the relation between these two countries is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of April 23, 2002. Russian-Turkmen relations are further developed during the Berdimuhammedov era and the two countries signed a bilateral agreement on the expansion of strategic cooperation in the field of energy and engineering on December 22, 2009. On October 2, 2017 during the official visit of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, the heads of state also signed the Agreement on Strategic Partnership in Ashgabat.[261]

---

[259] Совместное заявление президентов Республики Таджикистан и Туркменистана. (Joint Statement of the Presidents of the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). (2014, May 5). Retrieved November 2, 2018, from http://www.prezident.tj/ru/node/6657.

[260] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

[261] Гунеев, С. (2018, August 15). Межгосударственные отношения России и Туркмении (Interstate Relations of Russia and Turkmenistan). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20180815/1526542260.html.

In addition, in Article 9 of the 7-Year Foreign Policy Plan, Berdimuhammedov stated that Russia is a strategic partner of Turkmenistan. Cooperation with Russia, both bilaterally and within the framework of international organizations, has proved its effectiveness and meets the fundamental interests of both countries. Berdimuhammedov clearly stated that Turkmenistan will continue to enhance close cooperation with Russia.[262]

China is one of the most important countries in the region with which Turkmenistan had developed relations with. January 6, 1992 marked the beginning of a relation of friendship and cooperation between Turkmenistan and China. China was among the first countries to recognize the independence and sovereignty of Turkmenistan. Furthermore, the newly independent Turkmen state established its first diplomatic ties with this country. This development had a deeply symbolic meaning for both China and Turkmenistan, resulting right from the beginning in a close cooperation between the two countries. During the Berdimuhammedov era however, this cooperation culminated in to long-term strategic partnership.[263] In this framework, the visits of the Chinese leadership to Turkmenistan over the past couple of years should be noted. In August 2008, the President of China, Hu Jintao, paid an official visit to Turkmenistan. Again, in December 2009, President Hu Jintao visited Turkmenistan and attended the opening ceremony of the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline.[264]

As an example of the developing relations between the two countries, the negotiations of Berdimuhammedov and Jintao at the 64th session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2009 and at the meeting of the

[262] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

[263] Bandyopadhyay, L. (2013): 166. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: A Comparison of the Niyazov and the Post-Niyazov Regimes (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

[264] Ibid.

Council of Heads of States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent in June 2010 can be cited. In November 2011, the state visit of the President of Turkmenistan to China, which became another milestone for the two states, took place. In the course of the negotiations, the joint work and its major results were reviewed and summed up and a number of specific strategic objectives aimed at the long-term perspective were determined.[265] Again, on May 17, 2014, during the visit of the Berdimuhammedov to Beijing, China and Turkmenistan agreed to increase their relations to the level of "strategic partnership".[266]

In addition to all these, in Article 11 of the 7-Year Foreign Policy Plan, it is stated that the close friendship and strategic cooperation with People's Republic of China will be established. According to Berdimuhammedov:

> Today, China is the largest foreign trade partner of Turkmenistan. Relations with this country have been built in a mutually beneficial way and on a long-term basis.[267]

Within the framework of Turkmenistan's developing bilateral relations during the period of Berdimuhammedov, Iran needs to be specifically mentioned, both as a neighboring country of Turkmenistan and as a rising economic and political power in the region. During the Berdimuhammedov era, the relations between Iran and Turkmenistan significantly increased at various levels. Although the relations between Iran and Turkmenistan had started during the Turkmenbashi era, they remained relatively limited in scope. In the early years of independence,

---

[265] Sarma, A. S. (2012): 180. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy After Niyazov: Looking Beyond "Positive Neutrality" (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia: Performance in Local and Global Arenas: Performance in Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publisher.

[266] Ипполитов, И. (2017): 92. Китайско-Туркменские отношения: от взаимной выгоды к неравному партнёрству? (Sino-Turkmen Relationship: From Mutual Benefit to Uneven Partnership). *Проблемы Национальной Стратегии (National Strategy Challenges) ,42* (3).

[267] Выступление Президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

mostly common culture and history between these two countries were emphasized[268] and some trade agreements, such as the March 1992 agreement which allowed the exchange of 211 tons of food from Iran to Turkmenistan and 100 tons of cotton from Turkmenistan to Iran were signed.[269]

Another important component of the Iran-Turkmenistan cooperation was related to the measures to transport Turkmen oil and natural gas to Iran. In February 1992, Iranian oil minister Ghulam Reza Aghazadeh signed an agreement with Turkmenistan on oil, and in April 1992 an intergovernmental agreement was signed on the transit of Turkmen gas through Iran to Turkey and further to Europe.[270] The results of such cooperation between the two countries were summed up at the first session of the Iranian-Turkmen Economic Commission, held on April 14-15, 1993 in Tehran.[271] In general, the results of the first session of the economic commission confirmed the intention of the two countries to continue cooperation in various fields. This is equally important for both sides. For Iran, Turkmenistan is the most friendly republic among all of the states of Central Asia.[272]

During the first governmental visit of Turkmen delegation on December 27, 1997 President Turkmenbashi stated the following:

---

[268] Sarma, A. S. (2012): 186. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy After Niyazov: Looking Beyond "Positive Neutrality" (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia: Performance in Local and Global Arenas: Performance in Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publisher.

[269] Hooglund, E. (1995): 107-108. From the Gulf to Central Asia: Players in The New Great Game (A. Ehteshami, Ed.). *Iran and Central Asia*.

[270] Zonn, I. (2016): 122. Iranian Direction of Hydrocarbon Transport: Present State and Difficulties (S. Zhiltsov, I. Zonn, & A. Kostianoy, Eds.). *Oil and Gas Pipelines in the Black-Caspian Seas Region*.

[271] Pomfret, R. (1997): 659. The Economic Cooperation Organization: Current Status and Future Prospects. *Europe-Asia Studies,49* (4).

[272] Peyrouse, S. (2014, April 6). Iran's Growing Role in Central Asia? Geopolitical, Economic and Political Profit and Loss Account. Retrieved October 4, 2018, from http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/dossiers/2014/04/2014416940377354.html.

> A common religion between the peoples of Iran and Turkmenistan is a solid ground for bringing the peoples of the two countries closer. We are for serious cooperation with Iran for the development of transport and border trade.[273]

In general, it is possible to suggest that during the Turkmenbashi era, the relations of Turkmenistan with Iran were based mostly on economic cooperation. In the early 1990s, when the two countries first established diplomatic ties, Turkmenistan was not yet a neutral country and those was no border agreement between Iran and Turkmenistan.[274] However, when the period of Berdimuhammedov is examined, it is seen that Turkmenistan's relations with Iran have reached a higher level. Iranian leader Rouhani and Berdimuhammedov frequently express concerns about the growth of extremism and terrorism which they see as a serious threat to peace and stability in the region. The two leaders also focus on the importance of cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels. The need to stop the flow of illicit arms and drugs, human trafficking, illegal migration and organized crime is noted.[275]

In the meeting of the SCO held on June 7, 2012 in Beijing, Berdimuhammedov had a chance to meet with the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and they talked about possible areas of cooperation and projects between the two countries such as the construction of the "Dostluk" reservoir, Tejan-Sarakhs-Mashad railroad, inter-state pipelines and power lines. Both leaders expressed that these projects would strengthen the ties between the two countries.[276]

---

[273] Iranian Media Reports on New Gas Pipeline. (1997, December 29). Retrieved September 2, 2018, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/43226.stm.

[274] Hunter, S. T. (2010): 175. *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*. California: Praeger.

[275] Iran, Turkmenistan Must Boost Anti-Terror Fight: Rouhani. (2016, May 7). Retrieved September 22, 2018, from https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2016/05/07/464470/Iran-Turkmenistan-Rouhani-Zarif-Meredov/.

[276] Sarma, A. S. (2012): 186. Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy after Niyazov: Looking Beyond "Positive Neutrality" (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia: Performance in Local and Global Arenas: Performance in Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

On 3 November, 2015, negotiations were held in Ashgabat between Berdimuhammedov and Rouhani. In this meeting, Berdimuhammedov stressed the high level of the good-neighborly relations between Turkmenistan and Iran that have been actively developing in recent years based on mutual respect. Berdimuhammedov stated that:

> Trade and economic relations between our countries are developing intensively, an effective partnership has been established in the oil and gas transport as well as in communications, water management, electricity and some other industries.[277]

In this regard, the President of Turkmenistan also stressed the significant role of the joint Turkmen-Iranian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation. In addition to the intention to expand cooperation in all areas, in a joint statement following these negotiations, the leaders of both countries emphasized the importance of strengthening political consultations in order to expand cooperation at the bilateral and regional levels. The need to participate in the work of a number of international organizations (including the UN, the ECO and the OIC) and using the capabilities and potentials of these organizations was noted. The presidents of Iran and Turkmenistan also emphasized the importance of continuing bilateral consultations on issues related to the Caspian Sea, and appreciated the important role of the Iranian-Turkmen parliamentary friendship group in the development of bilateral relations.[278]

On March 28, 2018, the Iranian President once again visited Turkmenistan upon the invitation of the Turkmen President. Thanking "the distinguished guest" for accepting the invitation to visit Turkmenistan, Berdimuhammedov noted that:

---

[277] Переговоры между Президентом Гурбангулы Бердымухамедовым и Президентом Хасаном Рухани (Negotiations between President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and President Hassan Rouhani). (2015, March 11). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=8347.

[278] Ramani, S. (2016, May 19). Has Iran Finally Found a Security Partner in Central Asia? Retrieved September 20, 2018, from https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/has-iran-finally-found-a-security-partner-in-central-asia/.

