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MASTER'S THESIS

**The Aspects of Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish
Foreign Policies toward Albania, Bosnia
and Herzegovina and Kosovo**

Author	Gergely Nagy
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Supervisor:	Dr. Emil Souleimanov
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Thesis proposal

Gergely Nagy (2nd August 1987)
Charles University in Prague
International Economic and Political Studies MA

Supervisor: Dr. Emil Souleimanov

Abstract: “The aspects of Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy towards Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo”

Research Question: Why and how did Turkish foreign policy – with the rise of the AKP and the appearance of several aspects of Neo-Ottomanism – changed since 2002 regarding the specified countries and what could be the result of all these changes?

Issues: The European Union and US oriented Turkish foreign policy went through radical changes after the end of the Cold War, the country’s foreign relations became more diversified with great focus on the Balkans too. Because of Turkey’s close historical, cultural, economic and political ties with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo and these countries in a manner being a gateway to Europe for Turkey, it is important to explore the motives and new tendencies of Turkish foreign policy directed to these countries. These three countries have a strong Ottoman heritage, Muslim population and used to be the core areas of the Ottoman Empire. The appearance of Neo-Ottomanism – some would argue that this is just a “pragmatic” and “realistic” notion but I would stick to Neo-Ottomanism – and all its characteristics (e.g. “strategic depth”, although Ahmet Davutoglu Turkish FM refuses to use the term Neo-Ottomanism) are the leading approach towards this area today; the governing Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) and its politicians role are also the main focus here.

Key issues will contain the increasing political activity of Turkey in the region, also regarding the phenomena when Turkey steps up as a mediator in several topics and a country which seeks to stabilise security in the area. The attempts of helping these countries to settle some conflicts with neighbouring states in the area will be also put under scrutiny and attached to the question. Besides the increasing political activity my focus would also be directed towards the strengthening economic ties, the ascendent Turkish investments in the region which are one of the main driving factors of Turkey’s renewed approach.

Great emphasis will be put on the topic of European integration of Turkey which the country partly seeks to achieve through a stronger presence in these three countries and establishing many ties with nations in the region plus gathering “friendly nations” around itself to support its EU integration process.

I plan to conduct interviews with Turkish professors teaching in these three countries, Turkey and even in the EU regarding this question and also with journalists, analysts dealing with Southeastern Europe so I could contribute to this issue with a wider variety of opinions, a broader perspective on the whole topic.

Analysis: There has been some presumptions that Turkish Foreign Policy follows a route which does not require the EU membership to achieve its aims in the region and Turkey is just showing a pragmatic face to these nations based on previous contacts. It is thought that Turkey is trying to establish itself as a global player in the world and this increased activity in

these three countries is a part of this process and also strengthening those ties which were cut off after the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand there are some opinions which say that Turkey as an individual player could not stand globally and the reason why Turkey being active in the area is to strengthen its position before entering the EU. The reaction of these three states favours Turkish activity – however other states in the region observe Turkish activities suspiciously – and I will also explore the reasons of this.

Conclusion: The thesis aims to discover the background of the above mentioned themes and give a complete and complex answer for the recent Turkish activity and the roots and consequences of the Neo-Ottoman approach in the region. Although the research question points to some really sensitive topics for Turkey and for Europe (e.g EU-membership) and the exact, clear answer may could not be found but I will try to provide an adequate view on the matter.

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29th November 2010, Prague

Dr. Emil Souleimanov



DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. The thesis as submitted is 173 460 keystrokes long (including spaces), i.e. 75 manuscript pages.

Your name: *Gergely Nagy* Your signature: *Gergely Nagy* Date: *19th May 2011*

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“The next century will be a Turkish century”

Turgut Özal, 1992¹

“The Ottoman centuries of the Balkans were success stories. Now we have to reinvent this”

Ahmet Davutoglu, 2009²

Introduction

Turgut Özal, Turkey’s former Prime Minister and President might had extraordinary foreign policy senses, or perhaps he was just enthusiastic and lucky enough to say this, but he quite accurately predicted the rise of Turkey in the international field at the beginning of the 21st century. Ahmet Davutoglu, the current Turkish Foreign Minister’s words highlight a bit different, albeit more far-gone step on Turkey’s reinvented and reformulated foreign policy approach which the Turkish FM stated on a visit to the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo. Clear words, no doubt about that. The “visionary”³ Turkish FM aims high. Although, this reinvention did not come as a surprise, the current Turkish government has been systematically building the country’s new foreign policy since almost a decade.

Twenty years ago study on Turkish foreign policy almost did not exist⁴. Turkish foreign policy has been studied since the Republic of Turkey was created in 1923, but the focus and emphasis was more placed on the country’s Western oriented approaches. Turkey’s Balkan policies were particularly neglected, except from a few academic articles, MA and PhD theses.

However, since 2001, as a new and robustly strengthening political party has started to determine Turkey’s political life and arena, the picture changed completely

¹ Laciner, Sedat. "Turgut Özal Period in Turkish Foreign Policy: Özalism" *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*. 9 March 2009. 4 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/333/turgut-ozal-period-in-turkish-foreign-policy-ozalism.html>>.

² Cain, Phil. "Turkey: Seeking influence through mediation" *globalpost*. 12 Jan. 2011. 8 March 2011 <<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/turkey/110111/turkey-the-balkans-serbia-kosovo>>.

³ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy" *Foreign Policy*. 20 May 2010. 10 March 2011 <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy?page=0,1>.

⁴ Robins, Philip. "The 2005 BRISMES Lecture: A Double Gravity State: Turkish Foreign Policy Reconsidered" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 33.2 (2006): 199-211.

and the attention turned to this sphere of Turkish foreign policy too, with academic works mushrooming on the horizon.

The *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/Justice and Development Party* (AK Party), which was created on the ruins of the Islamist *Fazilet Partisi/Virtue Party*,⁵ scored a sweeping victory on the 2002 general elections and secured a stable two-third majority in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. AK Party-leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the former mayor of Istanbul and an MP of the banned Islamist *Refah Partisi/Welfare Party* (RP), managed to gain the Prime Ministership after a short bypass and along with his fellow colleagues, especially with Davutoglu, started to reformulate and “reinvent” Turkish foreign policy.⁶

Davutoglu, as an intellectual with serious academic background and knowledge, soon became the architect and key protagonist in shaping the AK Party’s world view and the reshaping of Turkish foreign policy. The current Turkish FM, who was first lifted to the position of chief advisor to the PM in 2009, started to completely retransfrom and remodel Turkey’s foreign policy. The policy’s prime pillars were basically untouched, although sometimes challenged, since the end of World War II.⁷ The chief Turkish foreign affairs politician wanted to bring a new dimension, proactive stance, multidimensional foreign policy, “rhythmic diplomacy”⁸ into this new approach. Davutoglu wanted to use Turkish soft power, geographic position and economic potential to rethink Turkish foreign policy.⁹

In addition, Turkey’s “Sevres phobia”¹⁰ is weakening – through this national security approach and the shaping of public attitude also changes – and with Davutoglu’s

⁵ Cizre, Ümit. *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey*. New York: Routledge, 2008: 29-30.

⁶ Not Davutoglu was the first one to challenge the establishment of a more diverse Turkish foreign policy in this era, we should note that Ismail Cem – Turkey’s former FM – also emphasised peace, security and stability in the region, the importance of economic co-operation, cultural tolerance and Cem also understood that Turkey’s geostrategic, political and economic role extends beyond neighbouring regions. See also: Cem, Ismail. "Turkish Foreign Policy: Opening New Horizons for Turkey at the Beginning of the New Millenium" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 1.1. (2002): 1-6. 5 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishpolicy.com/images/stories/2002-01-futureofTRpolicy/TPQ2002-1-cem.pdf>>.

⁷ Danforth, Nicholas. "Ideology and Pragmatism in Turkish Foreign Policy: From Atatürk to the AKP" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 7.3. (2008): 83-95. 5 Apr. 2011 <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_vol7_no3_nicholas_danforth.pdf>.

⁸ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy" *Foreign Policy*. 20 May 2010. 10 Mar. 2011 <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy?page=0,1>.

⁹ Grigoradis, Ioannis N. "The Davutoglu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy" *Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy* Apr. 2010. 5 Apr. 2011 <http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%99%CE%9C%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%9F-%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%93%CE%91%CE%A3%CE%99%CE%91%CE%A3-8_2010_IoGrigoriadis1.pdf>.

¹⁰ Kirisci, Kemal. "Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times" *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)* (2006): 32. 5 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp092.pdf>>.

“zero problems policy”,¹¹ which spreads to ex-Ottoman countries, this new approach aspires peaceful and constructive relationships with all states in neighbouring regions.

Foreign Policy magazine even put Davutoglu to the position of the seventh top global thinker in 2010, stating that he is “the brains behind Turkey’s global reawakening” and he brought “impressive results” in Turkey’s foreign policy.¹²

This new approach in the ex-Ottoman regions, which is many times referred as neo-Ottomanism in the West and denied by Davutoglu¹³ – however on some occasions he confirms the name of this approach but emphasising that the concept is understood quite differently at home and abroad¹⁴ – concentrates on the Ottoman heritage and legacy, also highlighting Turkey’s central role in these states.¹⁵ The controversial expression¹⁶ fueled debates since the beginning of the 1990s, when the concept originally appeared and the new policy generates much attention since then.

The proactiveness of Turkish foreign policy can not be just observed on the eastern, southern and northern borders of the country and in the international, global sphere, but on the west, in the Balkans – and in the European Union (EU) – too. Turkey, as a state committed toward EU integration, uses this new approach to cooperate and invest in those countries in the Balkans which once were the core European areas of the Ottoman Empire. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have Muslim pluralities or majorities and to facilitate relations with these states, which are given prospect of EU membership,¹⁷ Turkey and these three countries are tightening their relations – toward EU membership. The sustainability of this approach, due to criticisms and unknown factors ahead, is the question of the future, however Turkey can look positively into the upcoming years. The country’s aspirations to become a

¹¹ Özcan, Mesut, and Ali Resul Usul. "Understanding the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Changes within Continuity Is Turkey Departing From The West?" The Journal of Turkish Weekly 6.21. (2010): 109-133. 6 April 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/files/article/392.pdf>>.

¹² "100 Top Global Thinkers of 2010" Foreign Policy Dec. 2010: 45-46.

¹³ Lately he completely denies that such a policy exists under this name. See also: Raxhimi, Altin. "Davutoglu: I'm not a neo-Ottoman" BalkanInsight. 26 Apr. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/davutoglu-i-m-not-a-neo-ottoman>>.

¹⁴ Turkey's foreign minister denies neo-Ottoman remarks" News.Az. 25 Nov. 2009. 4 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.news.az/articles/turkey/3283>>.

¹⁵ Ülgen, Sinan. "A Place in the Sun of Fifteen Minutes of Fame? Understanding Turkey's New Foreign Policy" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Dec. 2010. 7 Apr. 2011 <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_new_foreign_policy.pdf>.

¹⁶ Somun, Hajrudin. "Neo-Ottomanism: the Return of Turkey to the Balkans" Today's Zaman. 6 Oct. 2010. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-223604-neo-ottomanism-the-return-of-turkey-to-the-balkans-by-hajrudin-somun.html>>.

¹⁷ "EU-Western Balkans Relations" EurActiv. 22 Feb. 2011. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-western-balkans-relations-links dossier-188295>>.

“global actor”¹⁸ by 2023, the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish Republic, through these steps might be realised.

My interest in Turkey and the country’s emerging role in the regional, and global, sphere started to intensify after I have participated in an international conference in northern Turkey in 2008. This focus has intensified when I became Balkans column editor at a major Hungarian online newspaper, and later becoming an editor of a Balkans based news agency. The selection of the topic of this thesis also shows this strengthened interest and the theoretically well underpinned approach make this issue a really special and challenging one.

The hypothesis of the thesis is composed of that Turkey is realising neo-Ottomanism in its foreign policy approach in three Balkan countries, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, with which the country have had close historical, economic, cultural and political connections. This foreign policy approach is not just a traditional, or one could say “conventional”¹⁹ foreign policy initiative, no matter how Turkish politicians try to deny the questions related to neo-Ottomanism, it is a policy which affects many layers of these countries’ societies – and not just the political and economic field. This pattern fits into Turkey’s current foreign policy doctrine toward ex-Ottoman regions and the approach could also help the country’s approximation to the EU. The aim of the thesis is to analyse the points and key characteristics of this foreign policy approach in these countries, to provide a regional and European outlook through this channel and an answer regarding the hypothesis’ correctness and validity, with emphasis on Turkey’s – and these three countries – EU accession prospects. In addition, the thesis also aims to provide more information and analysis to a topic where there is a lack of research done in English language.

The first chapter of the thesis aims to analyse what this policy basically means, what factors are encompassed in it and also to expose the principles and goals of neo-Ottomanism in the new Turkish foreign policy approach and to contrast its key points with previous Turkish foreign policy doctrines after World War II. Space will be

¹⁸ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007" *Insight Turkey* 10.1 (2008): 77-96.

¹⁹ Özcan, Mesut, and Ali Resul Usul. "Understanding the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Changes within Continuity Is Turkey Departing From The West?" *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* 6.21. (2010): 109-133. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/files/article/392.pdf>>.

devoted to the notion that why do I use the neo-Ottomanism expression regarding the Balkans and what grounding do I have for this.

The following points aim to prove how neo-Ottomanism serves as the key tool to achieve success, or partial success and sometimes even end in failure, in Turkey's approaches in these three countries. The thesis aims to show the limits of this policy in the recent international political landscape. Davutoglu's, and the AK Party's and government's foreign policy visions thus appear in the relations with the above mentioned countries.

This chapter also explores the criticisms toward Turkish foreign policy in these countries, why several politicians, the public opinion, analysts etc. oppose or support Turkish rapprochement to the region.

The second chapter of the thesis concentrates on the Ottoman past and Turkey's foreign policy approach to the region in the 20th century, providing a regional outlook with emphasis on the three countries in focus. The third chapter analyses Turkey's relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo today, how several aspects – political, economic, cultural etc. – of neo-Ottomanism are formulated in these states. I need to note here that this thesis takes Kosovo as an independent state according to the advisory opinion²⁰ of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and as most EU²¹ and NATO²² members also take Kosovo as an independent country. Turkey's role as a mediator in the ongoing Kosovar-Serbian relations will be taken under analysis here too. The fourth chapter focuses on the implications of these countries EU membership prospects in connection with Turkey's regional policies, both reflecting to the western Balkans' and Turkey's approximation and accession processes.

Due to the extension limits of this thesis, the other countries of the Balkans are left out from the analysis. However, I need to note here that several countries, like Serbia, Bulgaria or even Greece in recent times, are also of much importance and have significant roles and position in current Turkish foreign policy. The choice, among many highlighted previously, fell on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

²⁰ "Accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo (Request for Advisory Opinion)" International Court of Justice. 22 Jul. 2010. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=4&k=21&case=141&code=kos&p3=6>>.

²¹ "European Parliament urges EU members to recognise Kosovo" SETimes.com. 9 Jul. 2010. 3 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/07/09/feature-01>.

²² "Countries that have recognised the Republic of Kosovo" Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 Feb. 2011. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.mfa-ks.net/?page=2,33>>.

because these countries have significant Muslim populations, do not have fast EU membership prospects and their economy is also considerably less developed than other surrounding nations^{23 24} – there is a space and vacuum for Turkey to manoeuvre, to develop and enhance relations in the region.

Last, but not least, the fifth chapter will provide a conclusion for the whole thesis, assess the findings, the hypothesis and aims to formulate scenarios of neo-Ottomanism in which direction this policy approach could turn in the future.

The approach of the thesis is basically a policy analysis, assessing, analysing and reflecting to neo-Ottomanism, focusing on the process of this policy, how it developed during recent years. I will also devote space to criticisms which also question the policy's current existence.

I have primarily used primary resources for my thesis, ranging from academic books, articles, MA theses, magazine, newspaper articles, interviews made with several Turkish and Bosnian intellectuals and interviews published on webpages of several news organisations, government documents, data from international organisations, abstracts from conferences, maps and a diverse collection of analysis made by various institutes – government affiliated and non-government affiliated, from the Balkans and from elsewhere. Some of the assistant materials will be presented in the appendices of thesis.

I used a qualitative and – many times – a comparative method of the accumulated information and materials, assessing the three states in focus to one another and to provide a thorough and extensive work.

²³ "Country comparison: GDP - per capita (PPP)" CIA: The World Factbook. updated weekly. 2 Apr. 2011 <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html>>.

²⁴ Bulgaria and Greece also have considerably great number of Turkish minorities but these countries are already EU members, they are economically more developed and because these two states are already EU members there is less potential for Turkey to develop several kinds, economic for example, of relations – the bargaining possibilities with individual states, like Albania, are many times easier than with the 27 member block.

1. The new Turkish foreign policy approach

1.1 The Ottoman legacy, Davutoglu's new approach, key points of today's Turkish foreign policy

Most new policy approaches do not appear without any antecedents. The post-Cold War era brought a completely new political situation and Turkey also needed to reconceptualise its foreign policy strategy. However, this reframing took some years and a clearly defined concept only appeared with the publication of Davutoglu's "Strategic Depth" in 2001.²⁵ The book was greatly ignored at that time but the 2002 general elections in Turkey, when the AK Party was voted into power, completely changed the picture, Davutoglu became chief foreign policy advisor to the PM.

Foreign policy changes also have different meanings²⁶ and I will examine some parts of this issue. Nonetheless, before we take a look at this and from what ideas Davutoglu drew his strategy, we should mention the key points of Ottomanism, an expression and concept which emerged in the second half of the 19th century, with which the current FM's ideas show interesting connection points.

1.1.1 Ottomanism

Ottomanism²⁷ emerged as an idea to preserve the disintegrating Empire, but the decline approached rapidly and became really visible in the 19th century.²⁸ The theory aimed at creating an Ottoman nation by providing equal political rights and duties for both Muslims and non-Muslims residing on the territory of the Ottoman Empire²⁹ to preserve the country as one entity. Ottomanism wanted to "regenerate" the state,³⁰ a common Ottoman citizenship and constitution was created³¹ but revolutionary ideas

²⁵ Grigoradis, Ioannis N. "The Davutoglu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy" Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy 2010. 5 Apr. 2011 <http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%99%CE%9C%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%9F-%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%93%CE%91%CE%A3%CE%99%CE%91%CE%A3-8_2010_IoGrigoriadis1.pdf>.

²⁶ Özcan, Mesut, and Ali Resul Usul. "Understanding the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Changes within Continuity Is Turkey Departing From The West?" The Journal of Turkish Weekly 6.21. (2010): 110-112. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/files/article/392.pdf>>.

²⁷ I need to note here that Ottomanism had nothing to do with foreign policy, at that time those countries which are now independent, belonged to the Ottoman Empire. However, the concept and ideological background are worth to draw some linking points.

²⁸ Lewis, Bernard. The Emergence of Modern Turkey. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

²⁹ Eligür, Banu. The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010: 39.

³⁰ Mayall, Simon V. Turkey: Thwarted Ambition. Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997: 12

³¹ Dodd, C. H.. "The Development of Turkish Democracy" British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 19.1 (1992): 16-30.

from France – mainly nationalism started to spread, first in the Balkans³² – provided a powerful tool first for individual liberties³³ then on a bigger, national scale too. However, Ottomanism did not embrace non-Turkish symbols and during the Young Turk era, at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, it heavily got embedded with ideas of Turkification and Turkish nationalism.³⁴ The foundations and the ideas behind the ideology encompassed great changes compared to previous Ottoman policies but in practice it did not work out.

1.1.2 Turkey's new foreign policy

Turkey's new foreign policy approach can be characterised by several meanings of policy change: an adjustment and – disputedly – a program change is taking place currently.³⁵ Adjustment change in the meaning of providing more efforts to a cause, namely putting more emphasis in the country's EU accession process³⁶ and creating a multidimensional policy sphere, balancing the Western oriented Turkish foreign policy with northern, eastern and southern dimensions. This approach – in the eyes of some experts and authors³⁷ – can be seen as a radical program change, however, this issue is highly controversial and Turkish decision makers deny the existence of this U-turn. The new Turkish foreign policy doctrine was introduced in Davutoglu's 2001 book "Strategic Depth" and the changes followed due course.

First, we need to see that the policy changes and the reconceptualisation of Turkish foreign policy are intertwined. The concept of "strategic depth" encompasses multiple points, which were previously not that stressed in the country's foreign policy approach. These include an intensive focus on Turkey's historical and cultural traditions, the Ottoman legacy, the country's geopolitical importance, a multidimensional foreign policy, Turkey's "soft power" possibilities,³⁸ settling all problematic issues with neighbouring countries ("zero problem policy"). In addition,

³² Altunisik, Meliha Benli, and Özlem Tür. Turkey: Challenges of continuity and change. New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005: 2-3.

³³ Yavuz, Hakan, and Özlem Tür. Islamic Political Identity in Turkey. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003: 42-43.

³⁴ Ülker, Erol. "Empires and Nation Building: Russification and Turkification Compared" Diss. Central European University, 2004. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://web.ceu.hu/nation/theses/ukler0304.pdf>>.

³⁵ Özcan, Mesut, and Ali Resul Usul. "Understanding the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Changes within Continuity Is Turkey Departing From The West?" The Journal of Turkish Weekly 6.21. (2010): 109-133. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/files/article/392.pdf>>.

³⁶ Özcan, Mesut. Harmonizing Foreign Policy Turkey, the EU and the Middle East. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008: 157.

³⁷ Köprülü, Kemal. "Paradigm Shift in Turkey's Foreign Policy" Brown Journal of World Affairs 16.1 (2009): 185-197.

³⁸ Oguzlu, Tarik. "Soft power in Turkish foreign policy" Australian Journal of International Affairs 61.1 (2007): 81-97.

other points encompass taking Turkey as a “central country” which is able and should guarantee its own security and stability by a more active foreign policy to establish itself as an important international player.³⁹ Turkey’s position as a regional power is already realised. If all of these conditions could be fulfilled then the desired “Pax Ottomana”⁴⁰ or “Ottoman peace”⁴¹ would be in sight of reach.

The concept of strategic depth builds on Turkey’s historical and geostrategic depth, strength in the region.⁴² Davutoglu takes Turkey as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans were the ones who united the Muslims under one flag.⁴³ Today Turkey still has the ability to act as a – not just – regional player to achieve this. Turkey lies in a basin of an intersection point of north and south, east and west, has several “cross border spheres of influence”,⁴⁴ with controlling the Turkish Straits too. Abdullah Gül, President of Turkey claimed in 2009 for example⁴⁵ that “Turkey, surely, is moving simultaneously in every direction”. This approach tries to counterweight the country’s Western Kemalist foreign policy engagements, which looked more to the West, and widened up the possibilities, also emphasising the country’s independent stance and voice in foreign policy: Turkey can and should engage itself in policies from the Balkans through the Middle East to the Caucasus, Caspian and Central Asia because of this historical embeddedness.