> Our country regards this summit as another important stage in expanding the fruitful Turkmen-Iranian cooperation, which is successfully developing in both bilateral and multilateral formats.[279]

President Hassan Rouhani reaffirmed Iran's continued commitment to traditionally friendly relations with neighboring Turkmenistan. Expressing confidence that the current talks in Ashgabat would contribute to the effective realization of the existing potential of the partnership, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran has sent his best wishes to the Turkmen people.[280] During the meeting, the leaders of the two countries discussed a wide range of issues of Turkmen-Iranian cooperation and specified its key areas in the context of the implementation of bilateral agreements. The sides also exchanged views on a number of issues on the regional and global agenda, confirming the readiness of Turkmenistan and Iran to further cooperation in the international arena.[281]

As a final issue, it needs to be mentioned that although Turkmenistan developed bilateral relations with several regional countries during the Berdimuhammedov era and a special emphasis was also placed on the country's taking a more active role in regional issues and activities. In this framework, Turkmenistan's attitude regarding the Caspian Sea needs to be briefly emphasized. In this issue Turkmenistan adopted a more active, constructive and cooperative approach, facilitating the resolution of this rather complicated issue. In recent years, some progress has been made in resolving some of the key issues on the Caspian Sea's legal status, a process in which Turkmenistan became involved. For example, on July 13, 2016, the foreign ministers of these 5 countries came together to discuss various issues such as establishment of Trans-Caspian energy corridors. In the

[279] Официальный визит в Туркменистан Президента Исламской Республики Иран (Official Visit of President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Turkmenistan). (2018, March 27). Retrieved October 3, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/news/698.

[280] Ibid.

[281] Ibid.

following period, they met again in Baku on January 25-26, 2017 and signed an agreement on the use and cleaning of the Caspian Sea.[282] On March 4-5, 2018, a group of representatives of Turkmenistan, Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan met in Baku and signed an agreement on the protection of the Caspian Sea.[283]

In the 7-Year Foreign Policy Plan, Turkmenistan's active cooperation on the Caspian Sea is also stated. In Article 8 of the plan Berdimuhammedov stated that Turkmenistan will continue to actively cooperate on the Caspian Sea on a five-sided basis. The neutrality policy of Turkmenistan that has been implemented since 1995 continues to be a major foreign policy pillar of the country. In the final chapter of this thesis, this policy will be analyzed from the perspective of Efraim Karsh's model on permanent neutrality.

[282] Garibov, A. (2017): 24. Are the Littoral States Close to Signing an Agreement on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea? *Eurasia Daily Monitor, 14* (61).

[283] Orujova, N. (2015, March 5). Caspian Sea States Reach Agreement in Baku. Retrieved November 30, 2018, from https://www.azernews.az/nation/78664.html.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to analyze the permanent neutrality policy of Turkmenistan (which is one of the most important features that distinguishes it from the other Central Asian countries) during the periods of the first and second presidents of the country in a comparative way by using Efraim Karsh's neutrality model. To do this, first a general background information on Turkmenistan as well as the history of this country is given. This is followed by the post-Soviet era developments that resulted in the adoption of permanent neutrality in the periods of the two presidents of Turkmenistan.

When we look at the post-Soviet era developments, which took place in the era of Turkmenbashi and Berdimuhammedov, it is possible to suggest that in general Turkmenistan acted in accordance with the neutrality model proposed by Karsh.

First of all, during the Tajik civil war, a development which greatly affected the region during the Turkmenbashi era, the attitude of the permanently neutral Turkmenistan fits well into the Karsh model. A brief analysis of the attitude of Turkmenistan during the Tajik civil war indicate that the country exhibited the positive components of permanent neutrality policy analyzed by Karsh. As Karsh suggested, a neutral country must follow a peaceful line and cannot be part of any military bloc or alliance that require collective responsibility.[284] Turkmenistan acted very much in the line with these criteria during the Tajik civil war and only kept a limited number of troops within its borders in order to protect its territory.[285] Holding peace negotiations within its territory and the creation of living spaces for the refugees from Tajikistan are the best examples of Turkmenistan's remaining neutral in a peaceful line.

---

[284] Karsh, E. (2011): 147. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

[285] Tadjbakhsh, S. (2008): 25. *International Peacemaking in Tajikistan and Afghanistan Compared: Lessons Learned and Unlearned* (Vol. 143, Rep.). Les Etudes du CERI.

Another important event in the Turkmenbashi period in addition to the Tajik civil war was the rapid rise of the Taliban. In the face of this development, Turkmenistan again remained loyal to its main foreign policy line. According to Karsh, when faced with a conflict in any neighboring country, a neutral country should not provide any military or financial aid. But for its own safety it may have an army that will act for defense purposes in case of a possible attack. In line with Karsh's model, Turkmenistan displayed both of these features during the Taliban era. It did not provide any military or financial aid, but kept a small number of troops allowed by the UN in its border with Afghanistan for the purpose of being ready to protect its own territory against a possible or potential attack.[286]

During the Turkmenbashi period, NATO and SCO were examined as important cooperation organizations in the region. In the case of NATO, Niyazov again acted in accordance with and maintained its neutrality policy. NATO, being a military bloc, simply was not an option for Turkmenistan. According to Karsh model, the country could not be a member of such a military alliance. So Turkmenbashi's relations with NATO remained limited in a period in which this organization was actively involved in the region. Turkmenistan's cooperation with NATO focused only on peace keeping activities such as the PfP program. Likewise, Turkmenistan did not participate to any of NATO's military operations in the region but provided humanitarian assistance when and if needed.

If we examine the relationship between SCO and Turkmenistan in Turkmenbashi period based on Karsh model, it is possible to suggest that SCO may not be seen as an organization that would require military intervention or exhibit aggressive attitudes in a possible conflict situation. However, the agreements signed at various summits of this body such as "Increasing Military Confidence in Border Areas" and "Reducing Military Powers in Border Areas" could be the reasons why Turkmenistan did not actively participate in this organization. These

[286] Nichol, J. (2013): 13. Foreign Policy and Defense. *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*. Washington: Congressional Research Service.

agreements showed that SCO somehow could have military purposes and conduct military actions. However, the military forces of Turkmenistan, as a permanent neutral state, had to be at the level and number determined by the UN. Turkmenbashi, acting in accordance with the policy of permanent neutrality, did not want to get involved in such an organization which could potentially have a military goal.[287] And this is one of the main pillars of Karsh's model for permanently neutral countries.

When the neutrality policy during the Berdimuhammedov era is analyzed according to the Karsh model in terms of Turkmenistan's increased relations with NATO, it is possible to suggest that these relations did not violate the neutral status of the country. Turkmenistan did not enter into any kind of military cooperation with NATO, although it worked together with this organization "for peaceful reasons" as part of its neutrality policy. As such, NATO's establishment of a military base in the country was allowed to prevent "possible problems" and to control regional security.[288]

Turkmenistan's increased relations with the SCO can also be analyzed in a similar manner. According to UN regulations and Karsh's model, it is not wrong for a neutral country to enter into economic cooperation and sign bilateral agreements. That is what Berdimuhammedov had in mind when he increased his country's involvement with the SCO, although some of the member states of this organization (such as Pakistan) had internal and external problems. This particular point, when analyzed from the perspective of Karsh's model, raises a question. According to Karsh, a neutral country should not enter into cooperation with such countries. However, it is possible to argue that the country did establish relations with the SCO as an international body that has a significant potential to contribute to regional security and stability.

---

[287] Aris, S. (2011): 161-162. *Eurasian Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

[288] Pannier, B. (2008, May 30). Turkmenistan: NATO Finds New Partner in Central Asia. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1144519.html.

When Turkmenistan's increased relations with the regional countries are analyzed with the model of Karsh, it is possible to suggest that the country acted within the framework of a neutral status. Berdimuhammedov aimed to establish good relations with these countries and entered into cooperation with them in order to promote peace and stability in the region. As Karsh mentions, to support other countries for such purposes is one of the most important components of permanent neutrality.[289]

In the period of Berdimuhammedov, one of the noticeable steps taken by the president was to solve the problems between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Likewise, the president developed the relations of Turkmenistan with Russia and China, two very important countries in the region without which regional peace and stability cannot be achieved. In addition to developing economic relations with these two countries, Turkmenistan also cooperated with them within the body of the SCO. Finally, when Turkmen-Iranian relations are analyzed according to Karsh's model, it is possible to suggest that the cooperation between the two countries reflect positive components of neutrality, as the cooperation was based mostly on economic concerns and development. However, for Karsh, a neutral country cannot cooperate with a country that has political or military problems with others. Iran, in that sense, is a controversial case as it has certain tensions with regional and global powers, especially regarding its uranium enrichment program.

When the implementation of the neutrality policy of Turkmenistan in the periods of Turkmenbashi and Berdimuhammedov is compared, it is possible to suggest that between 1991-2006 (the Turkmenbashi period) the country followed a more reserved, cautious and passive attitude in its foreign policy especially in terms of Turkmenistan's relations with NATO and SCO. In this era, Turkmenistan's contact with NATO has been very limited in nature and the two sides only cooperated with each other within the framework of PfP. As for SCO, there were no active involvement of Turkmenbashi who, despite being invited to the

[289] Karsh, E. (2011): 55. Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

meetings of the organization, refused to do so and only sent a representative to these meetings.

In terms of bilateral relations of Turkmenistan with regional countries, the country had a similar attitude. In general, Turkmenbashi preferred limited relations with these countries and sometimes even let the relations come to a standstill, as is the case of Azerbaijan. Although, the country remained loyal to the policy of neutrality Turkmenistan was considered by international experts to be an isolated country.

During the Berdimuhammedov era however, we see a much more active, more moderate and more open foreign policy. This is basically related to concern of the new president to end the isolation of the country observed in the period between 1991 to 2006. Although neutrality does not mean isolation in international relations, during the Turkmenbashi era the country *de facto* remained isolated. Turkmenbashi had preferred limited bilateral relations with selected few countries and stayed totally away from all international alliances and organizations. Berdimuhammedov wanted to put an end to this isolation and took active steps for that purpose. As was analyzed in the fourth chapter of the thesis, he seemed to be even open to the idea of NATO's building a military base in Turkmenistan for the purposes of protecting peace. Unlike Turkmenbashi, the new president participated in all of the meetings of the SCO and expressed his views on both the organization itself and the common regional issues. Furthermore, as was seen in the cases of Turkmenistan's bilateral relations with Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Russia, China and Iran, Berdimuhammedov had a pro-active attitude.

Despite the differences between these two presidents however, Turkmenistan remained loyal to its neutrality policy and did nothing that was against it. The country presented a very consisted attitude and attempted to contribute to regional peace and stability. This general attitude is expected to continue in the

near future as well, making Turkmenistan a potentially significant regional power.

REFERENCES

Abazov, R. (2005) *Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press.

Abbott, L. (2016). *Turkmenistan History: Origins and Early history, Society, Social Structure, the Economy, Government and Politics, Tourism*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Afghan Refugees Want Third-Country Resettlement. (2003, July 3). Retrieved September 12, 2018, from http://www.irinnews.org/fr/node/189706.

Ahmadov, Anar Kamil. (2011). *A Conditional Theory of the 'Political Resource Curse:' Oil, Autocrats, and Strategic Contexts*. London School of Economic and Political Science.

Akiner, S. (2001). *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Anceschi, L. (2008). *Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: Positive Neutrality and the consolidation of the Turkmen Regime*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Andisha, N. A. (2015, March 17). Neutrality in Afghanistan's Foreign Policy. Retrieved March 27, 2018, from http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/189080/pdf.

Annan Hails Turkmenistan's Contribution to Peace in Afghanistan. (2002, October 22). Retrieved August 10, 2018, from https://news.un.org/en/story/2002/10/49122-annan-hails-turkmenistans-contribution-peace-afghanistan.

Annanepesov, M., & Moshev, M. (2005). (C. Adle, M. K. Palat, & A. Tabyshalieva, Eds.). *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (Vol. VI). Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Arı, T. (2011). *Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Dış Politika*. *(International Relations and Foreign Policy)*. Bursa: MKM Yayınları.

Aris, S. (2011). *Eurasian Regionalism: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Azərbaycan Respublikası Xarici İşlər Nazirliyi. (Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan). (2015, March 01). Retrieved November 12, 2018, from http://mfa.gov.az/content/37.

Ахмедова, Ш. (2014, December 12). Статус постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана – фундамент устойчивого развития. (The status of the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the foundation of sustainable development). *Золотой век*. Retrieved March 3, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=7841.

Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex [BMAC]. (2014, March 3). Retrieved May 6, 2018, from https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/history-bmac.htm.

Bandyopadhyay, L. (2013). Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy: A Comparison of the Niyazov and the Post-Niyazov Regimes (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

Baumer, C. (2014). *The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Silk Roads*. New York: I.B.Tauris.

Beissinger, M. R. (2002). *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bergen, P., & Hanna, J. (2015, July 30). Taliban's Mullah Omar died in 2013, Afghan Government Says. Retrieved July 20, 2018, from https://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/29/asia/afghanistan-mullah-omar/index.html.

Bohr, A. (2016). Turkmenistan: Power, Politics and Petro-Authoritarianism. *Russia and Eurasia Programme*. Retrieved January 23, 2018, from https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-03-08-turkmenistan-bohr.pdf.

Bosworth, C. E. (1990). The Tahirids and Saffarids (R. N. Frye, Ed.). *The Cambridge History of Iran, 4*. Cambridge University Press.

Bregel, Y. E. (1961). *Khorezmskie Turkmeny v XIX veke.(Khorezm Turkmen people in the XIX century).* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi literatury.

Bregel, Y. E. (1991). *Manghishlak*. The Encyclopedia of Islam, eds., P.J. Bearman, T.H. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs, vol. VI. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Burke, J. (2014, June 9). Post-Soviet world: what you need to know about the 15 states. Retrieved January 28, 2018, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/09/-sp-profiles-post-soviet-states.

Burton, A. (1994). Bukharan Jews, ancient and modern. *Jewish Historical Studies, 34*, 43-68. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/29779953.

Central Commission for Holding Elections and Referendums in Turkmenistan: State Symbols. (n.d.). Retrieved May 20, 2018, from http://saylav.gov.tm/en/national.

Cheng, J. Y. (2011). The Shanghai Co-operation Organization: China's Initiative in Regional Institutional Building. *Journal of Contemporary Asia, 41* (4), 632-656. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2011.610618.

China Ready to Mull Prospects of Strategic Partnership with Turkmenistan. (2018, March 23). Retrieved November 13, 2018, from https://www.azernews.az/region/129137.html.

Clark, L., Thurman, M., & Tyson, D. (1996) Turkmenistan (G. E. Curtis, Ed.). *Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan Country Studies.*

Coll, S. (2005). *Ghost Wars*. New York: Penguin.

Collins, B. J. (2011). *NATO: A Guide to the Issues*. USA: Praeger.

Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan (as of 2008). Retrieved July 26, 2018, from http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/constitutions/country/51.

Crews, R. D. (2008). *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* (A. Tarzi, Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Curtis, G., & Meditz, S. (2007). Country Profile: Turkmenistan. *Library of Congress – Federal Research Division*.

Dally, J. C. (2014, February 26). Despite Proclaimed Neutrality, Turkmenistan Increases Border Defenses. *Eurasia Daily Monitor, 11* (37).

Delupis, I. D. (2000). *The Law of War*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Denison, M. (2008). Turkmenistan and the EU: Contexts and Possibilities for Greater Engagement (N. J. Melvin, Ed.). *Engaging Central Asia, the European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia. Brussels:* Centre for European Policy Studies. 81-104.

Dzardanova, S. (2015). Turkmenistan: Positive About Being Positively Neutral. *The Puls Research and Consulting,* (7). Retrieved May 16, 2018, from https://pulsofcentralasia.org/2015/03/31/turkmenistan-positive-about-being-positively-neutral-by-svetlana-dzardanova/.

Edgar, A. L. (2004). *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton University Press.

Epkenhans, T. (2016). *The Origins of the Civil War in Tajikistan; Nationalism, Islamism and Violent Conflict in Post-Soviet Space.* (M. Laruelle, Ed.). London: Lexington Books.

Erol, M. S. (2001). Türkmenistan Devleti'nin Dış Politikasının Temel Sacayağı: Daimî Tarafsızlık Statüsü. (The Main Principle of The Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan: Permanent Neutrality Status). *Avrasya Dosyası Türkmenistan Özel Sayısı, 7* (2). Retrieved December 10, 2017, from http://www.21yyte.org/assets/uploads/files/124-142%20Mehmet.pdf.

Erol, S. M., & Musaoğlu, N. (2009). Orta Asya'da Demokrasi Söyleminden Otoriter Rejimlere Geçiş (E. Efegil, Ed.). *Yeni Büyük Oyun*. Ankara: Platin Yayınları.

Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Setting. (2006). *Library of Congress – Federal Research Division: Country Profile: Russia*. Retrieved January 24, 2018, from http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/Russia%20Study%20and%20Profile.pdf.

Fifteen Years of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Brought Steady Realization of Nation's Aspiration to Become Force for Progress, Says Secretary-General. (2010, December 13). Retrieved March 22, 2018, from http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sgsm13316.doc.htm.

Freedom of association and the right to participate in public life. (2017): In *Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee/ Review of Turkmenistan under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (119th). Geneva: International Partnership for Human Rights.doi:http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/TKM/INT_CCPR_CSS_TKM_26458_E.pdf.

Garibov, A. (2017). Are the Littoral States Close to Signing an Agreement on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea? *Eurasia Daily Monitor, 14* (61).

Gaynor, K. L. (2017). Transformations in Turkmen Higher Education: Current Opportunities and Challenges at a New University. *Central Asian Survey, 36* (4), 473-492. Retrieved July 20, 2018, from https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2017.1367645.

Geheime Allianz (Secret Alliance). (2008, May 19). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-57038097.html.

Grotz, F., & Hartmann, C. (2001). Turkmenistan (D. Nohlen, Ed.). *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook: Volume I: Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Haas, M. D. (2016). Security Policy and Developments in Central Asia: Security Documents Compared with Security Challenges. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 203-226. doi:10.1080/13518046.2016.1168123.

Hafner, G. (1992). The Impact of Developments in the East European 'Socialist' States on Austria's Neutrality. *The European Neutrals in the 1990s: New Challenges and Opportunities.*San Francisco: Westview Press.

Hero, D. (2011). *Inside Central Asia: A Political and Cultural History of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Iran* (1st ed.). New York: The Overlook Press.

Hewett, A., & Winston, V. H. (Eds.). (2010). *Milestones in Glasnost and Perestroyka; Politics and People*. Brookings Institution Press.)

Hooglund, E. (1995). From the Gulf to Central Asia: Players in The New Great Game (A. Ehteshami, Ed.). *Iran and Central Asia*.