Establishing peaceful contacts with dozens of countries in all these areas are not of any hardships. Davutoglu therefore embraced the concept of “zero problems policy”, which reflects a radical change to previous Turkish foreign policies. He facilitates the settlement of disputes, changing disagreements to cooperation, creating a “win-win” situation⁴⁶ into a mutually beneficial and interlocking process.⁴⁷ These ongoing,

³⁹ Ülgen, Sinan. "A Place in the Sun of Fifteen Minutes of Fame? Understanding Turkey's New Foreign Policy" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. December 2010. 7 Apr. 2011 <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_new_foreign_policy.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Pope, Hugh. "Turkey: Pax Ottomana?" Foreign Affairs 89.6 (2010): 161-171.

⁴¹ Türköne, Mümtazer. "New Ottomans" Today's Zaman. 18 December 2010. 7 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayzaman.com/columnistDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=229969>.

⁴² Murinson, Alexander. "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy" Middle Eastern Studies 42.6 (2006): 945-964.

⁴³ Danforth, Nicholas. "Ideology and Pragmatism in Turkish Foreign Policy: From Atatürk to the AKP" Turkish Policy Quarterly 7.3. (2008): 83-95. 5 Apr. 2011 <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_vol7_no3_nicholas_danforth.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Murinson, Alexander. "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy" Middle Eastern Studies 42.6 (2006): 945-964.

⁴⁵ Candar, Cengiz. "Turkey "Soft Power" Strategy: A New Vision For a Multi-Polar World" SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research December 2010. Brief No. 38. 8 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.seta.org/Ups/dosya/34809.pdf>>.

⁴⁶ Lynch, Brian. "Roundtable. Turkish foreign policy: 'promoting zero problems'" New Zealand International Review 35.4 (2010): 26-27.

⁴⁷ Önis, Ziya, and Suhnaz Yilmaz. "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era" Turkish Studies 10.1 (2009): 7-24.

albeit at some stages bumpy and obstructed, rapprochement with neighbouring countries, like Greece or Syria, are clearly of a sign of this new approach. Zero problems policy opens new mechanisms for Turkey for cooperation with neighbouring states; economic, visa, cultural, free trade agreements (FTA) are made – with Syria and Georgia for example⁴⁸ – and Turkey takes part actively in trade liberalisation agreements and organisations, with emerging onto a donor level too.⁴⁹ The abolishment of visas for Turkish citizens into more than a dozen of countries⁵⁰ in the past years – and perhaps more to follow –, reaching the number of 62 countries for visa-free travel, resulted in a robust trade volume increase too, with tourism and further economic cooperation expected to boost.⁵¹

Turkish foreign policy also embraces the ideas of creating peace, security, stability, prosperity⁵² mainly through increasing economic interdependence with neighbouring countries.⁵³ Turkey also acts more and more as a mediator in the regional, and in the global sphere too.⁵⁴ One of the main reasons why Turkey proactively behaves in these relations is because the country has more regional identities,⁵⁵ not just a Western/European one – as it was much emphasised by Kemalist forces. The cross-continental country has the ability and possibility to make space and manoeuvre in more regions and the state has multidimensional foreign policy priorities, instead of a single one.⁵⁶ This multidimensionality also serves as a balanced policy for maintaining equal distance from all participating sides and acts as a mediating field between opponents (the EU vs. Iran for example) in the region and even beyond.

I have made a brief indication how Turkey's soft power plays a role in its foreign policy approach but I should also mention how parts of this concept could help

⁴⁸ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007" *Insight Turkey* 10.1 (2008): 77-96.

⁴⁹ "Turkey gives US\$1 million to the EIF to help poorest countries on trade" *World Trade Organization*. 30 September 2010. 8 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.wto.org>>.

⁵⁰ Yavuz, Ercan. "Trade booming with neighbors as visa requirements abolished" *Today's Zaman*. 30 Jan. 2011. 9 Apr. 2010 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=233908>.

⁵¹ Yavuz, Ercan. "Turkey, Lebanon sign deal to abolish visa requirements" *Today's Zaman*. 12 Jan. 2010. 8 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-198273-turkey-lebanon-sign-deal-to-abolish-visa-requirement.html>>.

⁵² Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy" *Foreign Policy*. 20 May 2010. 10 March 2011 <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy?page=0,1>.

⁵³ Zalewski, Piotr. "The Self-Appointed Superpower" *World Policy Institute* 2010-11. Winter (2010): 97-102. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.worldpolicy.org/sites/default/files/uploaded/image/WPJ-Winter2010-11-Zalewski-Turkey.pdf>>.

⁵⁴ Önis, Ziya, and Sunnaz Yilmaz. "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era" *Turkish Studies* 10.1 (2009): 7-24.

⁵⁵ Oguzlu, Tarik. "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?" *Turkish Studies* 9.1 (2008): 3-16.

⁵⁶ Criss, Nur Bilge. "Parameters of Turkish Foreign Policy Under the AKP Governments" *UNISCI Journal* 8.2. (2010). 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/revistas/UNISCI%20DP%2023%20-%20BILGE.pdf>>.

adding to the development of this arena too. The expression of “conservative democracy”, with adjustments to Islamic values,⁵⁷ clearly provides stable grounds for Turkey’s increasing involvement in international organisations with putting also a stress on the compatibility of Western and Muslim traditions. The AK Party is keen on to promote its ability to be open for all respective sides and engage in discourse regarding this question. The Turkish government perceives democracy as the country’s most important soft power.⁵⁸ Moreover, Turkish governments since 2002 aim to draw in all involved and related actors into problem-solving and other initiatives, with showing a constructive and non-biased – this is debated – foreign policy approach. In addition, due to the political and constitutional reforms in Turkey⁵⁹ economic growth and consolidation started to characterise the country. Turkey is increasingly involved in major international organisations – on many occasions Turkish nationals and Turkey occupy top jobs –, such as in the Organisation of The Islamic Conference (OIC), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), G20, non-permanent member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), Council of Europe and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The country also co-operates with countries in the Gulf Coordination Council, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Southern Common Market (Mercosur). This “all-inclusive” diplomacy, as it was put down quite smartly,⁶⁰ also tries to mobilise NGOs, business communities and other civil actors in support of the government’s foreign policy aims, creating an all-field covered policy strategy to implement Turkey’s international desires.

Davutoglu has managed to become an extremely influential actor in the Turkish government⁶¹ and all of the above mentioned reasons and facts could contribute to the notion of this dynamic diplomacy, which helps Turkey today to come forward with a more confident, responsible and proactive foreign policy approach, with focuses shifting onto the global stage too.

⁵⁷ Cizre, Ümit. Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey. New York: Routledge, 2008: 76. old

⁵⁸ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007" Insight Turkey 10.1 (2008): 77-96.

⁵⁹ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007" Insight Turkey 10.1 (2008): 77-96.

⁶⁰ Aras, Bülent. "The Davutoglu era in Turkish foreign policy" Insight Turkey 11.3 (2009): 127-142.

⁶¹ Grigoradis, Ioannis N. "The Davutoglu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy" Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy 2010. 5 Apr. 2011 <http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%99%CE%9C%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%9F-%CE%95%CE%A1%CE%93%CE%91%CE%A3%CE%99%CE%91%CE%A3-8_2010_IoGrigoriadis1.pdf>.

1.2 Neo-Ottomanism, the general view and accusations on this approach of Turkish foreign policy

Davutoglu's ideas, the "strategic depth" and Turkey's new foreign policy approach have interesting ideological roots in neo-Ottomanism, a concept appeared and put in practise during Turgut Özal's Prime Ministership (1983-1989) and Presidential period (1989-1993). Davutoglu consistently denies being a neo-Ottoman, although, the concept and expression is not clearly defined as of today⁶² and flexibly changed during the course of the last more than three decades. Neo-Ottomanism, first coined by well-known columnist and Middle East, Balkans expert Cengiz Candar,⁶³ has been characterised by some authors being as an aggressive foreign policy, a pan-Turkist, a pan-Islamic or even an irredentist movement.⁶⁴ However, the question is not this simple and easy to answer.

1.2.1 Turgut Özal's neo-Ottomanism

Özal realised the need for change and the opportunities, especially with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the dissolution of the USSR, and aimed to establish political, economic and cultural ties with those areas – abandoning isolationism – which once belonged to the Ottoman Empire and even beyond (e.g. Russia).⁶⁵ These contacts and relationships were absent during the Cold War and having established these new connections – mainly through the field of economy – a more internationalist, active foreign policy was needed to protect the country's economic interests in these regions. Turkey "opened up" and started to rediscover its Muslim identity.⁶⁶ Özalist neo-Ottomanism (and neo-Turanism) also focused on the cultural aspects of these relations. He emphasised that Turkey is naturally part of the Islamic, Turkish (Turkic)

⁶² Rüma, Inan. "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Balkans: New Activism, Neo-Ottomanism or/so what?" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9.4. (2011): 133-140. 21 Apr. 2011 <[http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/%C4%B0nan%20R%C3%BCma-Turkey's%20Policy%20towards%20the%20Balkans\(1\).pdf](http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/%C4%B0nan%20R%C3%BCma-Turkey's%20Policy%20towards%20the%20Balkans(1).pdf)>.

⁶³ Sandrin, Paula. "Turkish Foreign Policy after the End of Cold War: From Securitising to Desecuritising Actor" *London School of Economics* (2009): 7. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CBYQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.lse.ac.uk%2FEuropeanInstitute%2Fresearch%2FContemporaryTurkishStudies%2FPaper%2520PS.pdf&ei=FW7KTAxUMMOD-wazu5CuAw&usq=AFQjCNG-mVUhyln1589cu-PmKBTS9R_nvWA>.

⁶⁴ Laciner, Sedat. "Turgut Özal Period in Turkish Foreign Policy: Özalism" *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*. 9 March 2009. 4 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/333/turgut-ozal-period-in-turkish-foreign-policy-ozalism.html>>.

⁶⁵ Laciner, Sedat. "Turgut Özal Period in Turkish Foreign Policy: Özalism" *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*. 9 March 2009. 4 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/333/turgut-ozal-period-in-turkish-foreign-policy-ozalism.html>>.

⁶⁶ Alessandri, Emiliano. "The New Turkish Foreign Policy and the Future of Turkey-EU Relations" *Istituto Affari Internazionali*. Feb. 2010. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai1003.pdf>>.

and Ottoman world and Turkey could be a model country for the states in the region,⁶⁷ even a central state in that geographical space. Kemalism viewed Turks outside of Turkey as a dangerous factor, however, for neo-Ottomans outside Turks and the Turkish diaspora spread all around Europe were a possibility for co-operation and improving bilateral relations. Neo-Ottomans, and especially Özal, considered the Turkist, Islamist and Ottomanist factors not to be abandoned from the country's EU accession aims. Turkey's national interest, independence views were reformulated according to these concepts and Özal tried to make it clear that a Turkey with its good relations with regional states would be the best to integrate into the EU.

Özalist policies also changed the economic structure of Turkey, started to privatise companies, liberalise the market mainly to boost exports⁶⁸ and reduced the power of the military – a crucial point in the history of Turkish democracy.

However, after Özal deceased in 1993, neo-Ottomanism as a policy was abandoned and foreign policy concentrated on the security aspects, namely to eliminate and fight against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist organisation.⁶⁹⁷⁰⁷¹⁷²

Özalist neo-Ottomanism was perceived by suspicion in those states which once belonged to the Ottoman Empire,⁷³ many of them saw this approach as the revival of the Ottoman imperial era and did not like the paternalistic tone, which Turkey was

⁶⁷ Sinan Ülgen suggests that Turkey could serve as a relevant example in today's revolts and transformations in the Arab world for the countries there, but he warns to avoid drawing much parallels with Turkey. On the other hand, some connection points could be drawn between Özal's vision and Ülgen's statements in connection to possibilities for Turkey to become a leading power in democratic norms, human rights promotion and state structure change in the region. See: Ülgen, Sinan. "The Future of Democracy in the Arab World: How Relevant is the Turkish Experience?" European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). Feb. 2011. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/The_Turkish_experience.pdf>.

⁶⁸ Lovatt, Debbie ed. Turkey since 1970: Politics, Economics and Society. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001: 22-25.

⁶⁹ Criss, Nur Bilge. "Parameters of Turkish Foreign Policy Under the AKP Governments" UNISCI Journal 8.2. (2010). 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/revistas/UNISCI%20DP%2023%20-%20BILGE.pdf>>.

⁷⁰ I need to add here, that multipolar tendencies did not stop after the death of Özal, Necmettin Erbakan, Turkey's first openly Islamist PM between 1996 and 1997, also wanted to foster relations with neighbouring countries, but only with Muslim ones, to create an alternative to the alliance with the Western world. However, the secularist elite, the judiciary and the military did not observe this without any vindications and the military staged a "postmodern coup" against his government in 1997. See also: Yavuz, Hakan, and Özlem Tür. Islamic Political Identity in Turkey. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003: 243-245.

⁷¹ Ismail Cem, FM of Turkey between 1999 and 2002 also favoured a multidimensional proactive foreign policy, with a Western emphasis. See: Önis, Ziya. "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique" Insight Turkey 13.1 (2011): 47-65.

⁷² Suleyman Demirel, Turkey's President between 1993 and 2000 also emphasised a multiregional foreign policy, however, he focused on the Black Sea Region. See also: Ülgen, Sinan. "A Place in the Sun of Fifteen Minutes of Fame? Understanding Turkey's New Foreign Policy" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. December 2010. 7 April 2011 <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_new_foreign_policy.pdf>.

⁷³ Danforth, Nicholas. "Ideology and Pragmatism in Turkish Foreign Policy: From Atatürk to the AKP" Turkish Policy Quarterly 7.3. (2008): 83-95. 5 April 2011 <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_vol7_no3_nicholas_danforth.pdf>.

using.⁷⁴ The Balkans was a crucial space for Özal's foreign policy approach,⁷⁵ countries that had problems with Serbia and Greece – such as FYROM/Macedonia, Albania – turned to Ankara for co-operation. Bulgaria, Romania and (half of) Bosnia also started to normalise relations with Turkey and the growing friendships between Turkey and these countries embarrassed Greece especially. The Hellenic state first observed this approach as Turkey wanted to circle around Greece with Muslim and Ottoman subjects, therefore creating a Muslim-Orthodox competition in the region. However, Greece later dropped this approach when it realised that Turkey's ambitions were not formulated as an insult on the Hellenic state.

1.2.2 Neo-Ottomanism today

The current Turkish foreign policy approach regarding the ex-Ottoman sphere, no matter how Davutoglu is emphasising its differentness, is primarily rooted in those times' neo-Ottomanism. The connection points are to be observed at many instances:

- the openness of Turkish foreign policy,
- concentrating on the Ottoman legacy and cultural relations,
- the focus on economic co-operation and interdependence,
- the revival of Islam and Islamic values in both domestic – no threat in Kurdish cultural rights and national identity as long as Kurds are loyal to the Republic of Turkey⁷⁶ – and foreign policy,
- the multidimensionality of foreign policy with as much emphasis on north, east, south, like on the west,
- peaceful approach to countries in the region,
- the more macro and all-level perspective,
- taking Turkey as a central country,
- and that both Özal's and Davutoglu's views do not call for Turkish imperialism.

⁷⁴ Fisher Onar, Nora. "Neo Ottomanism, Historical Legacies and Turkish Foreign Policy" Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies. Oct. 2009. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.edam.org.tr/images/PDF/yayinlar/makaleler/discussion%20paper%20series_fisher.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Laciner, Sedat. "Turgut Özal Period in Turkish Foreign Policy: Özalism" The Journal of Turkish Weekly. 9 March 2009. 4 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/article/333/turgut-ozal-period-in-turkish-foreign-policy-ozalism.html>>.

⁷⁶ Taspinar, Ömer. "Turkey's Middle East Policies Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism" Carnegie Endowment. Sep. 2008. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec10_taspinar_final.pdf>.

On the other hand, there are three clear cut, main differences between the two approaches:

- Turkey now proceeds with its zero problem policy with engaging in peaceful and problem-solving discourse with all of its neighbours and even acting as a mediator in several occasions,
- the current Turkish foreign policy toward ex-Ottoman states does not aim to openly become the leading state of the region – it is not even possible to reach, there are more major actors involved (EU, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia) –, but to calmly go ahead with its soft power approximation in all directions,
- and Turkey does not promote paternalistic ways towards countries of the ex-Ottoman Empire and stress its greatness.

The accusations that the whole Turkish foreign policy face today, such as that it has disregarded its Western values, the country turns away from the West,⁷⁷ promotes a hidden Islamist agenda,⁷⁸ pursues an anti-Western policy on the Middle East are of simplistic arguments. In addition, critics attach a pejorative meaning to neo-Ottomanism with emphasising Turkey's Eastern and Ottoman-era aspirations. The issue is more complex than this. Turkey is not going to turn into an Iran.⁷⁹ Neo-Ottomanism, emphasis on its Middle East and – disputedly – Islamic policies, is many times used to fuel the debate around Turkey's Westernness and Islamic values. The current AK Party government is more appealing to religious crowds and the majority of its women membership wears headscarf⁸⁰ – this issue remains a divisive domestic topic⁸¹ – but this does not mean that Turkey is turning its back on the West. Erdogan consequently objects and speaks out against radical Islamism. The AK Party has deep ideological, historical (focus on Ottoman past) and value roots in the Islamist RP,⁸² *Fazilet Partisi/Virtue Party* (FP) and even Özal's *Anavatan Partisi/Motherland Party* (ANAP). However, the current governing party has established itself as a

⁷⁷ Danforth, Nick. "How the West Lost Turkey" *Foreign Policy*. 25 Nov. 2009. 10 Apr. 2011 <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/11/25/how_the_west_lost_turkey?page=0,0>.

⁷⁸ Taspinar, Ömer. "Turkey's Middle East Policies Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism" *Carnegie Endowment*. Sep. 2008. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec10_taspinar_final.pdf>.

⁷⁹ "Is Turkey turning its back on the West?" *The Economist*. 21 Oct. 2010. 10 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.economist.com/node/17309065>>.

⁸⁰ Jenkins, Gareth. *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008: 167-187.

⁸¹ "On their heads be it" *The Economist*. 28 Oct. 2010. 11 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.economist.com/node/17363686>>.

⁸² Yavuz, M. Hakan. "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey" *Comparative Politics*. 30.1 (1997): 63-82.

reformist political organisation, which uses moderate and democratic language, defining itself as a conservative, rather than an Islamist political power.⁸³

The Turkish disputes with Western countries are many times portrayed as civilisational clashes, but these reflect another viewpoint here: Turkey participates in the Alliance of Civilisations for example to overcome the differences and contribute to the co-existence of Islamic and Western societies.⁸⁴ The Turkish public sees Western civilisation as a basically good thing and its values and norms are compatible with Turkish and Islamic culture. The main problem is Western politics, policies which are seen as negative and, many times, hostile. The disagreements with the West and Israel over several issues – Iran, the Gaza Strip or Sudan for example – are partly built on these grounds, Turkey is critical of the West's policies directed to Turkey and other Muslim countries. However, these disputes are also of a sign of a more independent, assertive and confident Turkish foreign policy; the Turkish state is rethinking its position in the world.⁸⁵ Turkey, in line with the zero problems policy, tries to avoid clashes of any kind with any country, especially economically important ones, like Iran. Nonetheless, EU membership still remains top priority. Both the West and Turkey wants stability in the Balkans and the Middle East, Afghanistan should not be left behind to the Taliban and the faith in democracy and human rights are just some of the key points in which both the West and Turkey agree.

Another interesting phenomenon here is that Turkey did not engage much in issues in connection with the ex-Ottoman and Arab world in the past more than 80 years and that could be one of the reasons why the country's current foreign policy might seem strange and surprising. For some countries, and perhaps even for the EU, Ankara's newly diversified focus has come "out of the blue", they were not prepared (and able) to understand, answer and handle Turkey's multidimensional approaches. These have contributed to bumps in the relations,⁸⁶ cooled down Turkey-EU negotiations and disagreements popped up with the US in connection with the war in Iraq. The confusion perceived in foreign states, which occasionally surrounds

⁸³ Cizre, Ümit. Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey. New York: Routledge, 2008: 110-112.

⁸⁴ Bülbul, Kudret, Bekir Berat Özipek, and Ibrahim Kalin. "Turkish perceptions of the West" Insight Turkey 10.1 (2008): 129-147.

⁸⁵ "Is Turkey turning?" The Economist. 10 Jun. 2010. 11 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.economist.com/node/16333417>>.

⁸⁶ Robins, Philip. "Turkish foreign policy since 2002: between a 'post-Islamist' government and a Kemalist state" International Affairs 83.1 (2007): 289–304.

Turkey's foreign policy steps, can be due to the notion that Turkey's acts at some points may contradict each other.⁸⁷ Turkey – which embraces many Western values, including democracy, respects and promotes human rights and international law – wants to be a regional power in a geographical space where there is (was) always a suspicion towards the West, Israel and the US. The balancing and careful Turkish diplomacy practise aims to manoeuvre between these buoys, but it is sometimes really hard to explain in the West why Erdogan supports the President of Sudan for example.

1.2.3 Neo-Ottomanism: a different meaning

Nevertheless, today's Turkish foreign policy is on the rise but it is understandable, why Davutoglu and other Turkish politicians fear and do not like the usage of neo-Ottomanism. It still has pejorative meanings – as we have seen it –, the definition is not clearly defined, everything could fit into this expression, and letting the word "Ottoman" remain in it could recall negative memories from the Ottoman past. However, we need to understand that policies can be filled with more positive and constructive meanings as the time goes by, Davutoglu is exerting on this. However, he considers neo-Ottomanism as too simplistic and he proceeds with more careful wording because Kemalist forces observe neo-Ottomanism as a policy to undermine Atatürk's legacy.⁸⁸

Nonetheless, I do stick to the usage of neo-Ottomanism regarding the Balkans because of the following reasons. In the previous section I tried to reveal the connection parts between Özal's and Davutoglu's neo-Ottomanism and I think that the similarities overwhelm the differences. Secondly, in my opinion the concept has been exploited mainly in negative ways, and times have long gone when countries once belonged to the Ottoman Empire needed to be afraid of Ottoman expansionism and imperialism. Therefore, I would like to provoke a bit by using the expression simply as describing the current Turkish foreign policy approach in the Balkans to underline the concept's traditions and linking points, not providing with this usage accusations or pejorative meanings to it. I just try to point to the matters, that

⁸⁷ Traub, James. "All Roads Lead to Istanbul" *Foreign Policy*. 10 Jun. 2010. 10 Apr. 2011 <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/10/15/all_roads_lead_to_istanbul?page=0,1>.

⁸⁸ Fisher Onar, Nora. "Neo Ottomanism, Historical Legacies and Turkish Foreign Policy" *Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies*. Oct. 2009. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.edam.org.tr/images/PDF/yayinlar/makaleler/discussion%20paper%20series_fisher.pdf>.

because the definition of the expression is not clearly defined, it could be filled in with many other elements, which were not emphasised in the media, especially in Western newspapers and magazines. In addition, as many countries in the Balkans welcome Turkey's political, economic and cultural approximation – with emerging mutual economic benefits in particular – puts the Ottoman past in a completely different light. In addition, we need to see that the current Turkish foreign policy toward the region is not just a traditional foreign policy approach: it encompasses overarching historical, political, economic, cultural – and religious – issues, affecting societies in a whole and not just a small proportion of it. Some experts also attach the notion that there is a great similarity between the mentality of Turkish and Kosovar people for example.⁸⁹

The “rebranding” of neo-Ottomanism has been already started and whatever name politicians attach to it, it still encompasses those attributes, the arch of which date back until Ottoman times, continued through Özal's views and expanded in today's AK Party era.