Hunter, S. T. (2010). *Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*. California: Praeger.

Iran, Turkmenistan Must Boost Anti-Terror Fight: Rouhani. (2016, May 7). Retrieved September 22, 2018, from https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2016/05/07/464470/Iran-Turkmenistan-Rouhani-Zarif-Meredov/.

Iranian Media Reports on New Gas Pipeline. (1997, December 29). Retrieved September 2, 2018, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/43226.stm.

Jonson, L. (1998). *The Tajik War: A Challenge to Russian Policy*. Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Karsh, E. (2011). Neutrality and Small States. New York: Routledge.

Kazakh Expert Weighs in on Central Asia's Top 10 Foreign Policy Events in 2018. (2018, February 1). *KABAR*. Retrieved March 21, 2018, from http://kabar.kg/eng/news/kazakh-expert-weighs-in-on-central-asias-top-10-foreign-policy-events-in-2019/.

Kembayev, Z. (2009). *Legal Aspects of the Regional Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Area*. Berlin: Springer.

Kimmage, D. (2008). Security Challenges in Central Asia: Implications for the EU's Engagement Strategy (N. J. Melvin, Ed.). *Engaging Central Asia, the European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia. Brussels:* Centre for European Policy Studies. 9-19.

Kis, J. (2012). State Neutrality. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199578610.013.0017. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kuchins, A., Mankoff, J., & Backes, O. (2015). Turkmenistan's Foreign Economic and Security Policy. *Central Asia in a Reconnecting Eurasia: Turkmenistan's Evolving Foreign Economic and Security Interests*. Washington: Center for Strategic & International Studies.

Kurat, A. N. (2014). *Rusya Tarihi: Başlangıçtan 1917'ye Kadar (History of Russia: From the Beginning to 1917).* (6th ed.). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

Laruelle, M., Peyrouse, S., & Axyonova, V. (2013, February). The Afghanistan Central Asia relationship: What role for the EU? *EUCAM-Security and Development Project, 13*.

Fifteen Years of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Brought Steady Realization of Nation's Aspiration to Become Force for Progress, Says Secretary-General. (2010, December 13). Retrieved March 22, 2018, from http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sgsm13316.doc.htm.

Leonhard, A. T. (1988). *Neutrality: Changing Concepts and Practices.* (N. Mercuro, Ed.). New York: University Press of America.

Liu, G. (1998). Ethnic Harmony and Conflicts in Central Asia: Origins and Policies (Y. Zhang, and Azizian, R. Ed.). *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. 73-98.

Malashenko, A. (2013). *The Fight for Influence: Russia in Central Asia*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Marat, E. (2009). *The Military and the State in Central Asia: From Red Army to Independence*. London: Routledge.

McAuliffe, C. (2006). Tajikistan Peace Negotiations. *Al Nakhlah*.

Merkezi Aziýadaky Hyzmatdaşlar. (Cooperation in Central Asia). (2014). *NATO: Backgrounder*. Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20140416_140416-Backgrounder_CentralAsia_tkm.pdf.

Morokova, A. (2006, December 21). Владимир Жириновский: символично, что мой лучший друг туркменбаши умер в день рождения Сталина (Vladimir Zhirinovsky: Symbolically, My Best Friend Turkmenbashi Died on Stalin's Birthday). Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://newdaynews.ru/moskow/97542.html.

Najibullah, F. (2009, June 12). Threat of Taliban Incursion Raised In Central Asia. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/Threat_Of_Taliban_Incursion_Raised_In_Central_Asia__Again/1752944.html.

New Turkmen President Sworn In. (2007, February 14). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1074693.html.

Newton, S. (2017). Honour in the Breach: Rights, Courts and Justice. *The Constitutional Systems of the Independent Central Asian States.*

Nichol, J. (2013). Foreign Policy and Defense. *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*. Washington: Congressional Research Service.

Olcott, M. B. (2013). Turkmenistan: Real Energy Giant or Eternal Potential? *James A. Baker III Institute for Public Polİcy Rice University*. Retrieved June 1, 2018, from https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/360e14e8/CES-pub-GeogasTurkmenistan2-121013.pdf.

Orujova, N. (2015, March 5). Caspian Sea States Reach Agreement in Baku. Retrieved November 30, 2018, from https://www.azernews.az/nation/78664.html.

Pannier, B. (2008, May 30). Turkmenistan: NATO Finds New Partner in Central Asia. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/1144519.html.

Pannier, B. (2017, June 26). The Many Agents of Tajikistan's Path to Peace. Retrieved June 4, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-civil-war-peace-20th-anniversary-rahmon-nuri/28579612.html.

Panova, E. (n.d.). United Nations Country Team of Turkmenistan. Retrieved June 9, 2018, from http://tm.one.un.org/content/unct/turkmenistan/en/home/about-us/un-resident-coordinator-system.html.

Parthian Fortresses of Nisa. (n.d.). Retrieved January 30, 2018, from http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1242.

Pazarcı, H. (2016). *Uluslararası Hukuk. (International Law).* (15th ed.). Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi.

Peimani, H. (2009). *Conflict and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus*. California: ABC-CLIO.

Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan. (1995). *United Nations Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly*. Retrieved February 1, 2018, from A/RES/50/80 A.

Petreski, D., Percinkova, E., & Iliev, A. (2015). USSR-China Relations in the Cold and Post-Cold War Era. *Wulfenia Journal, 22* (3), 313-326. doi:10.13140/RG.2.1.1896.6241.

Peyrouse, S. (2014, April 6). Iran's Growing Role in Central Asia? Geopolitical, Economic and Political Profit and Loss Account. Retrieved October 4, 2018, from http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/dossiers/2014/04/2014416940377354.html.

Pomfret, R. (1997). The Economic Cooperation Organization: Current Status and Future Prospects. *Europe-Asia Studies,49* (4), 657-667.

Qingdao Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. (2018). Shangai Cooperation Organization Information Report. doi: eng.sectsco.org/load/297146/.

Rakhimov, M. (2017). The Paradoxical Soviet Experience (M. Laruelle, Ed.). *Uzbekistan Political Order, Societal Changes, and Cultural*

Transformations. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University. Retrieved from http://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Uzbekistan_f.pdf.

Ramani, S. (2016, May 19). Has Iran Finally Found a Security Partner in Central Asia? Retrieved September 20, 2018, from https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/has-iran-finally-found-a-security-partner-in-central-asia/.

Readout of the Secretary-General's meeting with H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan, on the Margins of the 65th General Assembly. (2010, September 20). Retrieved October 19, 2018, from https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/readout/2010-09-20/readout-secretary-generals-meeting-he-mr-gurbanguly-berdimuhamedov.

Relations with Turkmenistan. (2018, September 28). Retrieved August 1, 2018, from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50317.htm.

Roy, M. S. (2011). Strategic Importance of Turkmenistan for India. *Strategic Analysis, 35* (4), 661-682. Retrieved August 5, 2018, from https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2011.585791.

Sarma, A. S. (2012). Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy After Niyazov: Looking Beyond "Positive Neutrality" (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia: Performance in Local and Global Arenas: Performance in Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publisher.

Sarma, A. S. (2013). Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy After Niyazov: Looking Beyond 'Positive Neutrality'? (A. Sengupta & S. Chatterjee, Eds.). *The State in Eurasia Local and Global Arenas*. New Delhi: KW Publishers.

Schmidt, H., Langbein, J., & Seidelmann, R. (2004). Turkmenistan-Nation Building and Economic Development since Independence (E. Giese, Ed.). *Cooperation and Conflict Management in Central Asia,* 69-86. Berlin: P.Lang Publishing.

SCO Summit is Held in Tashkent Hu Jintao Attends and Delivers an Important Speech to the Summit. (2010, June 11). Retrieved November 15, 2018, from http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zgyw/t708530.htm.

Seger, P. (2014). The Law of Neutrality. (A. Clapham & P. Gaeta, Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Armed Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Seminar on ICT Policy and Legal Issues for The Heads of Ministers and Agencies of Turkmenistan. (2012). Ashgabat: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Shahmiri, C. (n.d.). History of Iran. Retrieved February 1, 2018, from http://www.iranchamber.com/history/samanids/samanids.php.

Shikhmuradov, B. O. (1997). Positive Neutrality as the Basis of the Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan. *Journal of International Affairs, 2* (2).

Shlapentokh, D. (2013). Turkmenistan and Military Buildup in the Caspian Region: A Small State in the post-Unipolar Era. *Journal of Eurasian Studies, 4* (2), 154-159. doi: doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2013.03.005.

Şilibekova, A. (2007). Yeni NATO ve Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri. *Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi, 10*, 117-121.

Smith, S. A. (2017). *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928* (1st ed.). United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Stevens, K. (2011). Ashgabat Earthquake (1948) (B. Penuel & M. Statler, Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Disaster Relief*. California: SAGE Publications.

Subedi, S. P. (1993). Neutrality in a Changing World: European Neutral States and the European Community. *International & Comparative Law Quarterly,42* (3). doi:10.1093/iclqaj/42.2.238.

Tadjbakhsh, S. (2008). *International Peacemaking in Tajikistan and Afghanistan Compared: Lessons Learned and Unlearned* (Vol. 143, Rep.). Les Etudes du CERI.

Tahir, M. (2011, May 27). Peace Talks with the Taliban in Turkmenistan? Retrieved July 13, 2018, from https://www.rferl.org/a/peace_talks_taliban_turkmenistan/24207460.html.

Tajik Refugees Await Naturalisation. (2004, August 30). Retrieved October 1, 2018, from http://www.irinnews.org/report/26003/turkmenistan-tajik-refugees-await-naturalisation.

Tajik Refugees in Northern Afghanistan: Obstacles to Repatriation. (1996, May 1). Retrieved October 17, 2018, from http://www.refworld.org/docid/45c9a5272.html.

Tajikistan an Uncertain Peace. (2001). Osh/Brussel: ICG Asia Report No 30.

Tajikistan first half of 1990s. (2012, December 28). Retrieved July 10, 2018, from http://csef.ru/en/politica-i-geopolitica/423/tadzhikistan-pervoj-poloviny-1990-h-godov-3877.

The Many Agents of Tajikistan's Path to Peace. Retrieved July 11, 2018, from https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-end-of-civil-war/28581673.html.

The World Factbook: Turkmenistan. (2018, March 16). Retrieved March 23, 2018, from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tx.html.

Thrasher, Matthew J. (2010). How to Make a Colony: Reform and Resistance in Russian Turkestan, 1865-1917. *German and Russian Studies Honors Projects.*

Turkmen – Afghan Agreement on the Project of TAP Power Line is Signed. (2018, October 11). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://tdh.gov.tm/news/en/articles.aspx&article15028&cat29.

Turkmenbaşy, S. (2005). *Ruhnama.* Ashgabat: Türkmen Döwlet Neşiryat Gullugy.

Turkmenistan Agricultural Sector Review. (2012). Report 7. Italy: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. (n.d.). Retrieved February 14, 2018, from http://www.understandingwar.org/turkmenistan-and-afghanistan.

Turkmenistan Country Profile. (2018, February 26). Retrieved October 20, 2018, from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16094646.

Turkmenistan Grants Citizenship to 16,000 Refugees. (2005, August 5). Retrieved August 6, 2018, from https://reliefweb.int/report/tajikistan/turkmenistan-grants-citizenship-16000-refugees.

Turkmenistan Speaks for Expansion of Capacity Building of World Economic Relations. (2016, June 24). Retrieved August 17, 2018, from http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/_eng/?id=6051.

Turkmenistan: Geography, Climate and Population. (2014). Retrieved May 16, 2018, from http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/TKM/.

Türkmenistanyň Prezidenti Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedowyň Birleşen Milletler Guramasynyň Baş Assambleýasynyň 70-njı Mejlisinde Sözlän Sözi. (Speech of the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammeodv, in the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations). (2015, September 26). Retrieved November 2, 2018, from http://www.mfa.gov.tm/tk/articles/40.

Vukovic, S. (2015) Tajikistan. *International Multiparty Mediation and Conflict Management: Challenges of Cooperation and Coordination*. New York: Routledge.

World Energy Resources. (2013). England: World Energy Council.doi: https://www.worldenergy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/09/Complete_WER_2013_Survey.pdf.

Yalçıner, S. (2007). *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Tarafsızlık, Daimî Tarafsızlık ve İsviçre Örneği. (Neutrality in International Relations, Permanent Neutrality, and Swiss Example).* Isparta: Süleyman Demirel University.

Yıldırım, E. (2012). Türkmenistan: Aşiretten Ulusa. (Turkmenistan: From the Tribe to the Nation). (Ç Balım & A. Aydıngün, Eds.). *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler. (*Central *Asian Republics in the Twentieth Year of Independence and the Turkish Language Peoples-Turkey Relations).* Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi.

Zabortseva, Y. N. (2012). From the “Forgotten Region” to the “Great Game” Region: On the Development of Geopolitics in Central Asia. *Journal of Eurasian Studies, 3* (2), 168-176. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2012.03.007.

Zakirov, I., & Nevskaya, Y. (2017, September 18). Uzbekistan’s New Foreign Policy Doctrine. *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*. Retrieved March 29, 2018, from https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13470-uzbekistans-new-foreign-policy-doctrine.html.

Zongze, R. (2015, December 20). Turkmenistan’s Permanent Neutrality Powerful Example in Divided World. Retrieved March 2, 2018, from http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/959553.shtml.

Zonn, I. (2016). Iranian Direction of Hydrocarbon Transport: Present State and Difficulties (S. Zhiltsov, I. Zonn, & A. Kostianoy, Eds.). *Oil and Gas Pipelines in the Black-Caspian Seas Region*.

Биография Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова (Biography of Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov). (2012, June 29). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20120629/686805863.html.

В Исламабаде состоялась Международная научно-практическая конференция: Политика постоянного нейтралитета Туркменистана. (International Scientific and Practical Conference “Policy of Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan”). (2015, March 15). Retrieved February 24, 2018, from https://frankfurt.tmconsulate.gov.tm/ru/news/361.

Выступление президента Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова на расширенном заседании кабинета министров Туркменистана (Speech by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov at the Expanded Meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan). (2017, February 18). Retrieved July 19, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/articles/118.

Горак, С. (2007). Портрет Туркменбаши как мифологическая основа его режима. (Portrait of Turkmenbashi as the Mythological Basis of His Regime). *Вестник Евразии, 2*, 139-165. Retrieved July 12, 2018.

Гунеев, С. (2018, August 15). Межгосударственные отношения России и Туркмении (Interstate relations of Russia and Turkmenistan). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20180815/1526542260.html.

Закон Туркменистана о воинской обязанности и военной службе (The Law of Turkmenistan on Military Duty and Military Service). (2002, March 12). Retrieved July 27, 2018, from http://www.turkmenbusiness.org/content/zakon-turkmenistana-o-voinskoi-obyazannosti-i-voennoi-sluzhbe.

Ипполитов, И. (2017). Китайско-Туркменские отношения: от взаимной выгоды к неравному партнёрству? (Sino-Turkmen Relationship: From Mutual Benefit to Uneven Partnership). *Проблемы Национальной Стратегии (National Strategy Challenges) ,42* (3), 90-108.

Концепция внешней политики КР. (The concept of foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic). (2007, January 10). Retrieved March 13, 2018, from http://mfa-osh.kg/pravovayabase/1065-koncepciya-vneshney-politiki-kr.html#.WtH55IhuaUl.

Концепция внешней политики Республики Таджикистан. (Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan). (2015, January 27). Retrieved March 13, 2018, from http://tajemb.kiev.ua/kontseptsiya-vneshnej-politiki-respubliki-tadzhikistan/.

Королева, Е. (2015, August 31). Афганистан и Туркменистан: от дружеских к братским взаимоотношениям (Afghanistan and Turkmenistan: From Friendship to Fraternal Relationships). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://www.gumilev-center.af/archives/555.

На саммите ШОС в Бишкеке подписана совместная декларация (At the SCO Summit in Bishkek, a Joint Declaration was signed). (2007, August 16). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://regnum.ru/news/871475.html.

Начались поставки гуманитарных грузов в Афганистан через территорию Туркменистана. (Deliveries of Humanitarian Cargoes to Afghanistan Begin Through the Territory of Turkmenistan). (2001, September 28). Retrieved from http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/14358.

Нейтралитет Туркменистана: новая эпоха в миротворческой истории человечества. (The neutrality of Turkmenistan: a new era in the peacekeeping history). (2017, December 24). Retrieved March 2, 2018, from https://www.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/2826160.html.

Новому этапу Партнерства Туркменистана с НАТО (Starting of the New Stage of Partnership of Turkmenistan with NATO). (2004, March 30). Retrieved July 27, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/15709.

Официальный визит в Туркменистан Президента Исламской Республики Иран. (Official Visit of President of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Turkmenistan). (2018, March 27). Retrieved October 3, 2018, from https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/news/698.

Панфилова, О. (2006, December 21). Умер Туркменбаши: Биография (Turkmenbashi Died: Biography). Retrieved July 12, 2018, from https://newdaynews.ru/inworld/97388.html.

Переговоры между Президентом Гурбангулы Бердымухамедовым и Президентом Хасаном Рухани (Negotiations between President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and President Hassan Rouhani). (2015, March 11). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=8347.

Постоянный нейтралитет Туркменистана: сотрудничество во имя мира, безопасности и развития" ("Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan: Cooperation for Peace, Security and Development.") (2010, December 14). Retrieved November 1, 2018, from http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/articles/35485.html.

Си Цзиньпин встретился с Президентом Туркменистана Гурбангулы Бердымухамедовым (Xi Jinping Meets with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov). (2014, September 12). Retrieved November 30, 2018, from https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/rus/zxxx/t1191244.shtml.

Совместное заявление Президентов Республики Таджикистан и Туркменистана. (Joint Statement of the Presidents of the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). (2014, May 5). Retrieved November 2, 2018, from http://www.prezident.tj/ru/node/6657.

Соибназаров, Х. (2006). Межтаджикские Переговоры В Ашхабаде (Inter-Tajik Negotiations in Ashgabat). Retrieved September 5, 2018, from http://igpi.ru/monitoring/1047645476/1050412225/Tadjkistan0196.htm.

Состоялся официальный визит Президента Таджикистана в Туркменистан. (An Official Visit of the President of Tajikistan to Turkmenistan). (2015, August

21). Retrieved November 2, 2018, from http://www.cis.minsk.by/news.php?id=5380.

Туркменистан-Азербайджан: на новом витке конструктивного диалога. (Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan: At the New Period of the Constructive Dialogue). (2018, August 8). Retrieved November 16, 2018, from https://ukraine.tmembassy.gov.tm/ru/news/4827.

Шанхайская Организация Сотрудничества (ШОС): история и цели создания. (Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): History and Goals of Creation). (2013, October 13). Retrieved July 11, 2018, from https://ria.ru/spravka/20120606/664859152.html.

9/11 Commission Report. Retrieved August 2, 2018, from http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf.