1.3 Criticisms toward Turkey's new foreign policy approach in the Balkans

In this chapter I will present and analyse the criticisms which are in connection with the usage of the expression neo-Ottomanism, particularly linked to the Balkans. Neo-Ottomanism is understood here as a policy not under my terms which I have highlighted in the previous section, but as an approach used by most of the people who deal with this topic.

The quotes are from the interviews which I have made with Bosnian and Turkish intellectuals.

1.3.1 Neo-Ottomanism: a word to avoid

Basically we can differentiate between two great criticisms regarding neo-Ottomanism. The first is a complete denial of the expression, it does not exist and people usually use neo-Ottomanism in a pejorative way to highlight Turkey's perceived imperial aspirations in the ex-Ottoman world. Turkish politicians, and

⁸⁹ Usta, Emrah. "USAK Interview: Turkey's Role in the Balkans: Opportunities and Constraints"International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK). 9 Nov. 2010. 10 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.usak.org.tr/EN/makale.asp?id=1783>>.

especially Davutoglu, are really keen on not use the word and deny that such a policy exists.⁹⁰ However, Ottoman multiculturalism and the positive aspects of the Ottoman past are worth to take into account here, according to the Turkish FM.

The reasons, which would underpin the non-usage of neo-Ottomanism are multifold. First of all Ottomanism, from where neo-Ottomanism is considered to come from, has never had any connotation to foreign policy. Harun Karcic, a Sarajevo based former researcher at the Roberto Ruffilli Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Bologna and a member of Islam in South East Europe Forum (ISEEF) elaborates this question from this perspective:

“First of all, Ottomanism was a term coined by Ottoman statesmen in the 19th century to try and forge a common Ottoman identity in the wake of ever stronger nationalist movements in the Balkans and Middle East which threatened the political and social stability of the Empire. The term never had any connotation to Ottoman foreign policy, it was simply an attempt at forging a common identity. Hence, labeling Turkish foreign policy as 'neo-Ottoman' is simply wrong. I would simply label it as the 'new Turkish foreign policy'. We have to bear in mind that Turkey has been largely ignoring its neighboring countries (Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Armenia, Greece) in the last couple of decades. It was desperately trying to get closer to the Europe, and applied for EEC membership a few decades ago. However, Europe has been divided on Turkey's entrance and Turkish leadership and the ordinary people became increasingly frustrated with the EU. Since the AKP came to power, the Turkish leadership tried to make use of its immediate neighbourhood for its own economic gain as well as for political stability.”⁹¹

Turkey's “rediscovery” of its neighbourhood is nothing new according to this interpretation and the EU's reluctance with the Turkish EU membership provided an impetus for this increased involvement with neighbouring regions.

The second of the reasons why neo-Ottomanism is not an existing policy is pretty simple: Turkey has not enough resources and capabilities to put such a policy into

⁹⁰ Raxhimi, Altin. "Davutoglu: 'I'm not a neo-Ottoman'" BalkanInsight. 26 Apr. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/davutoglu-i-m-not-a-neo-ottoman>>.

⁹¹ Full interview with Harun Karcic – made on 4 Mar. 2011 – can be found in the Appendices of the thesis. Mr. Karcic only allowed to quote him in full paragraphs, no individual sentences were allowed to be taken out from their context.

practise. As Cengiz Aktar, Professor at Turkey's Bahcesehir University and the Chariman of the Department of EU Relations in Istanbul puts it:

“The intention is good in a way but the realisation, plus the capabilities of Turkey to put such a policy in place are highly doubtful.”⁹²

This view is also supported by other opinions,⁹³ that Turkey has limited economic and diplomatic resources at its disposal to impose an overarching policy, concentrating on every aspects of a foreign policy approach. This is also true for Turkey's mediating role, its unilateral “referee position” can not work alone, other international support is needed due to this lack of resources.

A third point in this matter is that Turkey does not want to revive the Ottoman Empire, it is not in its interests. However, the multicultural and multifaceted heritage of the Ottoman Empire is something on which the country could build on, according to Cengiz Aktar:

“I don't think that today we can talk about the revival of the Ottoman Empire, although a multiethnic, a multireligious Ottoman or the Austro-Hungarian Empire we are aiming at. After all, what is the European Union?”

Interestingly, as I have noted in sub-chapter 1.2, many criticisms point to the matter that Turkey has disregarded its Western values and is turning away from the West. However, from the the point of the increased Turkish interest in the Balkans, Turkish foreign policy regarding this region is not a departure from Europe and the West, because the Ottoman state was in practise a European, rather than an Asian entity.⁹⁴ Therefore, Turkey's new foreign policy initiative to this region is also not a matter of value choice between neo-Ottomanism and the West because it has embraced Western values long time ago.

One of the last factors which could contribute to the point that neo-Ottomanism does not exist as a policy is that since the early 2000s the EU and the US showed relative indifference toward the Balkans. Muzaffer Vatensever, Balkans expert of the

⁹² Full interview with Cengiz Aktar – made on 11 Apr. 2011 – can be listened on the mp3 files provided in the attachment.

⁹³ Önis, Ziya. "Multiple Faces of the “New” Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique" *Insight Turkey* 13.1 (2011): 47-65.

⁹⁴ Özcan, Mesut, and Ali Resul Usul. "Understanding the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Changes within Continuity Is Turkey Departing From The West?" *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* Vol. 6.21. (2010): 109-133. 6 April 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/files/article/392.pdf>>.

Ankara based International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK) says⁹⁵ that Turkey – a country which could speak the language of the region – and its initiatives are trying to move forward the situation in the field of peace, security and stability in the region but if this does not get any help, the effects of these approaches will not last long. Cengiz Aktar affirms these views, he adds that western Europeans were (are) not interested in the region and Turkey stepped in, rediscovered the Balkans. Selvet Cetin, an expert at the Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE) in Ankara says⁹⁶ that Turkey has also a balancing role in the region, it can not abandon it because it could have great consequences.

Regarding religion, to answer those accusations which state that Turkey uses Islam as a factor in its foreign policy in the Balkans, Harun Karcic claims that:

“Islam does not play a role in Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans. Turkey today has greater trade with Orthodox majority countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Serbia than it has with Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo. Although, Turkey could use its religious connections in the Balkans, Balkan Muslims are, after half a century of communism, too secularised to see it as a major link.”

1.3.2 Opposition toward increasing Turkish relations

The second great criticism regarding neo-Ottomanism is not the denial of the expression, people who criticise this do believe that the expression and policy exists, but the increased involvement of Turkey in the ex-Ottoman sphere is in line with neo-Ottoman policies. These kinds of criticisms primarily come from Greek, Serb and Western intellectuals, politicians, whereas the first type of criticism, that neo-Ottomanism does not even exist, is emphasised mostly by Turkish, Bosnian (Bosniak) and some Western intellectuals, politicians.

The first aspect of the opinions in opposition to increasing Turkish relations is that Turkey is biased regarding the countries in the region, it favours Muslims in the Balkans and provides disproportionately great amount of political, economic and

⁹⁵ Kart, Emine. "Turkey's Balkan Policy Needs New Impetus to Gain Int'l Support" International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK). 15 Sep. 2010. 9 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.usak.org.tr/EN/makale.asp?id=1687>>.

⁹⁶ Kart, Emine. "Turkey's Balkan Policy Needs New Impetus to Gain Int'l Support" International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK). 15 Sep. 2010. 9 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.usak.org.tr/EN/makale.asp?id=1687>>.

cultural support to these communities and countries.⁹⁷ The religious argument is embedded in the discourse since the Bosnian War, when Turkey has provided help and assistance to Bosniaks who encountered with the aggressive behaviour and later with the physical attacks of the central Yugoslav government and Bosnian Serbs.

The second part of the criticism is that Turkey pursues with an aggressive Ottoman imperialism to the region⁹⁸ and has aspirations to expand its sphere of influence into the Balkans. All those Turkish diplomatic, political, economic and cultural involvement in the region serve this aim to get more influence and control the situation in the Balkans according to Turkey's interests. These criticisms many times cite Davutoglu's (in)famous 2009 presentation in Bosnia, where he stated sentences like "Sarajevo is ours".⁹⁹ Another aspect of this criticism is that it does not portray the Ottoman past as a prosperous and peaceful period, but as a time when the Balkan states' development was disrupted and the Ottoman period was a time of decline. The national awakenings and revolutions against the Ottoman rule were just natural processes in which Balkan countries liberated themselves from occupation.

There is also another part of the criticism, which is more concerned with Turkey's intervention into some countries' domestic affairs, primarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina. When Turkey officially states that it supports the territorial integrity of Bosnia and it would not let the country fall apart, Serb critiques say that Turkey only wants to shape a united Bosnia according to its taste.¹⁰⁰ Bosnian Serbs would like to explore all possibilities provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina's federative state system and according to them Turkish statements like this are questioning this federative political structure. Milorad Dodik, President of the Serb entity of Bosnia, Republika Srpska, views this issue as a major problem.

⁹⁷ Rüma, Inan. "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Balkans: New Activism, Neo-Ottomanism or/so what?" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9.4. (2011): 133-140. 21 Apr. 2011 <[http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/%C4%B0nan%20R%C3%BCma-Turkey's%20Policy%20towards%20the%20Balkans\(1\).pdf](http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/%C4%B0nan%20R%C3%BCma-Turkey's%20Policy%20towards%20the%20Balkans(1).pdf)>.

⁹⁸ Somun, Hajrudin. "Neo-Ottomanism: the Return of Turkey to the Balkans" *Today's Zaman*. 6 Oct. 2010. 6 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-223604-neo-ottomanism-the-return-of-turkey-to-the-balkans-by-hajrudin-somun.html>>.

⁹⁹ Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Speech by Ahmet Davutoglu" *International University of Sarajevo*. 16 Oct. 2009. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CBYQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ius.edu.ba%2Fdzsuskko%2FDavutoglu_transcript_dzs.doc&ei=HSC8TZ3PKsfEsgafquTvBQ&usg=AFQjCNFMWRpC1x6YfxkyvD1MTQxOqOdg>

¹⁰⁰ "Dodik accuses Turkey of interfering in BH's internal affairs" *Limun.hr*. 17 Aug. 2010. 10 Apr. 2011 <<http://limun.hr/en/main.aspx?id=618496&Page=63>>.

1.3.3 Analysis of criticisms

My duty here is not to judge these criticisms, just to provide an analysis of the – sometimes black and white – opinions, from my perspective.

First of all, Ottoman multiculturalism is a really debated topic, as we have seen some politicians on both sides have adjusted this concept according to their short-term policy aims. There is hardly any non-biased approach toward the Ottoman past and Turkey's recent involvement in the Balkans, we should be really careful when we would like to assess this issue.

Referring to the first section of the criticism, it is true that Ottomanism was not a foreign policy and aimed at creating a common Ottoman atmosphere, but we should mention that this was because at that time those territories were inside the Ottoman Empire, no foreign policy was needed to be formulated to those entities. In addition, the Ottoman history and traditions are mushrooming in today's Turkish foreign policy toward these regions and there is a huge focus on common similarities, where co-operation could be established.

The opinion, regarding that Turkey does not have enough political and economic capabilities to pursue such a policy in the Balkans, is debatable. Turkey is the 17th biggest economy in the world,¹⁰¹ the Turkish economy is booming, with economic growth coming right after China. Although, Turkey is still a country which requires and depends on significant amount of FDI¹⁰² but the robustly strengthening Turkish economy and companies also bring their "side effects": a more confident, diverse and assertive foreign policy. Part of the opinion might be true. However, Turkey might be on the edge of becoming a power like this, more than half of the total Turkish investment in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo has been realised since 2005.¹⁰³ In addition, Turkey has also realised that there was a vacuum to step in with a mediating role, albeit, without international support the effects of this role might diminish soon. Nevertheless, this role is more than what the EU and the US did in the last years, regarding the involvement in trying to settle disagreements between Bosnia and Serbia, or Serbia and Kosovo for example.

¹⁰¹ "Gross domestic product 2009" [World Bank](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf). Apr. 2011?. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf>>.

¹⁰² "Turkey's foreign direct investments fall 45.5 pct in Jan-Jun term" [Hürriyet Daily News](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/finance/9416031.asp?scr=1). 2008?. 10 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/finance/9416031.asp?scr=1>>.

¹⁰³ Hamidi, Lavdim. "Turkey's Balkan Shopping Spree" [BalkanInsight](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spree). 7 Dec. 2010. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spree>>.

The statement that neo-Ottomanism has embraced Western values and it does not confront the Western world is more than ambiguous. The Turkish government is trying to prove and voice that Western values – like democracy or human rights – are part of their policies, were always part actually, and there is nothing that the West needs to worry about. The disturbing factor here is that the current Turkish foreign policy approach is rather pragmatic and also embraces other values, including Eastern and Islam ones too. The mixture of these in the current Turkish foreign policy, including neo-Ottomanism, currently seems to be uninterpretable in the Western political axis, the problems in connection with Turkey's policies arise according to this.

Reflecting to the sentence that Turkey acts as a balancing power in the region might be a bit exaggerated. Turkey's support and mediating role should not be undervalued, however, the region's aim is primarily Euro-Atlantic integration. The EU and the US are also present with diplomatic, economic and military means to provide peace, security, stability and development in the region, therefore Turkey alone does not play a balancing role, perhaps just contributes to it.

Religion, officially, does not play a role in Turkey's relations with countries in the region. However, Turkey showed great sympathy and help toward the Bosniaks and Kosovars during the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts – albeit more originated with the human rights and humanitarian part of the crises – and this made a mark in many people, mainly Serbs in the Balkans that Turkey might be biased when establishing relations and co-operating with Muslim communities in the region. In addition, we should also take into consideration that if you face a smaller reacting force, even friendly approximation, you would co-operate with that person at first, not the most opponent one. Therefore, criticisms directed to the religious bias of the Turkish government's policies might be baseless, although, Turkish communities and organisations heavily invested in promoting Turkish education, culture in Bosnia and several remarks of Bosniak intellectuals could have contributed to fueling this debate.¹⁰⁴ However, Islam in the Balkans is considered to be more liberal (e.g. in Kosovo)¹⁰⁵ than to the east, so it occupies less role in politics¹⁰⁶ and this could also provide an example that religion could not be a major part of Turkey's foreign policy toward the region.

¹⁰⁴ Somun, Hajrudin. "Is Turkey Bosnia's mother?" Today's Zaman. 11 Nov. 2008. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=deta&link=158350>.

¹⁰⁵ Totten, Michael J. "Pristina: Kosovo's Liberal Islam" Standpoint Magazine. Jul. 2008. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.standpointmag.co.uk/node/157/full>>.

¹⁰⁶ However, there is a minority in Kosovo for example, which pursues with a more strict Islam. See also: Lowen, Mark. "Headscarf ban sparks debate over Kosovo's identity" BBC News. 24 Aug. 2010. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11065911>>.

Regarding the criticism directed to the possible post-Ottoman imperial aspirations, it is quite doubtful that Turkey has a clearly defined imperial policy and aggressively tries to pursue its aims in the region. This issue is a great possibility to fuel nationalism, a card used by local politicians a lot, and to exploit several communities' populist "hunger". Turkey alone, even if it would like to be, can not be a dominant political, economic and military player in the region, the EU and the US also have a major say in the flow of things in the area and most Balkan countries' aim is the Euro-Atlantic integration – not a union with Turkey, which also aims at EU accession.

The other part of the criticism, which refers to the Ottoman past as a period when the development of the Balkan states were disrupted, has some points worth to consider. Western and Eastern Christianity were dominant in the region before the arrival of the Ottomans, the countries in the region belonged to the sphere of influence of one or the other and their economic development also followed this line. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans did not happen at once, decades passed by until the Empire managed to secure control over several territories and in many occasions opponent local noblemen called in the Turks, to provide help to them. In addition, the Ottoman centuries of the Balkans should not be observed as just one point, the time of conquest, but in a wider picture and should be assessed according to this. Albanians for example have just started to reevaluate how the Ottoman centuries are portrayed in their history books.¹⁰⁷ This also points to the matter that politics in the Balkans have penetrated the field of the perception of history and the reassessment, reconsideration of one-sided opinions have just started.

The last part of the criticisms, which is concerned with Turkey's intervention into Balkan states', particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina's, internal affairs is again an example of how the different sides perceive and portray Turkish activity in the region. Those who would like to see further co-operation with Turkey do not see Turkish statements on territorial integrity, stability etc. as intervening into internal affairs, while others see this as a threat to their independence and autonomous functioning. We could say that the more a situation is unstable (even for the politician him/herself) – or just divert or downplay the importance of other issues – the more this tool is used to provide somewhat an answer for the crowds who eagerly wait for an adequate response.

¹⁰⁷ Erebara, Gjergj. "Albanians Question 'Negative' View of Ottomans" [BalkanInsight](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanians-question-negative-view-of-ottomans). 3 Dec. 2010. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanians-question-negative-view-of-ottomans>>.

2. The Ottoman past in the Balkans and Turkey's foreign policy toward the region in the 20th century

"The Ottoman past remains one of the most controversial historical subjects across much of the Balkans".¹⁰⁸ This issue got particularly into the focus amidst rising nationalism and violent state-building processes after the 1980s and the topic still spurs debate since then. In the following chapter I will present and analyse briefly the approximately five century long Ottoman rule of the Balkans and then the Turkish foreign policy's approaches to the region – to put the subject into a wider context – and break down the characteristics and important factors of this period in those three countries, on which I have special focus.

2.1 Overview of Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans in this period

2.1.1 The Ottomans

The Ottomans, established themselves as an empire with the leadership of Osman bey in northwestern Anatolia in 1299, have started to appear and conquer much of the Balkans in the 14th century, after Gallipoli became their first permanent base in Europe in 1354.¹⁰⁹ After the capture of Edirne and Thessaloniki, Sultan Murad rapidly advanced towards the Macedonian and Greek lands and then to Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia, significantly weakening the Hungarian influence in the Balkans. By 1388, Ottoman forces even reached the southern edge of Bosnia. The Battle of Kosovo (1389) is considered as a decisive point of Balkan and Serbian history: nonetheless the battle was seen as a draw, the high number of Serbian casualties deprived them the possibility of strong further resistance and in a few years time most Serbian noblemen became vassals of the Sultan. In addition, the road to the northern Balkans and Hungary opened up in front of the Ottoman conquest.

From this point the Balkans eventually became a constant battlefield for more than 150 years. With some interruptions in the process – the Interregnum and Venetian reconquests for example – consequent Sultans captured all important territories in the

¹⁰⁸ Hajdarasic, Edin. "Out of the Ruins of the Ottoman Empire: Reflections on the Ottoman Legacy in South-eastern Europe" *Middle Eastern Studies* 44.5 (2008): 715-734.

¹⁰⁹ Shaw, Stanford. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume I. Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808*. 9th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 16.

Balkans, including Constantinople in 1453¹¹⁰ – putting a definitive end to the existence of the Byzantine Empire. During the last years of the 15th and the first years and decades of the 16th century, the Ottomans conquered the remaining parts of the Peloponnese, Montenegro was invaded too and with Suleyman the Magnificent at the helm, all Serbia and Bosnia were successfully gained and incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia became Ottoman tributary entities for good and all in this period.

In the years between the death of Suleiman (1566) and the second battle of Vienna (1683), borders on the west stiffened and the Ottoman rule in the Balkans got stabilised. Bosnia for example remained in the hands of the Ottomans until the late 19th century and Serbia only gained complete statehood in 1882. With the stagnation period of the Ottoman Empire starting in the 16th and soon after that with its decline getting visible in the 17th century, some territories and the influence in the Balkans was gathered by the Habsburgs (and Russia, under the Orthodox flag).¹¹¹ The reasons for the weakening were diverse and multifold: administrative, economic difficulties coupled with the inability of the Ottoman army to develop onto the same level as those of the European powers. Ottoman Hungary and northern Bosnia was already lost by that time, and with the national awakenings, brought in by the ideas of the French Revolution at the beginning of the 19th century in Serbia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, and later in Albania, the Ottomans' attempts to reform the Empire – to provide a more flexible, autonomous and overarching approach to keep the Empire in one – completely failed. The disintegrating Empire, due to the appearance of independent states, lost almost all of its European territories completely by 1912. The new independent Balkan countries exploited the weak state of the Ottoman Empire and staged a war against the Ottomans (First Balkan War, 1912), with major territorial gains, only eastern Thrace remained under Ottoman rule, however, the Ottoman Empire did not give up and gathered some areas back – from Bulgaria – in the Second Balkan War in 1913.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Goffman, Daniel. The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe. 2nd. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004: 54.

¹¹¹ Hanioglu, M. Sükrü. A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008: 110-111.

¹¹² Hanioglu, M. Sükrü. A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008: 157 & 172.

The Ottoman rule in the Balkans had significant effects on the societies residing in these territories. The following points can be deduced from a closer analysis:¹¹³

- the Ottoman conquest disrupted the historical development of the Balkans,
- the Ottomans did not assimilate the people living in the region, but added new elements and revived previous traditions,
- mass immigration of Turkomans into the Balkans from the east,¹¹⁴
- the Muslim religion and Ottoman feudalism became the fundamental cementing elements of the society with differentiating between non-Muslims and Muslims, providing advantages for Muslims and smaller burdens on them,
- the non-Muslims were never able to mix freely with Muslims, the Ottomans regulated the dress Christians needed to wear, Islam religion was put forward in all spheres of social life,
- the Ottomans made agreements with the Orthodox Church – an “instrument of the Ottoman state”,¹¹⁵ the Empire tolerated the Church, until it served the Ottoman development and the Empire’s aims –, the Church was reorganised as a community under the control of the Patriarch who had extensive rights, Armenian and Jewish communities experienced the same treatment,
- some Christians and people belonging to other religions – who were oppressed under Christian rule – converted to Islam to secure benefits of Muslim religion (and avoid drawbacks), but there was no pressure for mass conversion, but in Albania and Bosnia greater numbers chose to convert to Islam,¹¹⁶
- the official language became Turkish,
- the Empire isolated Christian communities from urban centers, destroyed states and the upper class of each respective country,
- Balkan societies were bypassed by the Renaissance and Reformation, there was cultural stagnation, problems arose with possibilities to keep track on European developments and achievements through education,

¹¹³ Vucinich, Vayne S. "The Nature of Balkan Society under Ottoman Rule" *Slavic Review* 21.4 (1962): 597-616.

¹¹⁴ Shaw, Stanford. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume I. Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808*. 9th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 19.

¹¹⁵ Vucinich, Vayne S. "The Nature of Balkan Society under Ottoman Rule" *Slavic Review* 21.4 (1962): 597-616.