90th Plenary Meeting, Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan. Retrieved May 11, 2018, from A/RES/50/80.

APPENDICES

A. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW OF TURKMENISTAN ON PERMANENT NEUTRALITY OF TURKMENISTAN

The present Law determines political, economic and humanitarian grounds for the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan recognized and supported by the world community in UN General Assembly Resolution "Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan" dated 12 December 1995, in accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan.

Article 1. Within the scope of realizing the integral rights of the sovereign state Turkmenistan declare voluntarily about its permanent neutrality and will support it and put into practice consistently. The permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the basis of its foreign and domestic policy aimed at strengthening the stability and consent in society, developing the friendly and mutually beneficial relations with the states of the region and the whole world.

Article 2. The acceptance of the permanent neutrality status by Turkmenistan does not affect the obligations' performance of Turkmenistan, arising from the UN Statute. Turkmenistan will promote the achievement of the UN objectives in every possible way. Turkmenistan recognizes the priority of the United Nations Organization and its decisions.

Article 3. Turkmenistan pursues the peaceful foreign policy, makes its relations with other states on the principles of equality of rights, mutual respect and non-interference to internal affairs of other states.

Article 4. Turkmenistan does not participate in war blocs and alliances, interstate associations with tough obligations or providing the collective responsibilities of the parties. The activity of foreign policy of Turkmenistan does not restrict, and doesn't infringe the other states' interests, and does not threaten their safety.

Article 5. Turkmenistan commits itself not to start the war and war conflicts, not to participate in them (except of the exercise of right to self-defence), not to take political, diplomatic or other steps that could bring to war or war conflict. In case of armed aggression against Turkmenistan it is entitled to appeal for the help to other states or the United Nations Organization.

Article 6. Turkmenistan will not have, produce and distribute nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and other weapons of mass defeat, allocate the military bases of foreign states.

Article 7. Turkmenistan develops the international economic co-operation on the basis of equality of rights, mutual benefit and accounting for the interests of the parties involved into this process, considering such cooperation as an important means of strengthening trust between countries and regions, and maintaining peace and stability.

Article 8. Turkmenistan provides its financial and economic space open, cooperates with all states, international economic and financial organizations, promotes the world community efforts when solving the economic problems. Turkmenistan considers the economic pressure of one state on other ones unacceptable as a means of gaining the political objectives, and doesn't participate in economic blockade announced by them.

Article 9. The highest value of the society and state in Turkmenistan is a person. Turkmenistan recognizes and respects the basic democratic rights and liberties of a person and a national accepted by the world community and fixed in the international law standards, creates political, economic, legal and other guarantees of their efforts' exercise. In Turkmenistan the equality of rights of all nations and nationalities, the religious liberty is provided.

Article 10. Turkmenistan makes its relations with other states on the basis of respect of their culture, traditions and customs, and considers the humanitarian contacts as the most important means of making the people close, deepening the mutual understanding between them, developing relations of friendship and co-operation. Turkmenistan promotes the exchange of spiritual values between nations and nationalities, mutual enrichment and imbedding of cultures.

Article 11. Turkmenistan joins the basic international legal acts providing the rights of refugees, displaced persons and compelled migrants, maintains the efforts of the states and international public relating to rendering help to countries suffered from wars, conflicts, natural calamity, catastrophes, epidemics and their consequences. Turkmenistan collaborates actively with world and regional humanitarian organizations.

Article 12. Turkmenistan guarantees the steady and strict conformity of the course of its domestic and foreign policy with the permanent neutrality status and international obligations taken upon itself in connection with that.

President of Turkmenistan Saparmurat Turkmenbashi

27 December 1995

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkmenistan'ın ilk ve ikinci cumhurbaşkanları dönemlerinde, (onu diğer Orta Asya ülkelerinden ayıran en önemli özelliklerden biri olan) kalıcı tarafsızlık politikasını Efraim Karsh'ın tarafsızlık modelini kullanarak, karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemektir. Bunu yapmak için öncelikle Türkmenistan hakkında ve ülkenin tarihi hakkında genel bilgilere yer verilmiştir. Bunu tezde, Türkmenistan'ın iki cumhurbaşkanının dönemlerinde kalıcı tarafsızlığın benimsemesiyle sonuçlanan Sovyet sonrası dönemdeki gelişmeler izlemektedir.

1991 yılında, beş Orta Asya ülkesi bağımsızlıklarını ilan etti ve Sovyetler Birliği'nden ayrıldı. Bu devletlerin hepsi aşağı yukarı benzer siyasi ve yasal koşullara sahip olmasına rağmen, 27 yıl sonra hepsi çok farklı bir şekilde gelişmiş oldu. Örneğin, Kazakistan Orta Asya ülkelerinin diğer ülkelerle iş birliğini geliştirmesi gerektiğine inanıyor ve bu bağlamda bölgenin lider gücü olmak istiyor. Bu bağlamda, Ocak 2018'de Birleşmiş Milletler, ülke Güvenlik Konseyi başkanı olarak seçilmiştir. Bu yeni sorumlulukla Kazakistan, Orta Asya ülkeleriyle ilgili meseleleri Birleşmiş Milletler'in gündemine getirme şansı buldu. Özbekistan da benzer bir politika izlemiştir. Cumhurbaşkanı Shavkat Mirziyoyev'in 2016'da iktidara gelmesinden sonra ülke, başta Orta Asya olmak üzere komşu ülkelerle olan etkileşimini artırmıştır. Tacikistan'ın dış politikasına baktığımızda, bu ülkenin Avusturya, Almanya, Birleşik Krallık (İngiltere) ve İspanya gibi Avrupa ülkeleriyle ve Orta Asya komşularıyla iyi ilişkiler kurmak istediği anlaşılıyor. Son olarak, Kırgızistan'ın dış politikasına baktığımızda, Rusya ve diğer Orta Asya ülkelerinin yanı sıra batı ile iyi bir ekonomik ve sosyal ilişki kurmak istediğini de gözlemliyoruz.

Bu çerçevede, çalışmanın ana konusu olan Türkmenistan'ın sahip olduğu tarafsızlık politikası bölge ülkeleri arasında bir istisnai bir yere sahiptir. Bazı durumlarda izlediği dış politika nedeniyle Türkmenistan son yirmi yıldır

bölgedeki en yalıtılmış ülke olmaya devam etmiştir. Türkmenistan'ın tarafsız statüsü, siyasi, ekonomik, insani ve diğer alanlarda birçok devletle iş birliğinin kurulmasında ve çok taraflı bir dış politika stratejisinin uygulanmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Stratejik olarak konumlanmış bu ülkenin tüm faaliyetleri, diğer devletlerin içişlerine müdahale etmemek ve barış süreçlerine aktif yardım etmek gibi, tarafsızlık felsefesinde ortaya konan varsayımlara sağlam ve tutarlı bir bağlılık örneği olarak verilmiştir.

2018 yılı itibariyle, Türkmenistan tarafsızlığın 23. yıldönümünü kutlamıştır. 12 Aralık 1995'te Birleşmiş Milletler Genel Kurulu, 50.Yıl Oturumu'nda "Türkmenistan'ın Daimi Tarafsızlığı" kararını kabul etti. Bu statünün Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) tarafından Türkmenistan'a verilmesinin en önemli nedeni, jeopolitik olarak önemli bir konuma sahip olması bu bölgede barış sağlama arzusuydu. BM için bu yeni bağımsız ülkenin (doğal kaynaklar bakımından zengin olan) dış müdahale olmaksızın ulusal ve uluslararası platformlarda yerini alabilecek bir statüye sahip olması da önemliydi. Türkmenistan'ın daimî tarafsızlık statüsü, ülkenin ulusal çıkarlarını uluslararası toplumun bağımsız bir konusu olarak gerçekleştirmesinde etkili bir yol bulmasını sağlamıştır. Türkmen tarafsızlığının modeli, bölgesel istikrarın sağlanmasında önemli bir faktör olmuştur. Dış politika konusundaki tarihsel tercih birçok bakımdan, ülkenin Sovyet sonrası gelişimini etkilemiştir. Bu eşsiz uluslararası yasal statü, yalnızca büyük ölçekli dönüşümsel devlet programlarının ve sosyo-ekonomik reformların başarılı bir şekilde uygulanmasını sağlamıyor, aynı zamanda dünya barış ve güvenliğinin güçlendirilmesini ve ülkeler ve önemli uluslararası kuruluşlar ile iyi ilişkiler kurulmasını sağlıyor. Böylece, politik, ekonomik, kültürel, bilimsel, eğitimsel ve diğer alanlarda yaygın ve verimli bir iş birliğinin kurulmasında önemli rol oynayan tarafsızlık, sadece ulusal olarak değerli değil, aynı zamanda tüm bölge için tartışılmaz bir varlık olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Tüm bu hususlar dikkate alındığında, bu tezin ele almaya çalıştığı ana sorular şunlardır: Ülkeyi kalıcı tarafsızlığı benimsemeye zorlayan nedenler nelerdir? Bu politika kim tarafından ve neden kabul edildi? Bölgesel dinamikler ve çatışmalar

temel karşılaştırma kriteri olarak alındığında, bu politikanın ülkenin iki cumhurbaşkanı altında gerçek olarak uygulanmasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar nelerdir?

Bu tez, Türkmenistan'ın daimî tarafsızlık politikasını ülkenin iki cumhurbaşkanı olan Türkmenbaşı ve Berdimuhammedov dönemlerinde karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, Efraim Karsh'ın *Neutrality and Small States* kitabında anlatılan modeli bu politikayı değerlendirmek için kullanılmıştır. Karsh'ın modeli farklı araştırmacılar tarafından farklı ülkeler için kullanılmış ancak Türkmenistan için kullanılmamıştır.