¹¹⁶ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 35. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

- social life for Christians was cut back, regeneration of tribal life started to emerge, integration of cultures was not achieved,
- Ottoman system fostered social and cultural differentiation,
- Balkan peasants under Ottoman rule were less abused than in previous times, paid lower taxes – but Christian peasants paid higher ones than Muslims – and due to the centralised nature of the Empire they had greater security,
- the Ottomans repopulated old cities and built new ones in the Balkans,
- after the 18th century: de-Turkification, influx of Christian peasants to cities in the Balkans and Muslims migrating back to Anatolia,
- Ottoman influence on dress, crafts, arts, cuisine, language, celebrations, religion,
- Balkan Muslims incorporated many Christian practises and beliefs.

The Ottoman Empire laid down its footprints heavily in the Balkans, however, the new elites in the newly established states immediately started to “reconquer” those fields, which the Ottomans deprived from them.

2.1.2 The new Republic of Turkey

After World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, where the still Ottoman Empire named entity suffered major losses in fights with the Allies – consisting of mainly British and Greek forces – but later regained some territories (Treaty of Lausanne), the Republic of Turkey was created and the new state – under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk – committed itself to reforms, secularism and Westernisation, which also affected the field of foreign policy. This foreign policy, “peace at home, peace in the world”,¹¹⁷¹¹⁸ needed to be adapted to the Balkans – a new sphere of foreign, and not domestic, policy – too. The new, cautious and conservative Turkish foreign policy in the 1920s concentrated on to normalise the

¹¹⁷ Ergil, Dogu. "Peace at home, peace in the world" Today's Zaman. 8 Feb. 2010. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-133856-peace-at-homepeace-in-the-world.html>>.

¹¹⁸ Smartly put into another context by Davutoglu in 2010. See: Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkish foreign policy and the EU in 2010 (II)" Hürriyet Daily News. 11 Febr. 2010. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-foreign-policy-and-the-eu-in-2010-ii--2010-02-10>>. Emphasising the meaning behind the sentence, it appears on the webpages of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs too: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/default.en.mfa>>.

relations with the countries in the Balkans¹¹⁹ and later to try to keep Germany and Italy out of the region. All ambassadors, who were sent to the key countries in the Balkans, were close friends of Atatürk and they have stayed in their positions for long years. Turkey maintained a close relationship with the Soviet Union, which has started during the process of Turkish independence, and the new Republic thought to get the support of the USSR for several of its policies.

Turkey and Greece also tried to settle on the exchange of populations, property rights and the position of the Orthodox Patriarch in Istanbul. Hundreds of thousands of Greeks and Turks needed to relocate, after the Greek defeats in western Anatolia approximately 1,3 million Greeks left for Greece and more than five hundred thousand Turks¹²⁰ have already arrived to the territory of Turkey from the Balkans in the period 1912-1920, and these population movements changed the social landscape in both countries, but especially in Greece. The rapprochement in bilateral relations with Greece – Eleftherios Venizelos Greek and Ismet İnönü Turkish PM both wanted to normalise the hampered relations between the countries – ended in a treaty of friendship in 1930.¹²¹

The normalisation of these relations made way for a Balkans wide co-operation. The first conference was held in October 1930, with Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey as participating states where economic and cultural issues were discussed and the representatives agreed on the establishment of a permanent organisation.¹²² The second conference followed next year, more focused on the issue of minorities which was left out from the first meeting, failed to culminate in a draft of a Balkan Pact, mainly because of the disagreements over minority and territorial issues, Albania and Bulgaria voiced concerns respectively. However, there were several other forms of co-operation established in this period, such as the Balkan Tourist Federation or the Balkan Chamber of Agriculture.¹²³ On the third

¹¹⁹ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 49. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

¹²⁰ Shaw, Stanford, and Ezel Kural Show. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II. Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. 8th. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002: 368.

¹²¹ Shaw, Stanford, and Ezel Kural Show. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II. Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. 8th. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002: 376.

¹²² Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 45. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

¹²³ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 47. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

conference in 1932, the Bulgarian delegation left the meeting due to the rejection of its plans to include the topic of minorities in the agenda.

With Italy's more aggressive actions in the Mediterranean, Turkey was pushed towards a closer cooperation with the region and the country signed an *Entente Cordiale* with Greece in 1933. The agreement committed the two countries to defend common interests and to secure common representation. Nonaggression, friendship and peace agreements were signed with Romania and Yugoslavia too. Bulgaria's revisionist policies were a driving factor behind these agreements and particularly Yugoslavia was worried of Italy's Albanian expansion.

The fourth Balkan Conference (1933)¹²⁴ aimed at deepening the co-operation between the Balkan states and further steps were made to enhance this, including an aspiration towards the creation of a Balkan Pact.

The deepening co-operation resulted in the creation of the *Balkan Entente*, signed by representatives of Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey in 1934.¹²⁵ The participating states agreed to guarantee the security of the existing borders in the Balkans and consult fellow members before taking political action against another Balkan state. The reasons for the creation of the entente were multifold. Bulgaria's revisionist approaches were widely considered as a motivating factor behind the agreement and also the great powers' – mainly Italy's – possible intervention in the Balkans were not neglected either. However, Greece attached special provisions to its version due to fears of provoking Italy with the agreement. In addition, the Hellenic state also initiated another provision, which included that the protection of Yugoslavia's borders would not involve Greece and it was not obligatory for any of the members to help the other in case of an Italian attack.

The Pact never achieved to fulfill its role: it was considered as a limited and weak treaty.¹²⁶ The agreement aimed at maintaining the status quo on the peninsula, a common defence dimension was completely missing and members had different policy considerations which they did not manage to fit into the common targets. Turkey's close connections with the USSR also popped up the need for special clauses in the agreement: the security guaranties were only valid between Balkan states, so a Romanian-Soviet dispute could not involve the Balkan Entente.

¹²⁴ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 49. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

¹²⁵ Barlas, Dilek. "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Opportunities and Limits for Middle-power Activism in the 1930s" *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.3 (2005): 441-464.

¹²⁶ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 50. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

Compared to other states in the region, Turkey had the greatest potential to become a middle power in the interwar era, mainly due to diplomatic factors.¹²⁷ With an experienced Ottoman diplomatic heritage, no imperialist aspirations, being a bridge between two continents, controlling the only seaway between the Black Sea and the Aegean and believing that the country's geostrategic importance is still valid, Turkey was soon seen as a partner – rather than a threat. A political vacuum in the Balkans, no great power was particularly and directly involved here at the beginning of this period, also helped Turkey to facilitate co-operation. The new Republic also embraced the equality among states – meanwhile the country was accepted as a member state into the League of Nations in 1932 – and started to become a leading power in the region. Members of the entente welcomed and supported Turkish initiatives and believed that the country had turned its back on the Ottoman heritage. Turkish policies were perceived as promoting the Balkans' interests on the regional and European level too. Turkey also managed to secure the abolishment of the international control and demilitarisation of the Turkish Straits at a conference in Montreux in 1936. From this time Turkey was the sole power to monitor and control the straits and the country was fully authorised to station troops in the area.

However, with the deteriorating European situation – Germany's and Italy's (and partly the USSR's) attention started to turn more and more toward southeastern Europe – countries of the Balkans made bilateral agreements to guarantee their own security.¹²⁸ Yugoslavia and Romania tried to manoeuvre to avoid any further German, Italian and Soviet threats, Bulgarian revisionism was not taken as primary issue then. The Balkan Entente although came to an inevitable end with the break out of World War II, the USSR took Bessarabia and Bukovina from Romania, Italy attacked Greece and German troops invaded Yugoslavia. The majority of the countries which formed the entente were occupied by foreign forces or coerced into hurtful agreements.

¹²⁷ Barlas, Dilek. "Turkish Diplomacy in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Opportunities and Limits for Middle-power Activism in the 1930s" *Journal of Contemporary History* 40.3 (2005): 441-464.

¹²⁸ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 51-52. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

2.1.3 World War II.

The developments in Europe from 1933 – when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany and Italy aspired to become a Mediterranean and African great power – made Turkey to consider more factors in its foreign policy. Italy's presence in the Aegean, in the Dodecanese Islands, Germany's economic and political pressure in the Balkans and the German annexation of Austria in 1938 and Czechoslovakia in 1939, and Italy's annexation of Albania in 1939 made Turkey to stand firm against German and Italian expansionist plans. The country's government decided to deepen relations and sign mutual aid and assistance agreements with the United Kingdom and France to prevent further Axis power gains.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 caused great surprise and disturbance in Turkey, which the Soviet Union helped much to establish its independent statehood, and suspicions got strengthened that German and Soviet involvement in the Balkans – and in the Middle East and the Caucasus – might get accelerated. Turkish foreign policy tried to secure guarantees in Moscow that the USSR would not interfere more in the region, but received no positive reply. Turkey strengthened its co-operation with Britain and France by signing a Mutual Assistance Treaty in October 1939,¹²⁹ in which the two great powers promised help for Turkey if it is going to be attacked and Turkey also promised help for Britain and France if German or Italian troops enter British and French territories in the Mediterranean.

Italy attacked Greece in October 1940 and this forced Turkey to declare strict measures and deploy its troops into eastern Thrace in order to prevent any possible Italian incursions.¹³⁰ Several of the articles of the Mutual Assistance Treaty should have come into force with the Italian invasion of Greece but Turkey did not want to go to war because of fears that in that case the country would face a bigger threat – the Soviet Union. With the fall of France in 1940, German entry into Bulgaria in 1941 and into Greece and Yugoslavia in the same year, the Turkish government reconsidered its agreements with Britain and France and claimed that the Mutual Assistance Treaty was no longer valid due to France's drop-out from it and signed a nonaggression pact with Germany in June 1941. This agreement basically paved out the way for Turkish neutrality in World War II: from this point Turkey refused to enter

¹²⁹ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 55. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

¹³⁰ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 54-56. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

the war on grounds that it was not adequately armed to counter a German aggression but as the German positions in the Balkans started to weaken, Turkey broke off economic and diplomatic relations with Germany in August 1944 and declared war on the country in February 1945.

2.1.4 The Cold War

As the war nearly came to an end on the continent, the division of the Balkans has been already started between the USSR and Britain. It was decided that Albania and Bulgarian would fall into the Soviet sphere of influence, whereas Britain could determine policies in Greece. Influence in Yugoslavia was sought to be divided equally between the two powers. However, the Soviet Union helped communist parties to take over governments in Albania and Yugoslavia too, and supported Greek communists in that country's civil war after World War II with the aim of establishing a communist Greece. Britain was no longer able to support Greece to fight with the communists and the US needed to step in to provide military and political aid and assistance to tackle this problem. With communists on the edge of encircling Turkey, the Turkish government tried to make steps to avoid this situation, but Britain was not in a position to afford any help to Turkey either and President Truman, in line with the Truman Doctrine, promised US resources, economic aid and military capabilities for Greece and Turkey. This act proved to be of great significance, Turkey's integration into Western organisations has started immediately, to contain the Soviet Union. Turkey became member of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) by 1948, a member of the Council of Europe in 1949 and member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) – together with Greece – in 1952. By 1954, as Cold War structures stabilised, the international political situation has also considerably firmed in the region,¹³¹ with socialist Yugoslavia staying outside of the Soviet bloc and communist rule completely strengthening in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania.

The East-West – economic, political and military – division of the Balkans from the 1950s reduced the role of the peninsula in regional and international politics¹³² and with Turkey orientating toward the West the “intermediate countries” were ignored

¹³¹ Turan, Ilter, and Dilek Barlas. "Turkish-Greek Balance: A Key to Peace and Cooperation in the Balkans" East European Quarterly 32.4 (1999): 469-488.

¹³² Turan, Ilter, and Dilek Barlas. "Turkish-Greek Balance: A Key to Peace and Cooperation in the Balkans" East European Quarterly 32.4 (1999): 469-488.

and observed with indifference by the Turkish government.¹³³ Yugoslavia, as a country expelled from the Soviet bloc, searched for connection points in the region and this resulted in a friendship and co-operation treaty with Greece and Turkey in 1954, but this agreement proved to be shortlived due to Khrushchev's rapprochement to Tito and Yugoslavia's commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement. The treaty fell into complete languidity by 1960, although it was concluded for twenty years.

There were several attempts to facilitate co-operation in the frozen relations in the Balkans between the two blocks in this period, however no major attempt resulted in real breakthrough. The Turkish government observed all Romanian and Bulgarian shots with suspicion to develop bilateral relations because it thought the Soviets tried to divide the Western alliance through their satellite states and secondly, because Bulgaria's treatment of its numerous Turkish minority. Bulgaria even forced 150 thousand of its Turkish citizens to emigrate to neighbouring Turkey and this act severely worsened relations between the two states for several years.¹³⁴ The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cyprus issue and the Johnson letter all had considerable effect on this time's Turkey's Balkans directed foreign policy but the aim of the thesis is not to go in deep of these themes, for further information there are several academic literature available.¹³⁵

Relations with Yugoslavia on the other hand developed in a more friendlier manner at this time.¹³⁶ Tito's split with the Soviet Union, the Turkish minorities' treatment and the Yugoslav stance on the Cyprus issue were no problematic points in the developing relations. Albanian-Turkish relations, despite the two countries being in the opposite blocs, also developed in this period, cultural and trade agreements were concluded.

Due to the deteriorating situation in Cyprus and Turkey's armed involvement in the crisis – a military junta rose to power in Greece with revisionist aspirations toward

¹³³ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 61. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

¹³⁴ Turan, Ilter, and Dilek Barlas. "Turkish-Greek Balance: A Key to Peace and Cooperation in the Balkans" *East European Quarterly* 32.4 (1999): 469-488.

¹³⁵ For example Shaw, Stanford, and Ezel Kural Show. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II. Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. 8th. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002 and Turan, Ilter, and Dilek Barlas. "Turkish-Greek Balance: A Key to Peace and Cooperation in the Balkans" *East European Quarterly* 32.4 (1999): 469-488.

¹³⁶ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 73-74. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

Cyprus – on the Mediterranean island in 1974, the US suspended all military aid to Turkey and this had major consequences in Turkish foreign policy. With worse relations with Greece and shoving off from the US, Turkey groped into other directions in the Balkans, namely establishing better relations with Romania, Bulgaria and strengthening the existing ties with Yugoslavia. At the end of the 1970s, Turkish politicians made high level visits to Bucharest, Sofia and Belgrade.

The 1980s brought change in these policies, the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 put the whole situation into another context. Turkey started to realign to the West, but several problems remained, mainly with Greece. The issues which were highly debated between the two sides included the still unresolved situation in Cyprus, territorial disputes in the Aegean, the boundaries of the continental shelf and the Greece's treatment of western Thrace's Turkish minority.¹³⁷ Another major problem was the Turkish minority's treatment in Bulgaria, where the government took on a path to forced assimilation from the mid-1980s and Turkey first did not realise the seriousness of this issue – relations seemed normal with Bulgarian politicians, there were regular visits – and after the 1980 coup the Turkish government, responding to Western criticisms, aimed at improving relations with eastern European countries. However, the situation worsened rapidly and Turkey had no other choice to open its borders in front of the mass exodus of Turkish emigrants departing from Bulgarian. Until the end of 1989 more than 300 thousand Turks left from Bulgaria to avoid Todor Zhivkov's suppressing rule.

Real breakthrough in Turkey's relations with Balkan countries did not come until the end of the 1980s, the Cold War dominated international arena did not provide the adequate conditions for Turkey to pursue an active foreign policy in the region. The Turkish government aimed at maintaining the status quo and did not challenge the main pillars of the region's relations, co-operation was limited and trust in the sincereness of other countries' foreign policies was not on a high level.

¹³⁷ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 78-79. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

2.1.5 Turkish foreign policy in the 1990s

The last decade of the century started in a global turmoil and change. With the Iron Curtain coming down, the dissolution of the USSR – the escalating conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan –, the Cold War came to an end, the first Gulf War and the rising tensions in Yugoslavia provided new challenges for Turkish foreign policy. Turkey needed to change fundamentally, reevaluate several priorities and possible threats.¹³⁸ Turgut Özal has already started to diversify the curve of the country's foreign policy and in line with this Turkish intellectuals have also started a dialogue about the state's Ottoman past, as all was mentioned in the first chapter, however the general assumptions and directions of Turkish foreign policy did not change much until the escalation of the Balkan, and especially the Bosnian crisis.

In the following sub-chapters I will present, analyse and assess the three countries' Ottoman past and relations with Turkey, concentrating on the events in the 1990s, including the Bosnian war and Kosovo conflict

2.2 Albania

Independent Albania existed only in temporary periods throughout the Middle Ages, Albanian territories were largely under a dominant power's supervision first under Byzantine, then Bulgarian, Serbian rule and finally the Ottomans conquered the Albanian lands.

The roots of the Ottoman past in Albania date back until the 14th century when Sultan Murat's Ottoman raiders first reached Albania.¹³⁹ The Ottomans were called in by one of the local tribal leaders to support his fight against another local notable. The territory of Albania was divided at that time among local notables and the Venetians, the majority of the population was Orthodox (in the south) due to the previous Byzantine and Bulgarian legacy, however, Roman Catholic groups (in the north) were also to be found in the area. Migration of Albanian people has already started in this period, this factor later becomes an important issue, mainly due the scarcity of land, cattle, deriving from the territory's mountainous landscape, and interestingly, blood feud.

¹³⁸ Atesoglu Güney, Nursin ed. Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007: 14.

¹³⁹ Shaw, Stanford. History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume I. Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808. 9th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 20.

By reason of the divided state of the Albanians, they were not able to resist the Ottoman pressure and in a couple of years time the major Albanian feudal lords became vassals of the Sultan. The Battle of Kosovo in 1389, in which several Albanian princes took part, also proved to be of a great power loss for the Albanians, although, the Ottoman Interregnum (1402-1413) provided a little relief, Ottoman expansionism slowed down.¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the Ottoman conquest of Albania was interrupted just for a short period of time, southern Albania fell into the hand of Sultan Mehmed and the northern territories became tributaries of the Empire. By the mid 15th century, all Albanian lands were under Ottoman rule. On the other hand, an Albanian resistance movement started to emerge in this period, with the leadership of George Kastrioti, later known as Skanderbeg, a son of an Albanian nobleman who was sent to Istanbul to military training.¹⁴¹ He converted to Islam and after some military expeditions in other parts of the Empire, he returned back to Albania to administer the region, however after arriving to the Albanian lands he turned against the Ottomans, reconverted to Roman Catholicism and organised an uprising which lasted almost all the remaining part of the century, until his death. Regarding Albanian identity, Skanderbeg and his movement, had (has) significant meanings: the rebellious nature of Albanians and desire for freedom derive from this time.

The Venetians left Albanian territories in 1501 and by this time the Ottomans completely conquered these areas, a huge wave of Albanian emigration has landed in surrounding regions, mainly Italy.

The following decades were the time when Anatolian immigrants have started to arrive in Albania, the Ottoman Empire established its feudal and administration system on this territory too and new cities, with Muslim majorities, mushroomed in the area. Albanian communities have largely preserved their religion, Roman Catholic and Orthodox, conversion to Islam was not significant during these years.

In 1596, for the persuasion of European powers, a couple of thousand Albanians revolted against the Ottomans, however, without outer support, their resistance did not last for so long.

¹⁴⁰ Zhelyazkova, Antonina. "Albanian Identities" Policy Documentation Center, CEU. 2000. International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR). 21 Apr. 2011 <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003852/01/Albanian_Identities.pdf>.

¹⁴¹ Shaw, Stanford. History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume I. Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808. 9th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 48-49.

Due to the conversion of the local population by the time of the 17th century, almost 30 percent of the population became Muslim¹⁴² and this trend moved forward in the upcoming decades. On the other hand, the majority of Albanians were not devoted Muslims, Catholic and Orthodox traditions were still deeply rooted in the society and on many festive occasions the three religious groups celebrated together. The Islamisation of the local aristocracy, to incorporate them into the Ottoman administration was the most persuasive power the Ottomans could use, forced conversions in most of the cases failed in Albania. By the 16th century, Christian and Orthodox influence started to decline, mainly because they were forced to give up their profitable activities in the cities. The spread of Islam happened voluntarily, in the 17th and 18th century there was a sharp increase in the Muslim population of Albania, especially in the rural population. People wanted to survive, embed themselves into the Ottoman hierarchy. However, a relatively big number of Albanians exercised Roman Catholicism and Orthodox religion, by the end of the 19th century 30 percent of the population was not Muslim.

The Albanian lands in the 17th-18th century, with the Ottoman central power weakening, fell into the hands of local clans who usually used the help of the Sultan to suppress their opponents. The clans established a relatively wide autonomy for their lands, helped the Empire in several military campaigns, however, the Ottomans did not watch this existence positively and crushed this independent movement in 1830 by massacring hundreds of Albanian leaders. The rule of the local pashas ended, but several uprisings occurred in the upcoming decades, all of them failed. These were answers for the *tanzimat*, a movement to modernise the Empire and preserve its territorial integrity by promoting Ottomanism, and created a greater union and identity in the homogenous society of Albania.

The Albanian national awakening and nationalism, due to the lack of a previously existing state and a homogenous religion, developed at a slower pace than in the surrounding nations. However, the events accelerated in the 1870s, with Albanian leaders establishing the League of Prizren (in Kosovo),¹⁴³ to gain more autonomy from the Ottomans, to unite Albanian political power and to protest against the verdicts of the Treaty of San Stefano, which took away Albanian inhabited lands from

¹⁴² Zhelyazkova, Antonina. "Albanian Identities" Policy Documentation Center, CEU. 2000. International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR). 21 Apr. 2011 <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00003852/01/Albanian_Identities.pdf>.

¹⁴³ Shaw, Stanford, and Ezel Kural Shaw. History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume II. Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975. 8th. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002: 199-200.

that time's Albania.¹⁴⁴ The League staged an uprising at the end of the decade, but the Ottomans crushed the uprising again. Albanian-language schools were banned, the local population was oppressed. Nonetheless, the existence of a strong political and military entity strengthened the Albanians' need for unification and their own country.

The Young Turk movement, emerged as an opposition of the Sultan in the beginning of the 20th century, wanted to reform the Empire and restore the constitutional government. At first, Albanians joined the movement, it seemed that the Young Turks would allow Albanian education and writing, but the movement did not aim to acknowledge the rights of the nationalities of the Empire, Ottomanism was the ruling idea. Albanian resistance started almost immediately from this point, the armed struggle ended in the capture of the capital of the Kosovo vilayet, Skopje, in 1912. The Ottomans agreed to fulfill the Albanians' demands and the territory of today's Albania was recognised as independent state by the Great Powers in 1913. However, territorial disputes have remained, particularly with Serbia over the area of Kosovo.

With the domestic and international turmoil in the following years, diplomatic relations between independent Albania and Turkey were not established until the latter gained independence in 1923. In that time, an eternal friendship agreement was made between the two governments.¹⁴⁵ At the same time Albania could be hardly called as a fully functioning state in this period, only under King Zogu (1928-1939) the conditions picked up.

In the interwar era the bilateral relations concentrated mainly on the establishment of relations and the involvement of Albania into forms of regional cooperation. However, Albania after a time became detached from these Turkish approaches as it was drawn more and more into an Italian sphere of influence, finally annexed by Italy in 1939, and could not pursue a fully independent foreign policy.

During World War II, Albania was occupied by Italian, Nazi German forces and several Albanian inhabited neighbouring areas were attached to Albania, including Kosovo, parts of the Kingdom and Yugoslavia and northern Epirus.

After the war, with the communist Enver Hoxha getting into power in Albania in 1946, relations with any foreign country deteriorated and got severe, Turkey was no

¹⁴⁴ However, there were other Albanians who focused on the Ottoman pluralism, that emerging multiple identities – Ottoman and Albanian – are not a problem regarding the Empire's composition and entity, the diversity could provide an additional contribution to the Ottoman Empire. See: Gawrych, George W. "Tolerant Dimensions of Cultural Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire: The Albanian Community, 1800-1912" International Journal of Middle East Studies 15.4 (1983): 519-536.

¹⁴⁵ Sülkü, Mehmed. "Political Relations Between Turkey and Albania in the Post Cold War Period" Diss. Middle East Technical University, Feb. 2010: 7. Web. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12611656/index.pdf>>.

exception.¹⁴⁶ As Turkey got engaged actively in the Western bloc and its policies and Albania found itself in the other camp, almost all connections were lost. Economic and diplomatic co-operation were minimised. However, with Albania's vote in the UN for Turkey regarding the Cyprus question in 1965, relations started to get better, political visits happened and trade agreements were signed in this decade. Nevertheless, with Hoxha putting Albania into complete isolation for a decade until his death in 1985, no major breakthrough was achieved in the bilateral relations. This breakthrough was achieved in 1988, when the Turkish FM, Mesut Yilmaz visited Tirana and stated that there were no political problems between the two states, he spoke of the Albanian FM, Reiz Malile as "my friend" and hoped to establish even better bilateral relations.¹⁴⁷ In 1990, Tirana hosted the first high level multilateral meeting since 1945, however, Turkey was not present due to Greek concerns about the country's Balkans oriented foreign policy. On the other hand, Albanian-Turkish bilateral relations were improving, the Albanian FM also paid a visit to Turkey in 1990 and several agreements were signed during his trip.

The transformation was going quite slowly in Albania, all communist eastern European countries held democratic elections by 1990, but in Albania the first democratic elections were organised only in 1991 amidst a domestic chaos and rumours that the post-communist Labour Party, led by Hoxha's hand-picked successor – Ramiz Alia –, used state institutions to persuade voters. Alia was not able to establish order, stable democracy and economic situation and in 1992 the Sali Berisha led anti-communist Democratic Party (DP) rose to power in the elections. The new government's foreign policy aim was to reach approximation with the EC and to embed Albania into Western institutions. Albania was already a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) since 1991 and became member of OIC in 1992, emphasising the country's Islam religion and Islamic traditions. The DP and Berisha immediately started to open up Albania to the world and normalise, develop relations with foreign countries. From 1992, the relations improved on all major grounds. Turkey promised millions of dollars of assistance and aid to Albania, President Özal visited Albania in 1993 and on the Turkish PM's, Suleyman Demiral's visit to Tirana the two countries signed a friendship and cooperation agreement. Berisha, at that time President of

¹⁴⁶ Sülkü, Mehmed. "Political Relations Between Turkey and Albania in the Post Cold War Period" *Diss.* Middle East Technical University, Feb. 2010: 11-12. Web. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12611656/index.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁷ Zanga, Louis. "Solid Turkish-Albanian Relations " *Open Society Archives*. ?. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.osa.archivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/4-5-32.shtml>>.

Albania, also facilitated the expansion of Turkish assistance into several sectors of the economy and on his trip to Turkey in 1993 he invited Turkish investors to Albania. Berisha was even called a "Turkey-fan" by his opponents, pointing to the matter that he was really eager to develop relations between the two countries.

Albanian politicians also sought to gain the support of Turkey for Albania's NATO membership and to peacefully settle the situation of Kosovar Albanians. Turkey also facilitated an infrastructural co-operation between the two countries, involving neighbouring states too, to create an East-West Motorway Project, linking Turkey, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania and an agreement between the countries was signed in 1995 to underline this.¹⁴⁸ The millions of Albanian origin Turkish citizens were also playing a major factor in the developing bilateral relations.

In the following couple of years the Albanian government was still not able to establish a functioning state administration, a relatively stable economy and military. From the mid 1990s due to the underdevelopment of the Albanian financial sector, the majority of the population invested in so-called pyramid schemes, which promised incredibly high profits. The whole system collapsed in January 1997, people lost more than 1,2 billion USD.¹⁴⁹¹⁵⁰ Riots broke out in the country, looters appeared on the streets and the military clashed with several armed groups – Albania fell into complete chaos, two thousand people died in the rebellion. The UN authorised a multinational force to secure the flow of humanitarian aid to the country and among other nations, Turkey also took part in the mission. Turkish nationals were evacuated from the country. The Turkish FM, Tansu Ciller stated that Turkey would provide any kind of help what Albania would need.

The UN forces managed to restore order in the country and Berisha's party was voted out from power in the 1997, to be replaced by the Socialist Party.

The next years showed an increase in the pace of Albanian-Turkish relations, political, economic, cultural and military means of co-operation were further deepened. High level state visits have accelerated, particularly in connection to the Kosovo conflict, Turkey provided further 20 million USD credit to Albania in 2000 –

¹⁴⁸ Greece at this time followed these developments with suspicion because it was worried that it would be encircled by a Turkey-led coalition of countries.

¹⁴⁹ Warner, Margaret. "Crisis in Albania" PBS. 1 Apr. 1997. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/jan-june97/albania_4-1.html>.

¹⁵⁰ "Albanian Civil War (1997)" GlobalSecurity.org. ?. 16 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/albania.htm>>.

even in time of economic hardships¹⁵¹ – and rescheduled the payment of a previous loan, Turkish investors and companies started to appear in Albania and take part in the privatisation process, Turkish military officials actively contributed to the training of the Albanian military during the 1990s to prepare the country to meet NATO standards. Turkey tried to facilitate a dialogue prior to the Kosovo crisis between the two sides, as it was mentioned previously here, but no agreement was reached. Turkish officials paid visits to Albania before the war and sought to discuss issues with the Albanian government, instead of Kosovar Albanians, believing that Albania was the main leader and spokesman of the Albanians on the other side of the border. Turkish military units were also placed in Albanian bases during the Kosovo crisis.

Economic co-operation became the main driving factor of the relations, this field witnessed remarkable growth especially after 2002 and because of the stable economic growth in both countries.

2.3 Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Ottomans started to appear on the borders of Bosnia in the 14th century. Previously in the same century Bosnians managed to strengthen their already established independent statehood, while struggling between the Hungarians and Byzantium.¹⁵² However, after Bosnia's charismatic leader's, Ban Tvrtko's death in 1391, due to the dynastic fightings and feudal division, the territory started to disintegrate. First, Bosnia was able to resist the Ottoman pressure with Hungarian help, although the domestic problems in Hungary and Bosnia's divided state gave the Ottomans a huge advantage and finally Bosnia fell under Ottoman rule in 1463. Nonetheless, resistance against the Ottomans continued through the century and the Empire was only able to fully incorporate the territory in 1527.¹⁵³

Bosnia's fall resulted in a four hundred century long Ottoman rule in the territory. In the 16th and early 17th century the territory enjoyed relative prosperity, Bosnian soldiers and scholars made significant impression on the Empire's military and cultural life.

¹⁵¹ Chubin, Shahram, Jerrold D. Green, and Ian O. Lesser. "Turkish Society and Foreign Policy in Troubled Times" RAND. 27 Apr. 2001. 21 Apr. 2011 <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/conf_proceedings/2005/CF171.pdf>.

¹⁵² Shaw, Stanford. History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume I. Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808. 9th. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 64-65.

¹⁵³ Phillips, Douglas. Bosnia and Herzegovina. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004: 35-36.

The voluntary, and on some occasions forced, conversions to Islam – mainly because of political and economic advantages –, the immigration of Turks and the settlement of “trustworthy” Muslims into strategic, border areas resulted in that by the 17th century 75 percent of the population of Bosnia became Muslim.¹⁵⁴ The previously Orthodox and Roman Catholic Serbs and Croatians left the territory in great numbers, or also converted to Islam. On the other hand, due to the constant fightings and wars in the region, the Ottoman province of Bosnia economically declined, Muslim immigrants arrived from neighbouring war-torn areas and contributed to the emerging Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) population.

With the Ottoman Empire losing grounds in the Balkans and both politically and militarily weakening, and with the European revolutionary ideas spreading, people in Bosnia also started to formulate ideas of freedom.¹⁵⁵ Bosnian aristocrats were worried of the Ottomans’ modernising efforts which have threatened their privileges. Several uprisings took place in the 19th century against the Ottomans, the Orthodox Church also saw an opportunity to strengthen its presence in Bosnia and to support independence movements. Many Muslims started to leave for Turkey to avoid the deteriorating situation. Nonetheless, the suppression of Christians in Bosnia reached a point when these people could not bear it: the Herzegovinian rebellion, mainly led by Christians in the territory, pushed out the Ottomans from Bosnia. However, the conflict flared, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia became also involved and at the Congress of Berlin Bosnia was ceded to Austria-Hungary in 1878. The Habsburg-led monarchy exploited the ethnic and religious differences in the region and played the communities against in each other to strengthen the Austro-Hungarian rule over the area. These events also laid grounds for the roots of greater ethnic tensions later in the 20th century.¹⁵⁶

After World War I, Bosnia was incorporated into the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in line with the unifying southern Slav efforts. Turkish foreign policy from this period toward Bosnia ceased to exist until the early 1990s, because it was embedded in Turkish-Yugoslav relations, since Bosnia was part of Yugoslavia.

In the interwar era Serb-Croat efforts were made to carve out partitioning lines between the ethnic communities. During World War II, Bosnia was ceded to the the

¹⁵⁴ M. Császár, Zsuzsa. "The political, social and cultural aspects of the Islam in the Balkans" *Eurolimes* 10.Autumn 2010 (2010): 62-76.

¹⁵⁵ M. Császár, Zsuzsa. "The political, social and cultural aspects of the Islam in the Balkans" *Eurolimes* 10.Autumn 2010 (2010): 62-76.

¹⁵⁶ Phillips, Douglas. *Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004: 36-37.

newly independent Croatia.¹⁵⁷ Several atrocities were committed by Nazi supported Serbs against Muslim people residing in Bosnia.

After World War II the territory of Bosnia, the member state of Bosnia had no titular nation to dominate its administration,¹⁵⁸ was incorporated back into the forming socialist Yugoslavia. Bosnia was basically untouched as a federal entity in this period, however, it experienced rapid economic growth – mainly because of military related industries and the exploitation of natural resources – and the Bosniaks were granted an ethnic minority and later a constituent ethnicity status in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, acknowledging their rights and importance within Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, with the emergence of economic problems in the 1970s and 1980s, unemployment started to rise, mainly in Serb populated areas and several industries have started to decline. Prominent Serb intellectuals published a Memorandum in 1986, claiming that Serbs have been suppressed by Albanians and Croats who also committed genocide against them.¹⁶⁰ As the nationalist Slobodan Milosevic rose into power in Serbia, he openly challenged the Yugoslav entity and promoted the creation of Greater Serbia, including Bosnia and Herzegovina too. In 1990 there were multiparty elections held in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia and anti-communist political forces came to power. Slovenia and Croatia tried to carve out a diplomatic solution in the disintegrating situation with Serbia, however, Serbia did not prove to be helpful and understanding. The two countries declared their independence in June 1991 and this triggered immediate conflict with Serbia. The war in Slovenia did not last for long, the European Communities' intervention ended the conflict. On the other hand, with greater amount of Serbian population in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Krajina Serbs announcing the creation of a greater Serbian community with Bosanska Krajina, the armed conflict soon overspilled into these areas and by 1992 there were already thousands of dead and more than two million refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia's ethnically most mixed territory.¹⁶¹

The Turkish public was in favour of Muslims in the Balkans, against the Serbs, but in 1991 it seemed that the West – the US and Europe – wanted to preserve the

¹⁵⁷ Phillips, Douglas. Bosnia and Herzegovina. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004: 40-41.

¹⁵⁸ Friedman, Francine. Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Polity on the Brink. New York: Routledge, 2004: 22.

¹⁵⁹ Benson, Leslie. Yugoslavia: A Concise History. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001: 102-103.

¹⁶⁰ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". Diss. Bogazici University, 2005: 87. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

¹⁶¹ Gallagher, Tom. The Balkans in the New Millennium. New York: Routledge, 2005: 132.

status quo and keep Yugoslavia in one.¹⁶² Turkey's non-interference policy did not change even after Slovenia left the Yugoslav federation and war broke out between Croatian and Serbian forces because of Croatia's secession attempt. Turkey declared that the Yugoslav army was responsible for keeping order and dealing with the civil war situation in the federal entities. The reasons for Turkey's stance were manifold: the Turkish government maintained friendly relations with Yugoslavia throughout the 1980s, the Yugoslav government supported Turkey against Bulgaria's policies dealing with the country's Turkish minority, Turkey was afraid of the possible waves of Bosnian and Albanian immigrants and the Turkish government wanted to avoid to be seen as a "neo-Ottomanist" power in the region, which has aspirations for sphere of influence establishing. However, as the West's position started to change regarding the escalating situation, so did Turkey's and after the European Communities recognised the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, the Turkish government did the same and followed course in early 1992, also recognising Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia as separate independent countries. Turkey had a couple of million strong Bosnian originated communities on its soil and this was also a pressing factor. From this time Ankara became a busy meeting place for Balkans leaders, all involved parties were trying to gain the support of Turkey.

The real turning point was although the deepening crisis and armed conflict in Bosnia, reports have arrived about ethnic cleansing and Turkish politicians felt that they need to pursue a more active foreign policy in this issue. Turkey tried to press its allies in the EU, NATO, UN and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Turkish government stated that it was satisfied with the February 1992 UN sanctions against Serbia. However, Turkey considered the West's reaction too slow and turned towards Muslim organisations, such as the OIC, for better co-operation. Turkey, with the help of the OIC, managed to put the situation in Bosnia in front of the UN Security Council and also put the conflict "on the table" in the CSCE. The new Turkish PM, Suleyman Demiral even proposed a military solution for the Bosnian crisis in a meeting with President Bush in July 1992.

In August 1992, Turkey submitted an action plan, which aimed at ending the Serbian aggression in three weeks and unless the Serbs do so UN commanded air raids would start against Serb troops and establish "safe heavens" around Muslim communities. Turkey saw the Bosnian situation not as a civil war or humanitarian crisis, the Turkish government already recognised the independence of Bosnia and

¹⁶² Calis, Saban. "Turkey's Balkan Policy in the Early 1990s" *Turkish Studies* 2.1 (2001): 135-146.

Herzegovina, which was attacked by an aggressor state and these Serbian acts should have been stopped immediately.

The picture even became more blurry for Turkey as Western powers and the UN were still unable to reach an agreement to stop the fighting and ethnic killings. Turkey's trust in UN peacekeepers in Bosnia completely vanished when Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic was killed by Serbian militias on his way back to the city from Sarajevo airport and the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) were unable to protect him.¹⁶³ Turkish efforts, in connection with the West's and UN's incompetency, intensified and when a UN Security Council resolution adopted a no-fly-zone over Bosnia, Turkey – within the frames of NATO – sent fighter jets to keep this resolution in place. However, the arms embargo against Bosnia was not lifted up, weapons could not be provided for the Bosnian Muslims.

On the other hand, Turkey needed to tackle another problem in Bosnia, which was the ongoing fighting between the Croats and Bosnian Muslims. The Turkish government facilitated a dialogue between the two parts and the negotiations ended in the Washington Agreement where the opponent sides agreed to stop hostilities. Turkish relations with Croatia improved a lot after the signing of this agreement, trade and commercial co-operation were also facilitated between the two countries' private sector.

The UN also accepted a Turkish contingent to the UNPROFOR in June 1994, albeit Turkish participation was rejected at first, due to claims that Turkey's historical, cultural and religious ties were too close with the region¹⁶⁴ but after Russian – Serbia's traditional ally – peacekeepers were incorporated in the the UN mission Turkey could not be left out either. The Turkish government facilitated a close Bosniak-Croat co-operation because they thought this was the only way to preserve Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial unity.

The Bosnian War resulted in the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), which ended hostilities in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, aimed to restore stability in the region and established a new political and administrative structure in Bosnia and

¹⁶³ Pejanovic, Mirko. Through Bosnian eyes: the political memoir of a Bosnian Serb. USA: Purdue University Press, 2004: 70.

¹⁶⁴ Pringle, Peter. "Turkish troops to join UN forces in Bosnia" The Independent. 10 Mar. 1994. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/turkish-troops-to-join-un-forces-in-bosnia-1428072.html>>.

Herzegovina – with significant powers landing in the hands of the international community.¹⁶⁵

The principles of the after Cold War era Turkish foreign policy were getting visible during the Bosnian crisis. Turkey was proactive in all policy aspects (political, economic, cultural), did not make any unilateral moves, pursued its policy objectives through the international organisations – on a mass scale –, poured humanitarian and economic aid into the region – especially to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedoni. The country's foreign policy priorities included the provision of peace, security and stability in the Balkans and to avoid the overspill of the conflict into neighbouring Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece and even to Kosovo. Minority and ethnic group issues were also taken into consideration, not just the situation of the Bosnian Muslims, but those of the Turkish minority in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece too. The lack of an adequate Western response also made space for Turkish foreign policy to fill in the temporary vacuum and the economic side of the conflict could not be ignored that major Turkish trade transit routes to western Europe were interrupted, new – and more expensive – options needed to be established so Turkey's aim was to restore the previous stable and secure routes. Indeed, Turkey was seen as a country who could constructively contribute to help to tackle the crisis and to mediate between the opponents.¹⁶⁶

On the other hand, Turkey's active involvement in the Balkan crisis were not of without criticism. Bosnian Serbs, Serbia and Greece protested against Turkey's increasing role in the Balkans, they claimed that Turkey pursues a hidden agenda and would like to reestablish the Ottoman Empire under an Islamic flag. Nonetheless, Turkish governments at the beginning of the 1990s did not exploit the "Muslim card" in the conflict, they did not portray the crisis as a fight between Islam and Christianity and they concentrated on avoiding the even greater escalation of the situation.

The Turkish military also participated in the IFOR and NATO-led SFOR peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁶⁷ from 1995 until 2003 – and later in the successor mission, EUFOR Althea.

¹⁶⁵ "The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina" Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative. 14 Dec. 1995. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=380>.

¹⁶⁶ Calis, Saban. "Turkey's Balkan Policy in the Early 1990s" Turkish Studies 2.1 (2001): 135-146.

¹⁶⁷ "Contribution of Turkish Armed Forces to Peace Support Operations" Turkish General Staff. ?. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararası/barisdestekkatki.htm>>.

2.4 Kosovo

“Power has changed hands many times between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo’s turbulent history.”¹⁶⁸ Kosovo’s history cannot be understood only in one perspective, both nationalities attach special importance and significance to this region, the presence of both ethnicities are inseparable in the analysis of this territory.

Kosovo has been part of Serbia since the 12th century, however, due to the disintegration of the Serbian state in the mid 14th century and the Ottoman incursion into the territory with the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, where Bosnian and Albanian troops were also fighting, the territory started to fall under Ottoman rule.¹⁶⁹ In the second Battle of Kosovo in 1448 there was another attempt by the Hungarian-led army to stop the Ottoman expansionism in Europe, however, this attempt failed again. By 1455, all Serbian territories, including Kosovo, completely became part of the Ottoman Empire.

Prior to the Ottoman rule Kosovo was an economically important area, lying on a major trade route and being a rich natural resources deposit. At this time it is widely considered that Serbs were in majority in Kosovo – Serbs also consider Kosovo as the cradle of their nation –, on the other hand Albanians were also Christians, they lived together with Serbs in reasonable harmony.¹⁷⁰ We should add that nationality was playing a smaller role in that era, religion was the more important factor.

Kosovo (and Metohia) was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 15th century and the establishment of the Ottoman administration began immediately. Turkish immigrants did not arrive in mass in this period and the majority of the population constituted of Christians, Orthodox and Roman Catholics. The Islamisation¹⁷¹ of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo became widespread in the 17th-18th century, with the weakening Ottoman Empire trying to cement together the part of its territories and people through to avoid paying higher taxes and to embed themselves into the Ottoman society, hierarchy.

Serbs have started to migrate into northern part of Serbia – and into southern Hungary – after a failed uprising in 1689, and this caused the desolation of several

¹⁶⁸ Kostovicova, Denisa. Kosovo: The politics of identity and space. New York: Routledge, 2005: 2.

¹⁶⁹ "History, bloody history " BBC News. 24 Mar. 1999. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo/110492.stm>.

¹⁷⁰ Jansen, G. Richard. "Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo: An Abbreviated History An Opening for the The Islamic Jihad in Europe " Colorado State University. 22 Jul. 2008. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~grjan/kosovohistory.html>>.

¹⁷¹ Forced conversion is strictly prohibited by Islamic law, however, in several instances political and economic factors encouraged Ottoman authorities, and the local communities too, to persuade people to convert to Islam. See: Celik, Nihat. "The Black Sea and the Balkans Under Ottoman Rule" Black Sea Studies 6.24 (2010): 1-27.

areas in Kosovo, where Albanians have moved in later on. Albanian immigration to Kosovo also accelerated from Albania in this and the previous periods.

Kosovo, as one of the four vilayets with Albanian population, took part in the ill-fated League of Prizren in 1878, in a few years time the whole movement was crushed by the Ottomans. Consequent shots to unite Albanian inhabited vilayets into one did not succeed and Kosovar Albanians also did not get the promised benefits from the Young Turks at the beginning of the 20th century. Despite Kosovo's and Kosovar Albanians' involvement in the Albanian independence movement, the region was annexed by Serbia during the Balkan Wars and it was internationally recognised as part of Serbia.

The history of the Kosovo-Ottoman Empire (and then Turkey) relations from this point lost its grounding for decades because these relations developed within the Yugoslav-Turkish relations. Serb authorities encouraged the settlement of Serbs and other southern Slavs in the region, which facilitated the departure of many Albanians and Turks, mostly for Albania and Turkey.¹⁷² Kosovo, for a brief period under World War II, became part of Greater Albania, however, this entity was dissolved in 1944. After the creation of socialist Yugoslavia in 1945, Kosovo was reincorporated into Yugoslavia again, this time as an autonomous region called Kosovo and Metohia. However, Albanians were not satisfied with this position, they wanted Kosovo to be granted the status of republic, as Croatia or Montenegro in the federal system of Yugoslavia. Kosovo only gained the status of autonomous province in 1974 but the desire for greater independence among Kosovar Albanians rose more in the following years, which ended in student riots in 1981. Meanwhile, Serbs have started to leave the territory due to the deteriorating relations between the ethnicities and the issue of Kosovo became highly politicised. Slobodan Milosevic, as the new President of Serbia, withdrew the territory's autonomous status in 1989, imposing direct rule on Kosovo from Belgrade.