Bu tezin Giriş ve Sonuç bölümleri dışında üç ana bölümü vardır. İkinci bölümde, Türkmenistan ve ülkenin tarihi arka planı hakkında genel bilgiler verilmiştir. Bu bölüm ayrıca, ülkenin daimî tarafsızlık politikasının uluslararası toplum tarafından ne zaman ve nasıl kabul edildiğini ve nasıl tanındığını analiz eder. Ayrıca, bu bölümde hem 1995 yılında kabul edilen daimî tarafsızlığa ilişkin anayasal değişiklik hem de tarafsızlık durumu ile ilgili tartışmalar yer almaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde, Türkmenistan'ın tarafsızlık politikasının arkasındaki ana figür olan Türkmenbaşı dönemi ele alınmaktadır. Ardından dördüncü bölümde, 2006 yılından bu yana ülkenin cumhurbaşkanı olan ve tarafsızlık statüsünü koruyan Berdimuhammedov dönemi örnekleri ve bütün dinamikleri ile incelenmiştir. Bu iki bölüm, kalıcı tarafsızlık politikasını baz alırken Türkmenbaşı ve Berdimuhammedov dönemindeki bölgesel dinamiklere ve çatışmalara bakarak politikanın gerçek uygulanmasını analiz ediyor. Sonuç kısmında ise çalışma kısaca özetlenmiş araştırmanın sonuçları tartışılmış ve iki başkan arasında analitik bir karşılaştırma yapılmıştır.

Çalışmanın birincil metodolojik aracı belgesel araştırmalara dayalı nitel analiz olmuştur. Öncelikle, Türkmen, Rusça, İngilizce ve Türkçe olmak üzere akademik kitaplar, makaleler, gazeteler, dergiler, çevrimiçi kaynaklar ve resmî web siteleri birincil ve ikincil kaynaklar olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu tür kaynaklar arasında, Türkmenbaşı'nın (Türkmence yazılmış Ruhnama) en önemli eserinin ilk kopyası,

ülkenin resmi çevrimiçi gazetesi (www.turkmenistan.ru) ve Türkmenistan Dışişleri Bakanlığı web siteleri sayılabilir. Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda, Türkmenistan'ın anayasal ve yasal çerçevesi ile ülkenin bir parçası olduğu uluslararası anlaşmalar da incelenmiştir. Son olarak, konu hakkında hem Türkmenbaşı hem de Berdimuhammedov tarafından yapılan cumhurbaşkanlığı konuşmalarından yararlanılmıştır.

Türkmenbaşı ve Berdimuhammedov döneminde gerçekleşen Sovyet sonrası döneme ilişkin gelişmelere baktığımızda, genel olarak Türkmenistan'ın bu tez için model olarak belirlenen ve kullanılan ve Efraim Karsh tarafından önerilen tarafsızlık modeline uygun davrandığını söylemek mümkün.

Her şeyden önce, Türkmenbaşı döneminde bölgeyi büyük ölçüde etkileyen bir gelişme olan Tacik iç savaşı sırasında, kalıcı olarak tarafsız olan Türkmenistan'ın tutumu Efraim Karsh'ın modeline çok uymaktadır. Türkmenistan'ın Tacik iç savaşı sırasındaki tutumunun incelenmesi modele ve ülkenin ne derece bu modele uyduğuna dair bilgiye sahip olmamızı sağlıyor. Karsh'ın modeline göre konuşacak olursak, Türkmenistan Karş'ın analiz ettiği kalıcı tarafsızlık politikasının olumlu bileşenlerini sergilediğini gösteriyor. Karsh'ın önerdiği gibi, tarafsız bir ülke barışçıl bir çizgiyi izlemeli ve toplu sorumluluk gerektiren herhangi bir askeri blok veya ittifakın parçası olmamalıdır. Türkmenistan, Tacik iç savaşı sırasında Karsh'ın kıstas olarak gösterdiği, belirleyici unsurlar doğrultusunda çok fazla hareket etti ve topraklarını korumak için sınırları içinde yalnızca sınırlı sayıda asker bulundurdu. Bu çerçevede Türkmenistan Tacik iç savaşının çözüm sürecinde topraklarında barış görüşmeleri yapılmasına izin vermiştir ayrıca Tacikistanlı mülteciler için yaşam alanları oluşturmuş bununla da kalmamış onlara yaşama daha sıkı sarılmaları ve hemen adapte olabilmeleri için kalacak yer ve iş imkanında bulunmuştur. Bütün bunlar Türkmenistan'ın barışçıl bir seviyede kalması ve bu noktada bütün pozitif oluşumlarda yer alması ve hatta başı çekmesi demektir.

Tacik iç savaşına ek olarak Türkmenbaşı döneminde kendini gösteren bir diğer önemli olay ise Taliban'ın hızlı yükselişiydi. Bu gelişme karşısında da, Türkmenistan yine ana dış politika çizgisine sadık kalmıştır ve çeşitli giriş ve hatta bazen geri çekilmelerde bulunmuştur. Karsh'a göre, komşu bir ülkede bir ihtilafla karşı karşıya kaldığında, tarafsız bir ülke ne koşulda olursa olsun ve durum neye evirilecek olursa olsun herhangi bir askeri veya maddi yardımda bulunmamalıdır. Ancak tarafsız bir ülkenin kendi güvenliği için olası bir saldırı durumunda savunma amaçlı hareket edecek bir ordusu olabilir. Karsh'ın modeline göre, Türkmenistan Taliban döneminde bu özelliklerin her ikisini de sergiledi. Herhangi bir askeri veya maddi yardım sağlamamış, ancak kendi topraklarını olası bir saldırıya karşı korumaya hazır olmak amacıyla BM tarafından Afganistan sınırındaki BM'nin izin verdiği az sayıda birliği elinde tutmuştur.

Türkmenbaşı döneminde bölge için önemli olan uluslararası kuruluşlar düşünüldüğü zaman NATO ve SCO azımsanamayacak kadar önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu noktada Türkmenistan'ın bu kuruluşlar ile olan ilişkisi detaylı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Ve bu bölümde konunun daha iyi anlaşılabilmesi için iki kuruluşun da tarihsel değişim ve gelişimine yoğun bir şekilde yer verilmiştir. NATO ile Türkmenistan arasındaki ilişki söz konusu olduğu noktada, Niyazov yine tarafsızlık politikasına uygun davranmış ve bu tutumunu istikrarlı bir şekilde devam ettirmiştir. Askeri blok olarak düşünülen ve bileşenleri neticesinde de bu kanının çok doğru olduğu, NATO, Türkmenistan için uygun bir seçenek olmamıştır. Ve Karsh'ın da modeline göre zaten tarafsız bir ülke böyle bir askeri ittifakın üyesi olamazdı. Böylece, Türkmenbaşı'nın NATO ile ilişkileri, bu örgütün bölgede aktif olarak yer aldığı bir dönemde sınırlı kalmıştır. Türkmenistan'ın NATO ile yaptığı iş birliği yalnızca "Barış için Ortaklık" programı gibi barışçıl faaliyetlere odaklandı. Bu program da belki bazı noktalarda Türkmenistan'ın çekimser davranması gereken bir şey olarak görünüyor olsa bile Türkmenistan bu programa dahil olmak ile yeni bağımsızlığa kavuşmuş bir ülkenin sahip olduğu acemilik durumunu üzerinden atacaktı. Ve tamamen barışçıl kurallar çerçevesinde oluşturulmuştu. Aynı şekilde, Türkmenistan bölgedeki

NATO'nun askeri operasyonlarının hiçbirine katılmadı ancak gerektiğinde kuruluşun da finanse ettiği ve lojistik anlamda da yardımda bulunduğu bütün insancıl ve barışa hizmet edecek bölgesel yardımlarda yer almıştır.

Türkmenbaşı döneminde Şangay İş Birliği Örgütü ile Türkmenistan arasındaki ilişkiyi Karsh modeline göre incelersek, bu örgütün askeri müdahale gerektiren veya olası bir çatışma durumunda agresif tutum sergileyen bir örgüt olarak görülmeyebileceğini söylemek mümkündür. Ancak, bu düşüncenin yanlış olduğunu ve bu örgüte üye olmanın tarafsız bir ülke için sakıncalığı olduğunu düşündürecek farklı etkenler söz konusundur. Örneğin, örgütün bünyesinden imzalanan; "Sınır Bölgelerinde Askeri Güvenliğin Artırılması" ve "Sınır Alanlarındaki Askeri Güçlerin Azaltılması" gibi çeşitli anlaşmalar, Türkmenistan'ın bu organizasyona aktif olarak katılmamasının sebepleri olabilir. Bu anlaşmalar, örgütün bir şekilde askeri amaçlara sahip olabileceğini ve askeri eylemlerde bulunabileceğini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, daimi bir tarafsız devlet olarak Türkmenistan'ın askeri güçleri, BM tarafından belirlenen düzeyde ve sayıda olmak zorundadır. Kalıcı tarafsızlık politikasına uygun hareket eden Türkmenbaşı, potansiyel olarak askeri bir hedefi olabilecek böyle bir organizasyonda yer almak istememiştir. Bu da, Karsh'ın daimi tarafsız politikasına sahip ülkeler için belirlediği kriterler doğrultusunda Türkmenistan'ın modele uygun hareket ettiğini kanıtlayan en büyük dayanaklardan biridir.