Turkey maintained good relations with Yugoslavia during the Cold War, supporting the stability and peaceful existence of the Balkan countries and nations was the top priority of the consequent Turkish governments's policies toward the region, as well as to maintain the status quo. Therefore, the issue of Kosovo was not to the fore. Nevertheless, with the Iron Curtain falling down and tensions rising in Yugoslavia the regional and global picture changed completely and Turkey needed to reconsider several of its foreign policy approaches toward this question.

¹⁷² Ker-Lindsay, James. Kosovo The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009: 9.

Despite the war ended in Bosnia in 1995 and the Dayton agreement marked out the principles of a stable and peaceful Bosnia and Herzegovina another problem remained unsettled – Kosovo. Kosovar Albanians were hoping to establish their own independent entity since decades, but due to historic – Kosovo is seen for many Serbs as the cradle of the Serb nation – and domestic political factors this was not achievable. The Dayton agreement stated that Kosovo would remain part of federal Yugoslavia and this did not strengthen the search for peaceful solutions in the region. The self-declared Kosovo parliament declared the territory's independence in 1991 and a peaceful separatist movement was organised. However, Serbian authorities suppressed the Kosovar Albanian community more and more – reducing cultural autonomy and deploying tens of thousands of Serb troops into the area for example –, a mass exodus of Albanian immigrants to western Europe has started in this period, approximately 400 thousand Kosovar Albanians left Kosovo mainly to avoid conscription into the Yugoslav army.¹⁷³

A guerilla organisation, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) started to become the major actor in the situation and during the 1997 domestic turmoil in Albania, the KLA acquired more weapons and launched attacks on Serbian armed forces, especially policemen. Within weeks a Kosovar uprising was on its way, Serb authorities also responded with attacks against the KLA. The conflict deteriorated significantly at the beginning of 1999, when signs started to emerge that Serb armed forces were proceeding with a systematic ethnic cleansing of civilians. The international community tried to settle an agreement between the two sides to end the conflict, however, no solution was reached and in March 1999 NATO launched airstrikes against Serbia forces which have lasted for more than two months.¹⁷⁴ Slobodan Milosevic, the hardliner leader of Yugoslavia, after the raids – which destroyed much of the infrastructure and economy of Serbia – signed the peace accords which have established the United Nations Interim Administration for Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR).

There were no armed conflict in the territory of Kosovo until 1995, although, hostilities and human rights violations, killings were reported but by 1995-1996 the armed conflict has spread from Bosnia to Kosovo too, the KLA actually staged a war against Serb troops. The Serbian army responded with counter-offensives, killing

¹⁷³ The Independent International Commission on Kosovo. The Kosovo Report Conflict International Response Lessons Learned. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: 2 & 54.

¹⁷⁴ "NATO's role in relation to the conflict in Kosovo" NATO. 15 Jul. 1999. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm>>.

children and women too.¹⁷⁵ Western powers (and Russia) chose to intervene in defense of the Albanian population and launched an air campaign in 1999 against Serbia and the Yugoslav army. Opposite as it was thought by NATO members, Milosevic did not capitulate rapidly, but ordered the Yugoslav army to step up against the Albanian population. This move had devastating effects: more than 850 thousand Albanians fled to neighbouring Albania and Macedonia. With the air campaign intensifying and Moscow's support diminishing Milosevic had no other choice to accept the Rambouillet accords, which ended the conflict and established the UN administration in Kosovo.

Turkey's position in the Kosovo conflict was much different, than those in the case of Bosnia.¹⁷⁶ Kosovo was part of Yugoslavia, granted autonomous province status in 1974, not an independent state. The Turkish government needed to handle its own secessionist movement – the PKK – to preserve the country's territorial integrity and for its own sake it did not want to set out an example by recognising the independence of Kosovo. In addition, Turkey was concerned of the Turkish minority in Kosovo because this group's relations with Kosovar Albanians were far from ideal: the Serbian government used the *divide et impera* principal between the Albanians and Turks, the Turkish minority's rights were basically untouched and this caused disturbances in the Kosovar Albanian-Turkish relations. On the other hand, the Turkish government was worried of the possible overspill of the conflict into neighbouring Macedonia – a state with significant Albanian population – with which Turkey has established good relations after the country declared independence and Macedonia's stability was seen as a key element of the whole region's stability in the eyes of Turkish decision-makers. Nonetheless, Turkey contributed to the NATO-led military mission with fighter jets and with troops to KFOR too, mainly in those areas in Kosovo where the Turkish minority lived.

The lower profile Turkish interestedness, compared to Bosnia, was mainly because of the capture of the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, which coincided with the Kosovo war and because of the preparation for the parliamentary elections which

¹⁷⁵ We should consider the CNN effect in this case, meaning that the KLA smartly used the media to manipulate the Western public to support them with military means too and several other hostilities, which were committed by KLA officials, were not concentrated on and not shown. See: Bahador, Babak. The CNN Effect in Action. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Sülkü, Mehmed. "Political Relations Between Turkey and Albania in the Post Cold War Period" Diss. Middle East Technical University, Feb. 2010: 29-38. Web. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12611656/index.pdf>>.

were due that spring. However, this did not mean that the Turkish government and public was not in favour of intervention in Kosovo, Turkey was again active and wanted to contribute to the security and stability of the Balkans.

2.5 Regional initiatives, organisations

We should also mention the regional organisations in a nutshell, which have started to emerge in the 1990s reflecting the changing global, political structure and relations and the changes after the crisis in Bosnia. Turkey was actively involved in all initiatives. Several of these organisations helped to incorporate the newly established Balkan states (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina) into the international sphere and those which were completely outsiders in previous decades (like Albania). The EU and the US took the lead in helping these initiatives become realised but Balkan countries also realised that regional co-operation could be a milestone in bilateral and multilateral relations and some initiatives came from within the Balkans (like SEECP). On the other hand, not all organisations and co-operation forms proved to be of great success – some disappeared or got incorporated into EU initiatives –, however several of them served to facilitate better understanding and regional co-operation.

Organisations and initiatives established in this period (I am just going to mention them here):¹⁷⁷

- Royamount Process
- Southeast European Co-operation Initiative (SECI)
- Southeast European Co-operation Process (SEECP)
- Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe
- Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation (BSEC)

¹⁷⁷ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". *Diss.* Bogazici University, 2005: 139-150. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

3. Neo-Ottomanism in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo today

“The Balkans is a priority for Turkey from the perspectives of geographical position, economy, culture as well as historical and human bonds [...] Turkey, as a regional country, attaches special importance to its relations with Balkan countries [...] Turkey, conscious of her responsibilities to the peace and stability of the Balkans [...] In parallel with this understanding, Turkey believes that the vital contribution for a better future in the region will come from Balkan states themselves, thus, cordially interested in development of genuine cooperation mechanisms in the Balkans”.¹⁷⁸ These sentences reflect how Turkish foreign policy thinks about the Balkans today, every important aspect and vision is incorporated here, into the “special importance” expression which the Balkans occupy in current Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey’s emphasis on the three Muslim majority/plurality country in the region greatly increased in the last decade. Turkey considers all of these countries as neighbours, despite they do not share a common border and its relations are formulated according to this. All three countries are new democracies, Kosovo being the youngest state in Europe, are both geographically and in terms of population small countries in Europe, economically underdeveloped and have no fast EU membership prospects – although some are impatiently waiting for the green light for candidate status (Albania for example). Turkey, as an experienced member of the international community, with the 17th biggest economy in the world – and rapidly growing¹⁷⁹ –, a strengthening democracy could provide more than useful assistance and forms of co-operation for these countries. The common cultural and historical connection points are also emphasised more these days, and the majority of these countries’ politicians observe Turkey’s approximation positively. The mutual interest and common advantages started to overrule the differences.

I need to note here that these three countries, despite the constantly improving and developing relations since the fall of the Iron Curtain, are still lagging backwards in trade with Turkey, compared to other Balkan countries.¹⁸⁰ However, Turkish

¹⁷⁸ "Relations with the Balkan Region" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-with-the-balkan-region.en.mfa>>.

¹⁷⁹ Landon, Thomas Jr. "Turning East, Turkey Asserts Economic Power" The New York Times. 5 Jul. 2011. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/06/business/global/06lira.html?_r=1&ref=turkey>.

¹⁸⁰ Plus, the level of Turkish investments is also low compared to neighbouring countries. See: "Surveying Turkish Influence in the Western Balkans" STRATFOR. 1 Sep. 2011. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20100831_surveying_turkish_influence_western_balkans>.

companies are really interested in the region and willing to invest there, as Cengiz Aktar puts it:

“Turkey has the advantage of having a very aggressive and effective business community”.

He adds that there are mainly SMEs investing in these countries, Turkish companies see a vacuum to step in. Besides these, due to these countries' past ties with Turkey, as described several times in the previous chapters, the political situation favours Turkish involvement and there is a huge potential in bilateral developments in the future. More than half of total Turkish investment in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (and Serbia) has been realised since 2005,¹⁸¹ the dynamic of Turkish economic involvement is accelerating.

Neo-Ottomanism is clearly the driving policy frame of Turkish foreign policy regarding this region, the proactive approach – with Turkey's soft power initiatives – in the Balkans with all of its positive aspects, which takes mutual interests and enhanced co-operation into account, emphasising the shared past and cultural traditions. I would use the following chapter to underpin this sentence and to analyse the relations between the three countries in focus and Turkey.

3.1 Albania

Bilateral and multilaterally framed relations have been steadily developing since the turn of the new millennium between the two countries. The Kosovo conflict in 1999 was a milestone in bilateral relations, Turkey has realised that the stable and peaceful co-existence of the countries in the Balkans require an active and constructive approach from the Turkish side, taking multilateral aspects into consideration too when negotiating with individual states in the region.

With the AK Party getting into government in Turkey in 2002 and the multidimensional foreign policy approach formulating with more and more focus on the economic side of the co-operation, this trend also become more visible in relations with Albania. On the other hand, the focus on economic relations did not

¹⁸¹ Hamidi, Lavdim. "Turkey's Balkan Shopping Spree" [BalkanInsight](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spree). 7 Dec. 2010. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spree>>.

cast shadows on other forms of co-operation, political, humanitarian, cultural, defense, justice, visa regime, police etc. co-operation between the two countries strengthened much in the last ten years.

3.1.1 Politics

According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry¹⁸² relation between the two countries are excellent and the views on several policy approaches – regarding the regional and international field – of Turkey and Albania are almost identical.¹⁸³

Political relations between Turkey and Albania have been on the rise, especially after Erdogan's visit to Tirana in 2005.¹⁸⁴ During this visit the Turkish PM said that Albania has a special place in Turkish foreign policy and pledged support for the Albanian NATO membership. Erdogan stated that Albania's Euro-Atlantic integration would be a strategic advantage. His Albanian counterpart, Fatos Nano also praised Erdogan's visit, saying that the military and political relations are perfect between the countries, now the economic ones need to be developed. Erdogan reiterated his support again for Albania's NATO membership in another visit to Tirana in 2008,¹⁸⁵ and the Albanian PM, Sali Berisha stated that the EU would not be complete without Turkey's integration¹⁸⁶ and he also supported Turkey bid for a temporary seat in the UN Security Council.¹⁸⁷ Albania's NATO membership was accepted at the Bucharest Summit in 2008 and the country became a member in April, 2009. The improvement of economic and cultural collaboration were the main topics during this meeting. Erdogan and Berisha have met during 2009 and 2010 too, mainly in connection with Albanian construction projects, conducted by Turkish firms.

Besides the good relations between the PMs, the Presidents of Albania and Turkey also found the way for common understanding. In a 2009 visit to Tirana, Turkish

¹⁸² "Turkey's Political Relations with Albania" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 17 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-albania.en.mfa>.

¹⁸³ I should note here that we should handle all governmental official statements with reservation: almost in all cases relations are "excellent", "fruitful" and "developing" and this is especially right for the current Turkish FM's language. The excrescent expressions might mask some problematic points which the countries do not want to promote or expose.

¹⁸⁴ Pulaj, Ardi. "Turkey's Erdogan Visits Albania" SETimes.com. 17 Feb. 2005. 17 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2005/02/17/feature-02?print=yes>.

¹⁸⁵ "Turkey vows to support Albania's NATO bid" SETimes.com. 27 Mar. 2008. 17 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/mobile/en_GB/features/setimes/newsbriefs/2008/03/27/nb-07>.

¹⁸⁶ Berisha's statement was rather interesting because Albania was and still not an EU member, not even an official candidate country.

¹⁸⁷ "Turkey supports Albania's NATO bid, gains support for its UNSC drive" Today's Zaman. 27 Mar. 2008. 17 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=E9E52C0B24CFC8897BB2D86CF1DF9500?load=detay&link=137412&newsId=137325>.

President Abdullah Gül stated ¹⁸⁸ on a meeting with Albanian President Bamir Topi, that there is a real friendship between the two countries and Turkey considers Albania as a strategic partner in the region. Gül also expressed his satisfaction that Albania promised to raise its number of troops in Afghanistan and stated that Turkey supports Albania's NATO membership process.

Turkey's political proactivity regarding Albania was also visible during the Turkish chairmanship of the Southeast European Co-operation Process (SEECP). Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoglu on a visit to Tirana in 2009 noted,¹⁸⁹ there were no problems between the two countries and they have been approaching issues in the Balkans from the same point of view. Davutoglu also agreed with his Albanian colleague, Ilir Meta, to mutually lift visa requirements. This agreement has taken effect in 2010.¹⁹⁰

Besides the mutual PM, FM and Presidential visits, there are frequent visits of other ministers too, mainly connected to increasing economic and business co-operation. For example Turkish State Minister Aliye Kavaf visited Tirana in February 2010, where she highlighted¹⁹¹ the strategic partnership between the two countries and that Albania and Turkey are the two stability factors in the Balkans. Kavaf added that Turkey expects that economic relations with Albania will improve in the future and more Turkish FDI – already over one billion US dollars – arrive in Albania.

Former politicians also like to take part in discourses when there are chances to voice the "bright future" regarding the co-operation of Turkey and the Balkans, with the EU. For example Suleyman Demiral former Turkish President stated¹⁹² in a conference in April 2011 that if Europe wants to remain a politically and economically important actor in the global sphere it would definitely need Turkey and the Balkans – inside the European community.

¹⁸⁸ "Albania is our strategic partner in the region" Presidency of the Republic of Turkey. 10 Dec. 2009. 17 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.tccb.gov.tr/news/397/48524/albania-is-our-strategic-partner-in-the-region.html>>.

¹⁸⁹ Sagir, Celil. "Albania, Turkey reaffirm joint view on Balkans, Mediterranean" Today's Zaman. 19 Oct. 2009. 18 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=783F91612A1DE63057B2753849897CA4?newsId=190323>.

¹⁹⁰ "Albania, Turkey launch visa-free travel" SETimes.com. 10 Feb. 2010. 18 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/02/10/nb-03>.

¹⁹¹ "Turkey, Albania strategic partners in Balkans" Hürriyet Daily News. 21 Feb. 2010. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-albania-strategic-partners-in-the-region-2010-02-21>>.

¹⁹² "Turkey, Balkans could be wings of Europe" Hürriyet Daily News. 13 Apr. 2010. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=europe-loses-a-wing-without-turkey-balkans-says-former-turkish-president-2011-04-13>>.

3.1.2 Economy

The economic part of the Albanian-Turkish relations is the most visible aspect of Turkey's approach towards the country, economic relations have gradually changed after an FTA took effect between Turkey and Albania in 2008.¹⁹³ Whereas Turkish exports – mainly industrial products¹⁹⁴ – to Albania were only 79 million US dollars in 2002, this number climbed up to 241 million in 2010.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, Albanian exports to Turkey – mostly leather, iron scrap, vegetable seeds, timber – are on a much lower scale, with a continuous increase until 2008, reaching 22 million US dollars, this data dropped to 5,8 million in 2009 but jumped to 86 million in 2010.¹⁹⁶¹⁹⁷ As we see, there is a large trade surplus in favour of Turkey. In addition to the increasing volume of bilateral trade, Turkish investments in Albania have reached one billion dollar in 2010,¹⁹⁸ with a sharp – 60 percent – growth from 2008¹⁹⁹ and by reaching this number, Turkey became the third largest investor in Albania.²⁰⁰ Main focus areas of Turkish investments are infrastructure, telecommunications and the banking sector. Tourism is currently an underdeveloped sector in the relations, only 50 thousand Albanians visited Turkey in 2007.²⁰¹ There are currently 80 Turkish companies operating in Albania.

In the following paragraph, I will list the key Turkish investments:

- A consortium of Türk Telekom and Calik Holding bought Albania's only landline operator, Albtelecom – which also owns a mobile network, Eagle

¹⁹³ "Business: Albania, Turkey sign Free Trade Agreement" [SETimes.com](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/roundup/2006/12/29/roundup-bs-03). 29 Dec. 2006. 18 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/roundup/2006/12/29/roundup-bs-03>.

¹⁹⁴ "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations With Albania" [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-albania.en.mfa). ?. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-albania.en.mfa>.

¹⁹⁵ "Exports by countries" [TurkStat](http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=624). Mar. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=624>.

¹⁹⁶ "Export by countries" [Institute of Statistics](http://www.instat.gov.al/graphics/doc/tabelat/Treguesit%20Ekonomik/Tregtia%20%20e%20jashtme/TRJ%20%202009%20). 2009. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.instat.gov.al/graphics/doc/tabelat/Treguesit%20Ekonomik/Tregtia%20%20e%20jashtme/TRJ%20%202009%20>>.

¹⁹⁷ The data in this case seems not 100 percent reliable because this information was retrieved from the Albanian Institute of Statistics, but from its Turkish counterpart, TurkStat, there are other data to be found: 36 million US dollars for 2008, 4,6 million for 2009 and a fresh one for 2010, 86 million dollars (the Albanian statistics do not contain data for 2010.). See: "Imports by countries" [TurkStat](http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=625). Mar. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=625>.

¹⁹⁸ "Turkey, Albania strategic partners in Balkans" [Hürriyet Daily News](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-albania-strategic-partners-in-the-region-2010-02-21). 21 Feb. 2010. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-albania-strategic-partners-in-the-region-2010-02-21>>.

¹⁹⁹ "Turkey vows to support Albania's NATO bid" [SETimes.com](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/mobile/en_GB/features/setimes/newsbriefs/2008/03/27/nb-07). 27 Mar. 2008. 17 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/mobile/en_GB/features/setimes/newsbriefs/2008/03/27/nb-07>.

²⁰⁰ Hamidi, Lavdim. "Turkey's Balkan Shopping Spree" [BalkanInsight](http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spre). 7 Dec. 2010. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spre>>.

²⁰¹ "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations With Albania" [Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-albania.en.mfa). ?. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-albania.en.mfa>.

Mobile – in 2005 for 151 million US dollars.²⁰² Eagle Mobile's market share is steadily growing and might enter the Kosovar market in the near future too.²⁰³

- Calik Holding is also interested in another major sector, it became sole owner of the National Commercial Bank (NCB) in 2009.²⁰⁴ NCB is the second largest bank in terms of size in Albania and already opened branches in Kosovo too. Albanian President Bamir Topi not long ago talked about Calik Holding as a "very important establishment"²⁰⁵ for Albania and thanked all those investments which the company made in his country.
- Turkey's ENKA and US based Bechtel has built a 1,4 billion US dollars worth 170 kms long highway in northern Albania.²⁰⁶ The inauguration ceremony was attended by both countries' PMs.
- Universal Hospitals Group of Turkey opened its first hospital abroad in Tirana.²⁰⁷

The political support behind these investments – and following ones for the future – is particularly high. Besides the PMs presence at important economic events, speakers of both parliaments,²⁰⁸ Presidents²⁰⁹ also emphasise the importance and need for further Turkish investments in Albania, stating that one of the main reasons why they really like to invest in that country because they "feel home" there. This emphasis also appears at multilateral meetings, where the main topics are increasing trade and investment.²¹⁰

²⁰² "Turkish consortium acquires Albanian Albtelecom" Hürriyet Daily News. 28 May 2005. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=turkish-consortium-acquires-albanian-albtelecom-2005-05-28>>.

²⁰³ "Turkish mobile venture grows fast in Albania" Hürriyet Daily News. 22 Jun. 2010. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-mobile-venture-grows-fast-in-albania-2010-06-22>>.

²⁰⁴ Senerdem, Erisa Dautaj. "Turkish-owned Albanian bank BKT looks to expand" Hürriyet Daily News. 28 Jul. 2010. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=the-global-and-greek-crisis-did-not-affect-bkt-2010-07-28>>.

²⁰⁵ "Bamir Topi Thanks Calik" Sabah. 15 Apr. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://english.sabah.com.tr/Economy/2011/04/15/bamir-topi-thanks-calik>>.

²⁰⁶ "Albania launches highway to Kosovo with Erdoğan" Today's Zaman. 27 Jun. 2009. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=179236&bolum=100>.

²⁰⁷ "Turkish company opens hospital in Albania" Hürriyet Daily News. 14 Jan. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-company-opens-hospital-in-albania--2010-01-13>>.

²⁰⁸ "Parliament speaker calls Turkish investors to Albania" Today's Zaman. 24 Dec. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=162172>.

²⁰⁹ "Turkish president says Albania safe country for investments" Today's Zaman. 11 Dec. 2009. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=2E795DE67B13D2731AD255116A2DFA64?load=detay&link=195240&newsId=195216>.

²¹⁰ "Turkey seeks to double southeast Europe trade" Hürriyet Daily News. 30 Mar. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-eyes-doubling-southeast-europe-trade-2010-03-30>>.

Another important factor in the Albanian-Turkish economic relations is the energy aspect. Turkey, in connection with its other regional projects – the Nabucco for example –, takes Albania into account as a participating member in the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline natural gas pipeline project which would bring Iranian gas to the western European markets.²¹¹ The project is in a rather underdeveloped phase and the political situation with Iran is not working for the realisation of the issue, however, with several Western companies – like EGL or Statoil – committing themselves for the pipeline the project, Albania's and Turkey's role and co-operation should not be neglected.

3.1.3 Defense, culture, religion

The military, humanitarian co-operation between the two countries have seen unprecedented development in the last more than a decade. With Turkey's constant support for Albania's NATO accession, which eventually happened in 2009, Turkey provided 80 millions US dollars of military aid to Albania since 1998,²¹² assisting the Albanian military to reach NATO standards, renewed a military base, helped to upgrade a naval one, supported training of several units and there is a co-operation between the military education of the two countries too. Joint naval exercises also took place, angering Greece in one occasion.²¹³ In addition, currently there are Albanian soldiers being trained in Turkey.²¹⁴ Moreover, the Albanian government not long ago has promoted the Turkish military attache for his outstanding services he made during his stay in Albania.²¹⁵

Regarding the humanitarian part of the co-operation between Albania and Turkey the last example of this collaboration was the participation of the Turkish army's

²¹¹ "Trans-Adriatic Pipeline to carry Iranian gas through Turkey" Today's Zaman. 14 Feb. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=14D601622FC71BBE94790AB3F892B101?load=detay&link=134005&newsId=134003>.

²¹² "Turkey helps rebuild Albanian military air base" Hürriyet Daily News. 24 May 2005. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=turkey-helps-rebuild-albanian-military-air-base-2005-05-24>>.

²¹³ "Five Turkish warships to enter Albanian territory" SETimes.com. 23 Jun. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/06/23/nb-08>.

²¹⁴ "Turkish and Albanian Defense Ministers Meet in Ankara" The Journal of Turkish Weekly. 10 Mar. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/99170/turkish-and-albanian-defense-ministers-meet-in-ankara.html>>.

²¹⁵ "Turkey's Military Attache In Albanian Capital Awarded For Outstanding Service" The Journal of Turkish Weekly. 30 Jun. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/103864/turkey-39-s-military-attache-in-albanian-capital-awarded-for-outstanding-service.html>>.

helicopters in a disaster management last December, when parts of Albania were heavily flooded.²¹⁶

The cultural relations – one could say that Turkey’s cultural relations with Albania and not vice versa – between the countries seem to be excellent and diversified. However, there is a wide debate going on in Albania right now that what was their country’s position and how were Albanians treated under Ottoman rule. The reason of this is that many people have started to question those images which were portrayed about the Ottomans and Ottoman Albania in the nation-building process in the 19th-20th century and during communism too.²¹⁷ Some politicians argue that there is a pressure from Turkey to change history books for example, to soften the picture on the Ottomans, but others say that this new approach towards that era is due to the more sophisticated approach to social sciences and an interest in that period.

Nonetheless, the Ottoman past and architectural heritage is often emphasised in Turkish newspapers when talking about Albania,²¹⁸ there are several Turkish educational institutions in Albania – one being the biggest complex constructed in the country in the last 20 years – with 2 500 graduates from these schools so far²¹⁹ and there is also the possibility to take free Turkish classes in the country. TRT Avaz, Turkey’s state-run television network’s service for the region spanning from Central Asia to the Balkans has also started broadcasting news in Albanian (and Bosnian) from 2010.²²⁰ In addition, several Turkish soap operas were also sold to Albanian networks,²²¹ strengthening the interest in Turkey and Turkish culture too.

²¹⁶ "Turkish helicopters return to Turkey after completing mission in Albania" Today's Zaman. 20 Dec. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=0140447D947227AE259A69763387857F?newsId=230245>.

²¹⁷ Erebara, Gjergj. "Albanians Question 'Negative' View of Ottomans" BalkanInsight. 3 Dec. 2010. 15 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanians-question-negative-view-of-ottomans>>.

²¹⁸ One example is this article: Orhan, Saim. "Albania: The last Ottoman outpost in the Balkans" Today's Zaman. 11 Sep. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=65710457E0268F13BE8D6951A9E3DE77?load=detay&link=152757&bolum=117&newsId=151388>. or another, bit biased piece, can be found here: "Albania Lab music and Turkish schools" Today's Zaman. 9 Jul. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-215525-albania-lab-music-and-turkish-schools.html>>.

²¹⁹ "Turkish college opens in Albanian capital" Today's Zaman. 29 Oct. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=157245>.

²²⁰ "TRT launches news broadcasting in Albanian and Bosnian" Hürriyet Daily News. 17 Aug. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=trt-launches-news-broadcasting-in-albanian-and-bosnian--2010-08-17>>.

²²¹ "Turkish soap operas total \$50 million in exports" Hürriyet Daily News. 16 Jan. 2011. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-soap-operas-total-50-million-in-exports-2011-01-16>>.

Literature also deserves a place in this enumeration. Orhan Pamuk, Turkey's Nobel Prize-winning writer received an honorary doctorate from Tirana University in 2010.²²² Pamuk's books have been the best-selling books in Albania since 2006.

Regarding religion, it is officially not part of the bilateral relations. Under communism, Albania was officially an atheist country but (Ottoman) Islam was practised in secret.²²³ After the end of communism, there was a "religious vacuum", Albanian Islam was basically non-existent, younger Albanians did not practise religion much. First, Arab organisations brought in money and resources to the financially weak Albanian Islam structure, but by some Muslims they were considered as "alien" to Albanian society. After the expulsion and departure of Arab charities and communities backed organisations from Albania after 9/11, Turkish Islam started to dominate the Albanian religious sphere. The Turkish International Co-operation and Development Agency (TIKA) also helps to restore Muslim community buildings, cultural centres in Albania,²²⁴ Albanians ask Diyanet – the highest Islamic religious authority of Turkey – to arrange their hajj.²²⁵ The Gülen movement, one of the most important religious groups in Turkey, has an extensive educational system in Albania and operate religious and non-religious schools throughout the country. The first Islamic university in Albania has just opened recently with the help of SEMA Foundation, which is supported by the Gülen movement.²²⁶ The Albanian PM was also present at the opening.

Some Albanians observe this as a positive sign, the moderate wing of Islam is strengthening in their country, while others see this as a return of the Ottomans which pushes them away from closer European integration.

²²² "Albanian university gives Orhan Pamuk honorary doctorate" Hürriyet Daily News. 18 May 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=0517185410993-2010-05-18>>.

²²³ Raxhimi, Altin. "Albanian Muslims Grapple with Religious Identity" BalkanInsight. 1 Dec. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanian-muslims-grapple-with-religious-identity>>.

²²⁴ "Albanian Muslim Community's Headquarters Rebuilt by Turkish Agency" The Journal of Turkish Weekly. 30 Jun. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/103880/albanian-muslim-community-39-s-headquarters-rebuilt-by-turkish-agency.html>>.

²²⁵ Raxhimi, Altin. "Albanian Muslims Grapple with Religious Identity" BalkanInsight. 1 Dec. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanian-muslims-grapple-with-religious-identity>>.

²²⁶ "First Islamic University in Albania's History Opens" AhlulBayt News Agency. 10 Apr. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&id=235847>>.

3.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina's relations with Turkey are perhaps the most interesting and debated one from the three countries in this list. "The BiH [Bosnian] public has thus split into those that are emotionally-euphoric and those that pragmatically-sceptical about Turkey's new role".²²⁷ The multiethnic country is not just officially divided into several entities, but the discourse between the entities' political, economic and cultural sphere is also rather limited. Turkey's activity in the country is also perceived according to these divisions reflected in the Bosnian society, Bosnian Serbs (and Croats) generally oppose the increasing Turkish role,²²⁸ whereas Bosniaks support Turkey's initiatives in the country.²²⁹ These divisions often become quite visible during sport events.²³⁰

Turkey's proactive foreign policy toward Bosnia is possibly also of a product of the "Butmir process",²³¹ Turkey was left out from the EU-US sponsored talks to settle disputes between Bosnian communities, and started its own initiative to overcome obstacles within the multiethnic state.

3.2.1 Politics

First of all, Turkey considers Bosnia as a country which always had privileged place in Turkish foreign policy.²³² The principals of Turkey's approach to Bosnia are to preserve the country's territorial integrity and independence, and to maintain peace and stability in Bosnia. Turkey's diplomatic and political activity toward Bosnia is not only concentrated on the bilateral, we can say "business as usual" ties, but on mediating in several serious issues, including a Serbian apology last year for the

²²⁷ Foreign Policy Initiative BH. "The Balkan Express: A New Turkish Foreign Policy" Foreign Policy Initiative BH. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.vpi.ba/eng/content/documents/The_Balkan_Express_A_New_Turkish_Foreign_Policy.pdf>.

²²⁸ "Bosnian Serb leader condemns Turkey's activities in Bosnia" Hürriyet Daily News. 16 Aug. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=bosnian-serb-leader-condemns-turkeys-activities-in-bosnia-2010-08-16>>.

²²⁹ "Bosnian official welcomes Turkey's policy in Balkans" Today's Zaman. 27 Aug. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?jsessionid=48DA0D50B603C41433BC661594118DE9?load=detay&link=220214&newsId=219965>.

²³⁰ Somun, Hajrudin. "Is Turkey Bosnia's mother?" Today's Zaman. 11 Nov. 2008. 14 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=158350>.

²³¹ "BiH's Butmir process to continue" SETimes.com. 22 Oct. 2009. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2009/10/22/feature-01>.

²³² "Turkey's Political Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-bosnia-and-herzegovina.en.mfa>.

Srebrenica massacre, brokering an appointment of a Bosnian envoy to Serbia²³³ – after a three-year-long hiatus – and offering help to the country's communities to overcome the obstacles which prevented them from forming a government.²³⁴

High level visits of Turkish politicians have become frequent in recent years. The Turkish PM paid official visits to Bosnia in 2008 and 2010 too. During these visits Erdogan emphasised the improvement of relations with Bosnia,²³⁵ Turkey considers the integrity of Bosnia as top priority for the stability in the Balkans and will never abandon Bosnia because of Turkey's "historical responsibility".²³⁶ Erdogan also voiced his support for Bosnia's EU and NATO membership during the meetings in Bosnia. Members of the Bosnian tripartite Presidency visited Turkey in 2008, PM of Bosnia, Nikola Spiric paid an official visit to Turkey in 2009 where Erdogan stated that the relations between the two countries were "excellent"²³⁷ and the improving relations between Turkey and Bosnia were mainly because of the close ties between the people of the two countries.

The Turkish President and FM are also not lagging behind Erdogan, Abdullah Gül is also active in issues connected to Bosnia. On his visit to Sarajevo in 2010, Gül also affirmed Turkey's support for Bosnia's territorial integrity and claimed that they would like to see the region becoming the "heart of Europe".²³⁸ Gül could particularly like this expression, because he repeated it in April 2011 too.²³⁹

The Turkish President also participated at several multilateral meetings, often mediating and involving more actors to settle disputes between the entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also between Bosnia and Serbia.²⁴⁰ During one of the last of these meetings in Turkey in April 2010, the three involved actors signed the Istanbul Declaration which commits these countries to preserve the territorial integrity of Bosnia. The reason why this integrity is emphasised much recently, is because the

²³³ "Ankara talks yield fruit: Bosnia to appoint envoy to Serbia" Today's Zaman. 10 Feb. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-201129-102-ankara-talks-yield-fruit-bosnia-to-appoint-envoy-to-serbia.html>>.

²³⁴ "Turkey's Davutoglu offers to help form new government in BiH" SETimes.com. 30 Jan. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2011/01/30/nb-06>.

²³⁵ "Erdogan calls for improved economic cooperation" NewEurope. 31 Mar. 2008. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.n.europe.eu/articles/84812.php>>.

²³⁶ "Erdogan vows Turkey will stand by Bosnia and Herzegovina" Today's Zaman. 7 Apr. 2010. 19 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-206666-100-erdogan-vows-turkey-will-stand-by-bosnia-and-herzegovina.html>>.

²³⁷ "Relations between Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina are excellent - Erdogan" Trend. 16 Dec. 2009. 18 Apr. 2011 <<http://en.trend.az/regions/met/turkey/1601217.html>>.

²³⁸ "Turkey's Gul: united BiH key to stability in Balkans" SETimes.com. 3 Sep. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/09/03/feature-01>.

²³⁹ Hadzovic, Eldin. "Serbia's Tadic Hosts Turkish, Bosnian Heads of State" BalkanInsight. 26 Apr. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-ugly-issues-in-a-nice-environment>>.

²⁴⁰ Yinanc, Barcin. "Successful Turkish mediation puts Bosnia back on agenda" Hürriyet Daily News. 23 Mar. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=bosnia-back-on-world-agenda-with-turkish-mediation-2010-05-23>>.

parliament of the Serb entity of Bosnia, Republika Srpska, passed a law making referendums easier, which could reflect a possible independence vote in the future.²⁴¹

Besides Gül, Ahmet Davutoglu also appears as a great mediator between Bosnia and Serbia, he was the one who could stand victoriously onto the stage when Bosnia managed to appoint an envoy to Serbia in 2010. The Turkish FM was also the one, who managed to push through – quite aggressively – a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Bosnia last year.²⁴² In addition, his (in)famous – matter of perspective – speech in Sarajevo on 2009 was the one which has underlined the key principles and thoughts of Turkish foreign policy toward the Balkans.²⁴³

Political relations with the various communities in Bosnia are also worth to note here. Bakir Izetbegovic, the Bosniak member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, was treated as a friend on his visit to Turkey in 2010²⁴⁴ and Turkish support was confirmed during his stay both from Erdogan and Gül.

Bosnian Serb politicians – like the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik and the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, Nebojsa Radmanovic – often voice their concerns over Turkey's policy toward Bosnia and they face difficulties when meeting with Turkish politicians. Dodik accused Turkey of interfering into Bosnia's domestic affairs blaming Turkey of favouring only on community, the Bosniaks.²⁴⁵ However, this January Dodik said much moderate sentences when he met with Davutoglu in Banja Luka, and supported the territorial integrity of Bosnia and invited the Turkish FM for a conference to Republika Srpska. On the other hand, Radmanovic needed to cancel a meeting with Davutoglu, due to a "flag row": the Turkish FM insisted that the flags of Republika Srpska should be removed from the rooms of the government building in Banja Luka but the flags remained and Davutoglu was not willing to hold a press conference in front of those flags.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ "Bosnian Serbs pass referendum law" BBC News. 11 Feb. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8510383.stm>>.

²⁴² Demirtas, Serkan. "Turkey prevails against top NATO powers in Bosnia case" Hürriyet Daily News. 23 Apr. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-prevails-in-bosnia-case-against-top-nato-powers-2010-04-23>>.

²⁴³ Knaus, Gerald. "Multikulti and the future of Turkish Balkan Policy" European Stability Initiative (ESI). 4 Dec. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.esiweb.org/rumeliobserver/2010/12/04/multikulti-and-the-future-of-turkish-balkan-policy/>>.

²⁴⁴ "Turkey, Bosnia cement partnership during Izetbegovic's visit" Today's Zaman. 24 Nov. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=227754>.

²⁴⁵ "Flag row mars Turkish FM's visit to Serb region of Bosnia" World Bulletin. 30 Jan. 2011. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.worldbulletin.net/index.php?aType=haberYazdir&ArticleID=69187&tip=>>>.

²⁴⁶ "Bosnia Presidency Chair Cancels Meeting with Turkish FM" BalkanInsight. 30 Jan. 2011. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-presidency-chair-cancels-meeting-with-turkish-fm>>.

The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, who holds protectorate powers in Bosnia praised Turkey's involvement in the country, stating that Turkish foreign policy has adopted a "balanced approach" toward all ethnic minorities in Bosnia.²⁴⁷

There is also a bilateral visa-free travel agreement between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.2.2 Economy

Turkey provided 80 million dollars for the reconstruction in Bosnia through Eximbank credits, this was in addition to the 32 million dollars pledged for bilateral and humanitarian assistance.²⁴⁸ Turkey and Bosnia have signed 36 bilateral agreements on promotion and protection of investments with Turkey.²⁴⁹

Another important factor regarding the economic relations between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina is that an FTA is in place between the two countries since 2003.²⁵⁰ Turkish exports to Bosnia have been steadily increasing: in 2002 the value of Turkish exports were only 43 million US dollars, this number jumped to 572 million by 2008.²⁵¹ However, the value of Turkish exports suffered a great decrease in 2009, totaling around 224 million US dollars and in 2010 this indicator even shrunk with two million. Main Turkish export products are diesel engine vehicles, glassware, carpets etc.

Bosnian exports to Turkey were only six million US dollars in 2002, but this number has increased heavily, reaching 72 million in 2010.²⁵² Although, there is a considerably big trade deficit for Bosnia, but the volume of trade exports to Turkey increased 12-fold in the last eight years and this is not a negligible fact. Bosnian

²⁴⁷ Özerkan, Fulya. "Bosnia's international governor praises Turkish role, dispels concerns" Hürriyet Daily News. 22 Nov. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=bosnia8217s-int8217l-governor-praises-turkish-role-dissipates-concerns-2010-11-22>>.

²⁴⁸ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". Diss. Bogazici University, 2005: 174. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

²⁴⁹ Centre for Security Studies. "Bosnia and Herzegovina's Bilateral Relations with Turkey" Centre for Security Studies. Dec. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.css.ba/docs/Paper_Nerkez.doc>.

²⁵⁰ "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations With Bosnia and Herzegovina" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-bosnia-and-herzegovina.en.mfa>.

²⁵¹ "Exports by countries" TurkStat. Mar. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=624>.

²⁵² "Imports by countries" TurkStat. Mar. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=625>.

exports include mainly copper, electric locomotives, chemical products etc., mostly products made by Turkish companies in Bosnia.

Turkey is the eighth biggest investor in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an estimated 197 million US dollars, since 1994.²⁵³ One of the main reasons for the low level of Turkish investments is the divided and multi-tiered government structure in Bosnia,²⁵⁴ however Turkish investments in 2009 jumped to 45 million US dollars, becoming the fourth biggest investor in Bosnia that year.²⁵⁵

The tourism sector is rather underdeveloped between the two countries, there were around 40 thousand Bosnian tourists who visited Turkey in 2006.²⁵⁶

Major Turkish investment in Bosnia include:

- In 2008 Turkey – Turkish Airlines (THY) actually – bought 49 percent of Bosnia's national carrier, B&H Airlines, and is very likely to buy the remaining 51 percent government stake in the company in the near future.²⁵⁷ THY committed itself to invest 6,6 million US dollars in leasing two aircrafts and another 3,4 million as company reserves, plus financing B&H Airlines' debts, which are currently 11 million dollars.
- A Turkish oil company, Türkoil has just entered Bosnia, leasing 50 percent of the country's total gas delivery.²⁵⁸
- The Turkish Ziraat Bank Group appeared in Bosnia in 1997 and operate 21 branches across the country.²⁵⁹ The company reported a profit of 730 thousand dollars in 2010.²⁶⁰

²⁵³ "FDI Position and Performance" Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. ?. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.fipa.gov.ba/local_v2/default.asp>.

²⁵⁴ Kelkitli, F. Asli. "Turkish Balkan Policy After the Cold War". Diss. Bogazici University, 2005: 174. Web. 4 Apr. 2011. <<http://www.belgeler.com/blg/qkx/turkish-balkan-policy-after-the-cold-war-soguk-savas-sonrasinda-turkiyenin-balkan-politikasi>>.

²⁵⁵ Ramadanovic, Jusuf. "Turkey's reach has strong implications for BiH" SETimes.com. 20 Jan. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/01/20/feature-02>.

²⁵⁶ "Turkey's Commercial and Economic Relations With Bosnia and Herzegovina" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-bosnia-and-herzegovina.en.mfa>.

²⁵⁷ "Turkish Airlines To Buy Remaining 51% of Bosnia's BH Airlines Next Yr – Media" SeeNews. 30 Dec. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.seenews.com/news/latestnews/turkishairlinestobuyremaining51_ofbosnia_sbhairli_nesnextyr__media-124630/>.

²⁵⁸ "Turkish gas retailer enters Bosnian market" Hürriyet Daily News. 18 Apr. 2011. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-gas-retailer-enters-bosnian-market-2011-04-18>>.

²⁵⁹ "Turkish Ziraat Bank Bosnia the best in Bosnia and Herzegovina" Today's Zaman. 1 Dec. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-228334-turkish-ziraat-bank-bosnia-the-best-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina.html>>.

²⁶⁰ "Turkish Ziraat Bank Bosnia to enter Croatian market" Limun.hr. 21 Jan. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://limun.hr/en/main.aspx?id=549848>>.

The Bosnian political support behind the Turkish-Bosnian economic co-operation is divided, as is the case with the bilateral political relations. The major Turkish investments focus on the Bosniak-Croat inhabited Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serb inhabited Republika Srpska is almost entirely an empty area in Turkish investments, no information could be found on any bigger Turkish investment in the Serb entity.

Bakir Izetbegovic has been a key promoter of attracting foreign investments into Bosnia, he was also one of the patrons of this year's Sarajevo Business Forum, where many Turkish companies were present,²⁶¹ Turkish state-controlled bank Eximbank even announced the extension of credit lines to Bosnia.²⁶²²⁶³ Erdogan also pledged support for Turkish investments in Bosnia on his 2010 visit, emphasising the importance of Bosnia's richness in natural resources.²⁶⁴

3.2.3 Defense, culture, religion

The most important factor in the defense or military field is that Turkey participates with 255 soldiers²⁶⁵ in the EU's 1 600 troop strong EUFOR Althea military operation in Bosnia, which supervises the implementation of the Dayton agreement.²⁶⁶

On the other hand, military co-operation between the two countries has just started to emerge in the past years,²⁶⁷ state-run Turkish company MKEK signed an agreement with Bosnian Unis Fropp on joint producing and marketing of defense industry products.²⁶⁸ However, this is seen rather as a Turkish gesture for Bosnia, which is trying to rebuild its once prosperous arms production industry, mostly damaged and disappeared during the Bosnian War.

²⁶¹ I should note here that there were three Turkish guests of honour – Ali Babacan, deputy PM of Turkey, Kamil Gökhan Bozkurt, CEO of Türk Telekom and Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, President of the OIC – at the Sarajevo Business Forum 2011, out of 11 people.

²⁶² "Sarajevo Business Forum Targets Regional Recovery" Sarajevo Business Forum. 21 Apr. 2011. The Journal of Turkish Weekly. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.sarajevobusinessforum.com/en/news/sarajevo_business_forum_targets_regional_recovery>.

²⁶³ "Saudi Investors, Turkey Pledge to invest in Bosnia" Sarajevo Business Forum. 6 Apr. 2011. Reuters. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.sarajevobusinessforum.com/en/news/saudi_investors_turkey_pledge_to_invest_in_bosnia>.

²⁶⁴ "Erdogan vows Turkey will stand by Bosnia and Herzegovina" Today's Zaman. 7 Apr. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-206666-100-erdogan-vows-turkey-will-stand-by-bosnia-and-herzegovina.html>>.

²⁶⁵ "Contribution of Turkish Armed Forces to Peace Support Operations" Turkish General Staff. ?. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/barisdestekkatki.htm>>.

²⁶⁶ "EUFOR Fact Sheet" EUFOR. ?. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.euforbih.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=134>.

²⁶⁷ "Turkey, Bosnia to boost ties on military and defense" World Bulletin. 9 Dec. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.worldbulletin.net/index.php?aType=haber&ArticleID=67189>>.

²⁶⁸ "Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina ink arms production deal" UPI.com. 9 Aug. 2009. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2009/08/10/Turkey-Bosnia-Herzegovina-ink-arms-production-deal/UPI-48091249936522/>.

Nevertheless, deeper military co-operation between Bosnia and Turkey could be a sensitive issue because it might evoke the disfavour of the Bosnian Serb and Croat communities, that are already suspicious about Turkey's initiatives toward Bosnia.

However, another aspect of co-operation, namely humanitarian and disaster assistance, has been one of the architects of Turkish involvement in Bosnia, the Turkish government and Red Crescent organisation recently provided aid during the floods in 2010.²⁶⁹

Bosnian-Turkish cultural connections, relations mainly exist between the Bosniak community and Turkey. Bosnian Serbs are strongly against any Turkish involvement, populist politicians accuse Ankara of a pro-Muslim approach²⁷⁰ and that Turkey would like to create an Islamic state in Bosnia.²⁷¹ Bosnian Serb politicians often line up with academics, to prove that Turkey has a "hidden agenda".²⁷² Only 40 percent of Bosnians – almost the same percentage as the Bosniaks in Bosnia – consider Turkey as a friendly nation.²⁷³ Turkey, Turkish organisations have been providing resources and assistance for several project in this field to Bosnia – mainly to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – but in this atmosphere and given Bosnia's decentralised state structure it is really hard to say that there have been much emphasis on Republika Srpska. However, the Serb entity was also not quite keen on to ask for and accept any Turkish aid, help, assistance etc., Bosnian Serb paramilitaries – and Croatian nationalists – destroyed Ottoman-era urban structures, mosques during the Bosnian War.²⁷⁴

In addition, Turkey's relations with Bosnian Muslims also have another expect: there are millions of Bosnian originated Turkish nationals who often voice their views when they think that Bosniaks are maltreated or offended (e.g. the Emir Kusturica case in Antalya).²⁷⁵

²⁶⁹ Kaletovic, Bedrana. "US, Turkey provide assistance during BiH floods" *SETimes.com*. 14 Jul. 2010. 29 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/07/14/feature-02>.