Berdimuhammedov döneminde tarafsızlık politikası ilk günkü anlamı ile uluslararası arenada kullanılmaya devam etmiştir. Fakat bu dönemde gerek uluslararası kuruluşlarla gerekse bölge ülkeleri ile olan ilişkilerin artması söz konusu olmuştur. Bu tezde bu artan ve değişen ilişkilere de yer verilirken, politikanın Berdimuhammedov döneminde Krash'ın modeline olan uyumu araştırılmıştır. Türkmenistan'ın bu dönemde artan ilişkilerine rağmen bu ilişkilerin ülkenin tarafsız durumunu ihlal etmediğini söylemek mümkündür. Türkmenistan, tarafsızlık politikasının bir parçası olarak "barışçıl sebeplerle" bu organizasyonla birlikte çalışmasına rağmen NATO ile herhangi bir askeri iş birliğine girmemiştir. Bu nedenle, NATO'nun "olası sorunları" önlemek ve

bölgesel güvenliği kontrol etmek için ülkede askeri bir üs kurmasına dahi bu dönemde tartışılan konulardan biri olabilmiştir.

Türkmenistan'ın Şangay İş Birliği Örgütü ile artan ilişkileri de benzer şekilde analiz edilebilir. BM düzenlemelerine ve Karsh'ın modeline göre, tarafsız bir ülkenin ekonomik iş birliğine girmesi ve ikili anlaşmalar imzalaması yanlış değil tam tersi kabul edilebilir bir şeydir. Fakat bu iş birliklerine engel olan tek şey tarafsızlık politikasının gerekliliklerinden biri olan "tarafsız bir ülkenin, iş birliğinde bulunacağı ülkelerin veya kuruluşların da uluslararası arenada ya da iç işlerinde soruna sahip olmaması ve askeri hiçbir agresif politika izlememesi gerekli" maddesidir. Şangay İş Birliği Örgütün üye devletlerinden bazılarının (Pakistan gibi) iç ve dış sorunları olmasına rağmen, Türkmenistan'ın örgüt ile olan ilişkilerinin artması, Berdimuhammedov döneminde söz konusu olmuştur. Bu özel nokta, Karsh'ın modeli açısından bakıldığında bir soruyu gündeme getiriyor. Karsh'a göre, tarafsız bir ülke bu ülkelerle iş birliğine girmemelidir. Fakat bu noktada Türkmenistan, örgüt ile bölgesel güvenlik ve istikrar için önemli bir potansiyele sahip uluslararası bir kuruluş olarak ilişkiler kurduğu açıklamasını yapmaktadır. Bu da Karsh'ın modeli tekrar ele alındığı zaman ve bütün bileşenler bir arada düşünüldüğü zaman ülkenin tam üyeliğe de sahip olmamasından dolayı modele aykırı bir durum olarak görünmemektedir.

Türkmenistan'ın bölgesel ülkelerle artan ilişkileri Karş'ın modeli ile analiz edildiğinde, ülkenin tarafsız bir statü çerçevesinde hareket ettiğini söylemek mümkündür. Berdimuhammedov, bu ülkelerle iyi ilişkiler kurmayı ve bölgedeki barışı ve istikrarı arttırmak için onlarla iş birliğine girmeyi amaçladı. Karsh'ın da belirttiği gibi, tarafsızlık politikasına sahip bir ülke, barışçıl çizgilerde kalmanın yanı sıra ihtiyacı olan ülkelere ya da insanlara yardım etmekle yükümlüdür. Hatta ülkelere yapacağı yardımın yanı sıra ülkeler adına toplanacak barış ya da ateşkes görüşmelerine de tarafsız bir ülke ev sahipliği yapmak durumundadır.

Berdimuhammedov döneminde, cumhurbaşkanının attığı dikkat çekici adımlardan biri bölge ülkeleri ile Türkmenistan arasındaki var olan ilişkileri

geliştirmek ve yeni ilişkiler kurmaktır. Bu amaçla Berimuhammedov'un yönetime geçtiği anda ilk olarak yaptığı şeylerden biri, Türkmenistan ile Azerbaycan arasındaki sorunları çözmekti. Aynı şekilde, cumhurbaşkanı, bölgede bölgesel barış ve istikrarın sağlanamadığı iki önemli ülke olan Türkmenistan'ın Rusya ve Çin ile ilişkilerini geliştirdi. Bu iki ülke ile ekonomik ilişkilerin geliştirilmesinin yanı sıra, Türkmenistan Şangay İş Birliği Örgütü bünyesinde onlarla işbirliği yaptı. Son olarak, Türkmen-İran ilişkileri Karsh'ın modeline göre analiz edildiğinde, iki ülke arasındaki iş birliğinin, çoğunlukla ekonomik kaygılar ve kalkınmaya dayandığı için, tarafsızlığın olumlu bileşenlerini yansıttığını söylemek mümkün. Ancak, Karsh'ın ideal tarafsız ülke modeline göre tarafsız bir ülke, başkalarıyla siyasi veya askeri sorunları olan bir ülke ile iş birliği yapamaz. İran, bu anlamda, özellikle uranyum zenginleştirme programı ile ilgili olarak, bölgesel ve küresel güçlerle belirli gerilimler yaşadığı için tartışmalı bir durumdur.

Türkmenistan'ın tarafsızlık politikasının Türkmenbaşı ve Berdimuhammedov dönemlerinde uygulanması karşılaştırıldığında, 1991-2006 (Türkmenbaşı dönemi) arasında ülkenin dış politikasında daha kapalı, temkinli ve pasif bir tutum izlediğini söylemek mümkündür. Türkmenistan'ın NATO ve Şangay İş Birliği Örgütü ile ilişkileri açısından incelendiğinde, bu dönemde, Türkmenistan'ın NATO'yla bağlantısı çok sınırlı kalmıştır ve iki taraf yalnızca "Barış için Ortaklık" çerçevesinde birbirleriyle iş birliği yapmıştır. Şangay İş Birliği Örgütü ile Türkmenistan'ın bu dönem içerisindeki ilişkilerine gelince, dönemin cumhurbaşkanı olan Türkmenbaşı, organizasyon toplantılarına davet edilmesine rağmen, bunlara katılmamış ve gerektiği durumlarda sadece temsilci göndermek ile yetinmiştir

Türkmenbaşı döneminde, Türkmenistan'ın bölgesel ülkelerle ikili ilişkileri açısından ülke benzer bir tutum sergilemiştir ve mesafeli tutumuna devam etmiştir. Genel olarak, Türkmenbaşı bu ülkelerle sınırlı ilişkileri tercih etti ve bazen Azerbaycan gibi, ilişkilerin durma noktasına gelmesine bile izin verdi.

Ülkenin tarafsızlık politikasına sadık kalması, Türkmenistan uluslararası uzmanlar tarafından izole edilmiş bir ülke olarak kabul edildi.
Berdimuhammedov döneminde ise, çok daha aktif, daha ılımlı ve daha açık bir dış politika görüyoruz. Bu, temel olarak 1991- 2006 arasındaki dönemde gözlemlenen ülkenin izolasyonunu sona erdirmek için yeni cumhurbaşkanının endişesiyle ilgilidir. Tarafsızlık uluslararası ilişkilerde izole anlamına gelmese de, Türkmenbaşı döneminde fiili olarak ülke izole olmuş bir şekilde kalmıştır. Türkmenbaşı, seçilmiş birkaç ülke ile sınırlı ikili ilişkileri tercih etmiştir ve tüm uluslararası ittifaklar ve örgütlerden tamamen uzak durmuştur. Berdimuhammedov bu izolasyona son vermek istemiş ve bu amaçla aktif adımlar atmıştır. Tezin dördüncü bölümünde incelendiğinde, Berdimuhammedov döneminde, NATO'nun barışı korumak amacıyla Türkmenistan'da askeri bir üs inşa etme fikri bile konuşulmuştur. Türkmenbaşı'nın aksine, yeni başkan Şangay İş Birliği Örgütü'nün tüm toplantılarına katıldı ve hem kurumun kendisi hem de ortak bölgesel konular hakkındaki görüşlerini dile getirdi. Ayrıca, Türkmenistan'ın Azerbaycan, Afganistan, Tacikistan, Rusya, Çin ve İran'la ikili ilişkilerinde de görüldüğü üzere Berdimuhammedov'un aktif bir politika sergilediği görülüyor.

İki cumhurbaşkanı dönemi arasındaki farklara rağmen, Türkmenistan tarafsızlık politikasına sadık kalmıştır ve ona karşı hiçbir şey yapmadı. Ülke çok istikrarlı bir tutum sergilemiş ve bölgesel barış ve istikrara katkıda bulunmaya çalışmıştır. Bu genel tutumun yakın gelecekte de devam etmesi ve Türkmenistan'ı potansiyel olarak bölgesel bir güç haline getirmesi bekleniyor.

C. TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences [ ]

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences [X]

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics [ ]

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics [ ]

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences [ ]

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : DEMİREL
Adı / Name : GÖZDE
Bölümü / Department : Avrasya Çalışmaları

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (**İngilizce** / English): *HOW WAS THE PERMANENT NEUTRALITY POLICY ADOPTED IN TURKMENISTAN, COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN NIYAZOV AND BERDIMUHAMMEDOV*

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans** / Master [X] **Doktora** / PhD [ ]

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. /** Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide. [X]
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two year. *** [ ]
3. **Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for period of **six months**. ***** [ ]

***** *Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu Kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. A copy of the Decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.*

Yazarın imzası / Signature ..... **Tarih** / Date .....