²⁷⁰ Barlovac, Bojana. "Dodik Questions Turkey's Presence in Bosnia" *BalkanInsight*. 28 Apr. 2011. 29 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/dodik-turkey-tries-to-improve-impression-on-presence-in-bosnia>>.

²⁷¹ Ramadanovic, Jusuf. "Turkey's reach has strong implications for BiH" *SETimes.com*. 20 Jan. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/01/20/feature-02>.

²⁷² Somun, Hajrudin. "Neo-Ottomanism: the Return of Turkey to the Balkans" *Today's Zaman*. 6 October 2010. 6 April 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-223604-neo-ottomanism-the-return-of-turkey-to-the-balkans-by-hajrudin-somun.html>>.

²⁷³ Cain, Phil. "Turkey: Seeking influence through mediation" *globalpost*. 12 January 2011. 8 March 2011 <<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/turkey/110111/turkey-the-balkans-serbia-kosovo>>.

²⁷⁴ Hajdarpasic, Edin. "Out of the Ruins of the Ottoman Empire: Reflections on the Ottoman Legacy in South-eastern Europe" *Middle Eastern Studies* 44.5 (2008): 715-734.

²⁷⁵ "Serbian director Emir Kusturica withdraws from Turkish film fest" *Hürriyet Daily News*. 10 Oct. 2010. 25 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=serbian-director-emir-kusturica-withdraws-from-turkish-film-2010-10-10>>.

However, Turkey is extensively developing its educational and cultural relations with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia is the biggest receiver of TIKA funds from those countries which received resources from Turkey's development agency. Bosnia received more than 23 million US dollars until 2006,²⁷⁶ and the organisation has been involved in further Bosnian hospital and school renovation projects, along with the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB).²⁷⁷ Education has been one of the key pillars of Turkey's cultural relations with Bosnia, there are two Turkish-funded universities in Bosnia, the International University of Sarajevo (IUS) and the International Burch University (IBU). The IUS is funded by the Gülen movement.²⁷⁸ There is a high number of Turkish students studying at both universities.

TRT Avaz, Turkey's state-run television network's service for the region spanning from Central Asia to the Balkans has also started broadcasting news in Bosnian (and Albanian) from 2010.²⁷⁹ Appearing Turkish soap operas,²⁸⁰ especially "Binbir gece" (A Thousand and One Nights), not only provided entertainment for Bosnians, but also changed (changing) the image of Turkey, causing an increased interest in Istanbul and Turkish language.²⁸¹

Religion has been one of the main factors which primarily divides the communities of Bosnia. The debate – over religion, identity – is often fueled by the clergies. For example the grand mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mustafa Efendi Cerić claimed in 2008 that "we are Turks" and "Turkey is our mother".²⁸² Milorad Dodik in turn frequently scoots to Belgrade to receive support from the Serbian Orthodox Church for his policies.

²⁷⁶ Centre for Security Studies. "Bosnia and Herzegovina's Bilateral Relations with Turkey" Centre for Security Studies, Dec. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.css.ba/docs/Paper_Nerkez.doc>.

²⁷⁷ Asalioglu, Ibrahim. "Turkish institutions renovate two hospitals in Bosnia" Today's Zaman. 21 Feb. 2011. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=236187&link=236187>.

²⁷⁸ Zimonjic, Vesna Peric. "The Turks Return" IPS. 11 Aug. 2010. 29 Apr. 2011 <<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=52452>>.

²⁷⁹ "TRT launches news broadcasting in Albanian and Bosnian" Hürriyet Daily News. 17 Aug. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=trt-launches-news-broadcasting-in-albanian-and-bosnian--2010-08-17>>.

²⁸⁰ "Turkish soap operas total \$50 million in exports" Hürriyet Daily News. 16 Jan. 2011. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-soap-operas-total-50-million-in-exports-2011-01-16>>.

²⁸¹ Karcic, Harun. "The 'Şehrezad effect' in the Western Balkans" Today's Zaman. 6 Jan. 2011. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-231677-the-sehrezad-effect-in-the-western-balkans-by-harun-karcic*.html>.

²⁸² Somun, Hajrudin. "Neo-Ottomanism: the Return of Turkey to the Balkans" Today's Zaman. 6 October 2010. 6 April 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-223604-neo-ottomanism-the-return-of-turkey-to-the-balkans-by-hajrudin-somun.html>>.

Bosnia has also become a major destination for Turkish students, who would like to avoid the headscarf ban in Turkish universities.²⁸³ Religious women students, who are mainly from religious high schools in Turkey, can also attend Bosnian universities, there is no such ban in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority of these students attends the Turkish-funded universities.

3.3 Kosovo

Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008 has popped up uncomfortable issues for Turkey. A new, Muslim majority European republic was important for Turkey, however, if they would recognise the independence of Kosovo, they might create a precedent – even though both the EU and Turkey stated that this is not a precedent – for more countries to follow. Including territories, which are in the proximity of Turkey and hindered relations with neighbouring countries: the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus – only recognised by Turkey –, Nagorno-Karabakh – a *de facto* independent country, officially recognised as part of Azerbaijan, a key ally of Turkey – and also the Kurds in Turkey, where a guerilla movement tries to create an autonomous Kurdistan since 1978.

However, Turkey was one of the first countries to recognise the independence of Kosovo,²⁸⁴ stating that it was inevitable to ensure peace and stability in the region,²⁸⁵ and became an advocate – especially to convince OIC countries to recognise Kosovo – of the new country's further embedding into the international community²⁸⁶ and also to economically develop Kosovo.

3.3.1 Politics

The political relations between the two countries are really new, due to the fact that Kosovo has just become independent a little more than three years ago. However, the newly established relations seem to be quite fruitful and strong. Nonetheless,

²⁸³ Sito-Sucic, Daria. "Bosnian colleges draw Turks avoiding headscarf ban" *Reuters*. 5 Apr. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/04/05/us-bosnia-turkey-universities-idUSTRE6343VJ20100405>>.

²⁸⁴ Tabak, Enis. "Kosovo plans to open first embassy in Ankara" *Today's Zaman*. 5 Jul. 2008. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=146693>.

²⁸⁵ "Independent Kosovo will bring peace, says Erdoğan" *Today's Zaman*. 20 Feb. 2008. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=6728A43F3F8E2F004EAA0E342AEFF0E8?load=detay&newsId=134459>.

²⁸⁶ "Turkey Pledges to Lobby for Kosovo Recognition" *BalkanInsight*. 7 Jul. 2009. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-pledges-to-lobby-for-kosovo-recognition>>.

Serbs living in northern Kosovo – an area not under the control of the Kosovar government – do not favour Turkish rapprochement.²⁸⁷ Turkey was the first country where Kosovo opened an embassy.²⁸⁸ The first Turkish PM visit happened in November 2010, when Erdogan traveled to Kosovo. During his visit, outgoing Kosovar PM, Hashim Thaci called Erdogan “Kosovo’s hero”²⁸⁹ and revealed that, according to him, the Turkish PM urged the declaration of Kosovo’s independence in 2008. Thaci has previously visited Turkey that year, signing various agreements, where he praised bilateral relations, called Turkey as a strategic partner²⁹⁰ and called for further co-operation.²⁹¹ Turkey has promised to support Kosovo’s Euro-Atlantic integration, which the Kosovar government is aiming at. Erdogan also said that Turkey was ready to mediate the upcoming, now ongoing, talks between Kosovo and Serbia.²⁹² However, these talks are currently managed under the auspices of the EU.

Besides the PMs, the Presidents of the two countries also voiced very positive views on the bilateral relations. Fatmir Sejdiu, now former president of Kosovo, described bilateral ties as “golden relations”²⁹³ and stated on his visit to Turkey in 2010 that Turkey stood by Kosovars “at the darkest moments” of their history.²⁹⁴ The Turkish President stated, there is an “unreserved solidarity” between the two countries and Kosovo’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic community will bring peace and stability into the region.

Kosovo also takes Turkey as a model country, an example to be followed. Jakup Krasniqi, speaker of the Kosovar parliament, stated in July 2009 after a meeting with his Turkish counterpart, that all countries of the region should look at Turkey as an

²⁸⁷ "Officer wounded after Turkish victory sparks Kosovo clash" *Hürriyet Daily News*. 12 Sep. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkeys-victory-over-serbia-sparks-kosovo-clash-2010-09-12>>.

²⁸⁸ "Turkey appoints first envoy to Kosovo" *Today's Zaman*. 11 Feb. 2011. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=A4C7F85372EFED66923F8A5DBB4FF542?load=detail&newsId=166608>.

²⁸⁹ Benitez, Jorge. "Thaci: Erdoğan encouraged Kosovo not to delay independence" *Atlantic Council*. 5 Nov. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.acus.org/natosource/thaci-erdo%C4%9F-encouraged-kosovo-not-delay-independence>>.

²⁹⁰ "‘Kosovo country for new opportunities,’ says country's PM" *Hürriyet Daily News*. 20 May 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=8216kosovo-country-for-new-opportunities8217-2010-05-20>>.

²⁹¹ Collaku, Petrit. "Kosovo and Turkey Sign Four Agreements" *BalkanInsight*. 20 May 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-and-turkey-sign-four-agreements>>.

²⁹² "Turkey ready to mediate Kosovo-Serbia talks" *SETimes.com*. 4 Nov. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/11/04/nb-04>.

²⁹³ Brajshori, Muhamet. "Kosovo, Turkey build on historic ties" *SETimes.com*. 26 Apr. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/04/26/feature-01>.

²⁹⁴ Prokshi, Gent. "Turkey receives Kosovo President Sejdiu with highest state honors" *New Kosova Report*. 7 Feb. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.newkosovareport.com/201002072159/Politics/turkey-receives-kosovo-president-sejdiu-with-highest-state-honors.html>>.

example.²⁹⁵ There is also a visa-free agreement between Turkey and Kosovo, signed in 2009, during the Turkish FM's first visit to Pristina.²⁹⁶

3.3.2 Economy

Economic relations between Kosovo and Turkey are developing in a very accelerating speed since the declaration of Kosovo's independence in 2008. First of all, Turkey provided 30 million euros for Kosovo in 2008 to rebuild its destroyed economy.²⁹⁷ An FTA between the two countries is likely to take effect in the upcoming months and this could boost bilateral economic relations.²⁹⁸

Data for Turkish exports to Kosovo is only available since 2006, but there is a steady increase visible during the past four years. In 2006 Turkish exports were 71 million US dollars,²⁹⁹ but in 2010 this number jumped to 294 million – surpassing the volume of Turkish exports to Bosnia and Albania.³⁰⁰

Kosovar exports to Turkey were almost negligible in 2007, only three million US dollars. Although, by 2010 this has increased significantly, totaling 13 million that year. There is a huge trade deficit for Kosovo in the trade with Turkey.

There is no actual number on Turkish investments in Kosovo, we can just estimate how much money Turkish companies have invested there according to several recent acquisitions.

These include:

- A Turkish-French consortium has just taken over Pristina Airport, Kosovo's only airport, for 20 years and the joint company needs to invest 140 million euros to upgrade the facility and build a new terminal by 2012.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ "Turkey Pledges to Lobby for Kosovo Recognition" BalkanInsight. 7 Jul. 2009. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-pledges-to-lobby-for-kosovo-recognition>>.

²⁹⁶ "Kosovo, Turkey Sign Visa-Free Travel Pact" BalkanInsight. 13 Jan. 2009. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-turkey-sign-visa-free-travel-pact>>.

²⁹⁷ "Turkey pledges 30 mln euros for Kosovo" Today's Zaman. 16 Jul. 2008. 27 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=9BEE77E6B3B3C1DC6AA8EE1063CE2D70?load=detay&newsId=147666>.

²⁹⁸ "Turkey, Kosovo trade relations to develop" Today's Zaman. 14 Mar. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-kosovo-trade-relations-to-develop-2011-03-14>>.

²⁹⁹ "Turkey's Economic and Commercial Relations With Kosovo" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 27 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-economic-and-commercial-relations-with-kosovo.en.mfa>.

³⁰⁰ "Exports by countries" TurkStat. Mar. 2011. 19 Apr. 2011 <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=624>.

³⁰¹ Marzouk, Lawrence. "Consortium Takes Over Kosovo Airport" Balkan Insight. 12 Apr. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/consortium-takes-over-kosovo-s-airport>>.

- Bechtel-Enka, a US-Turkey consortium has won a tender last year to build the Pristina-Durres (Albania) highway and also to a section to Serbia. The value of the project is around 700 million³⁰² – or one billion according to other sources³⁰³ – euros, it is the most expensive such project in the region.
- Medicine Hospital Group has made its first international investment in Kosovo with establishing a heart hospital in Pristina. The value of the Turkish investment was 15 million euros.³⁰⁴ In the next five years the company plans to open several other hospitals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Macedonia.

The political support behind Turkish investments is really solid and enthusiastic, as we saw at Fatmir Sejdiu's statements for example. Not just the highest level politicians are eager to voice their commitments toward furthering bilateral cooperation, but ministers are also calling for increasing Turkish investments in Kosovo, possibly considering Kosovo as a European gateway for Turkish goods.³⁰⁵ Turkish, and any other foreign investments are definitely needed in Kosovo where the central government and local companies have hardly any money to invest.

On the other hand, Kosovars do not want too much dependency on Turkey, they have just achieved their independency.³⁰⁶ There are also some critical voices, mainly from the analyst/expert community in Kosovo, who consider increasing Turkish economic involvement in Kosovo as a disadvantage because other nations are leaving the country, diversification of investments suffered backlashes.³⁰⁷

³⁰² Brajshori, Muhamet. "Pristina's international airport under new Turkish management" SETimes.com. 21 Apr. 2011. 27 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/04/21/feature-03>.

³⁰³ Hamidi, Lavdin. "Kosovo's New Highway 'The Most Expensive in Region'" BalkanInsight. 1 Feb. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-s-new-highway-the-most-expensive-in-region>>.

³⁰⁴ "Turkish hospital group invests in the Balkans" Hürriyet Daily News. 15 Nov. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkish-hospital-group-invests-in-the-balkans-2010-11-15>>.

³⁰⁵ "Turkish firms urged to invest in Kosovo" Hürriyet Daily News. 30 Mar. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=0330162032952-2010-03-30>>.

³⁰⁶ Rüma, Inan. "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Balkans: New Activism, Neo-Ottomanism or/so what?" Turkish Policy Quarterly Vol. 9.4. (2011): 133-140. 21 April 2011 <[http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/%C4%B0nan%20R%C3%BCma-Turkey's%20Policy%20towards%20the%20Balkans\(1\).pdf](http://www.turkishpolicy.com/dosyalar/files/%C4%B0nan%20R%C3%BCma-Turkey's%20Policy%20towards%20the%20Balkans(1).pdf)>.

³⁰⁷ Hamidi, Lavdim. "Turkey's Balkan Shopping Spree" BalkanInsight. 7 Dec. 2010. 14 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-s-balkan-shopping-spre>>.

3.3.3 Defense, the Turkish minority, culture

A significant point in the relations is that KFOR troops are still in Kosovo, within UN frames, and Turkey is one of the biggest contributors to these troops, currently with 479 soldiers.³⁰⁸

On the other hand, military co-operation between the two countries has just started, with an agreement signed in February 2010.³⁰⁹ This agreement provides the possibility for Kosovar soldiers to get training in Turkey and also Turkish arms might arrive in the future into the country. In addition, Turkish KFOR troops also provide training for Kosovar troops and there is a police co-operation going on between the two states, Turkey offered 4-5 year long trainings for selected Kosovars.³¹⁰

Regarding the humanitarian assistance part, Turkey is helping Kosovo in the health sector, donating vaccines against swine flu for example.³¹¹

Co-operation in the field of education is also on the rise, Kosovo has a Turkish minority of 25-30 thousand but there are more than 300 thousand people who could speak Turkish, which is an official language of Kosovo today.³¹² The situation regarding Kosovo's Turkish minority is improving because Turks felt alienated after the UN administration settled itself in Kosovo in 1999: Turkish as an official language was abolished and many of their other rights were taken away.³¹³ However, Turkey still considers this point as an issue to mention at almost any meeting, to state that the Turkish minority's rights are really important.

Turkish soap operas, just like in Bosnia and Albania, are among the most watched TV programmes in Kosovo.³¹⁴ One of the recently arrived shows also portray a Kosovar immigrant in Turkey and considered by several members of the audience as

³⁰⁸ "NATO Kosovo Force" NATO. 7 Nov. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.nato.int/kfor/structur/nations/placemat/kfor_placemat.pdf>.

³⁰⁹ Celik, Minhac. "Kosovar defense minister: Turkey's support crucial for Kosovo" Today's Zaman. 20 Feb. 2010. 24 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-202082-100-kosovar-defense-minister-turkeys-support-crucial-for-kosovo.html>>.

³¹⁰ "Turkey to Train Kosovo Police" Balkan Insight. 14 Oct. 2008. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkey-to-train-kosovo-police>>.

³¹¹ "Turkey sends swine flu vaccine to Kosovo" Today's Zaman. 22 Nov. 2009. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=9835359DFB7F9699D6FEBF39186DAC6E?load=detay&newsId=193649>.

³¹² "Turkey's Political Relations with Kosovo" Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ?. 24 Apr. 2011 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-kosovo.en.mfa>.

³¹³ Mendaci, Nazif. "The Turks of Kosovo and the Protection of Minority: Culture at the Local Level" Center for Strategic Research Vol. 9. June-August. (2004) 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume9/June-August2004/nazif.pdf>>.

³¹⁴ "Turkish Soap Opera Top Kosovo Show" Balkan Insight. 28 Jul. 2009. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/turkish-soap-opera-top-kosovo-show>>.

a good example how Kosovar Albanians in Turkey “have preserved the true Kosovar traditions”.³¹⁵

TIKA is also active in Kosovo, mainly involved in renovation, protection of historical and cultural heritage.³¹⁶

4. Turkey’s EU prospects: implications for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo³¹⁷

Both Turkey’s and the western Balkans’ aims are Euro-Atlantic integration but this process moves forward rather slowly, particularly in recent years. Albania’s, Bosnia’s and Kosovo’s increased co-operation with Turkey is not an alternative to EU membership, it is just an additional impetus for stabilisation and economic growth, according to Cengiz Aktar.

Some countries are already official EU candidate countries, others are just potential candidates. An EU-Albania FTA is already in place since 2009, however, Bosnia is still waiting for the green light in this issue, albeit, Kosovo could not think about an FTA with the EU until all member states do not agree on a common stance regarding Kosovo’s declaration of independence.

In the following chapter I will present the factors involved and the possible implications of the slow process and Turkey’s EU membership prospects for the Balkans.

4.1 Turkey: fresh start, gloomy outlooks

Turkey has been an associate member of the EU since 1964 and an official candidate country since 1999. Despite Turkey being a partner of the EU for decades, the country is still not a member of the block.

³¹⁵ Musliu, Vjosa. "Kosovars Swoon at Albanian Star in Turkish Soap" *Balkan Insight*. 28 Jul. 2009. 27 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovars-swoon-at-albanian-star-in-turkish-soap>>.

³¹⁶ "Turkish prime minister on his visit to Kosovo" *Today's Zaman*. 3. Nov. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-226207-102-turkish-prime-minister-on-his-visit-to-kosovo.html>>.

³¹⁷ This chapter deals with the EU accession prospects of Turkey and the Balkans in brief, this issue is not the primary scope of the thesis, the more space will be devoted to the implications of the EU accession prospects – or the delay of this process – of these countries (Turkey and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), on each other.

In the mid-1990s, the question of EU integration in Turkey was one of the major foreign policy issues which has significantly divided Kemalists and Islamists.³¹⁸ However, after the AK Party's victory in the general elections in 2002, the picture changed completely, the newly elected PM, Erdogan clearly embraced his country's EU integration. He toured around European capitals to promote his government's EU integration commitment and also started a campaign at home to increase the support of Turkey's EU membership.

2003 and 2004 were the heydays of this process, the consensual political atmosphere in Turkey made space for several major reforms in the field of the Turkish legal, constitutional and administrative structure and an economic liberalisation process also followed due course.

However, the bright future started to fade around late 2004 and 2005, despite the EU officially opened accession negotiations with Turkey in late 2005, disillusionment spread in Turkey.³¹⁹ The reasons for this were multifold: the hesitation of several EU member states, the feeling of treating Turkey as a second-class partner and the unresolved issue of the divided island of Cyprus – Turkey not allowed any Greek Cypriot ships and airplanes to enter its harbours and airports and the Greek Cypriots' vote against the "Annan-plan" – contributed to the changed atmosphere. The EU blocked five chapters of the 33 required for membership because of Turkish reluctance to let in Greek Cypriot ships and aircrafts. In addition, the French and Dutch "No-s" in the referendum on the constitutional treaty also cooled down the situation.

Nicholas Sarkozy's election as president of France also added to the negative side of the EU-Turkey relations. Sarkozy started to speak out openly against the accession of Turkey, France blocked five more chapters and with Cyprus blocking another ones, leaving 17 chapters blocked altogether, there is really few space for opening other ones to the 13 already opened chapters.³²⁰ Major western European countries also became disappointed and dissatisfied with the eastern European enlargement, known as the "enlargement fatigue", especially the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 proved to be hurried off.

The discourse on Turkey's EU accession started to shove off from full membership to the position of "privileged partnership", which seems unacceptable for the current

³¹⁸ Robins, Philip. "Turkish foreign policy since 2002: between a 'post-Islamist' government and a Kemalist state" *International Affairs* 83.1 (2007): 289–304.

³¹⁹ Ülgen, Sinan. "Turkish politics and the fading magic of EU enlargement" *Centre for European Reform*. 8 Sep. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/pb_ulgen_turkey_8sept10.pdf>.

³²⁰ This represents the current state of the Turkish EU accession negotiations, the last chapter of the 13 open ones was opened in June 2010.

Turkish government. The possible accession of Turkey revolves around internal EU issues in the 27 member community.³²¹ The recent economic and eurocrisis also contributed to the enlargement scepticism. The negotiation process of Turkey's EU accession got stuck, the reset button has not been found yet.

4.2. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo: there is a long way to go

The western Balkans is currently a "white spot" for the EU. All countries, except for Kosovo, have signed Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) with the EU during the first decade of this century, this is considered as the first step before applying for membership. EU integration is supported by the public and politicians in almost all countries in the region.³²² The speed of the EU accession in these states is mainly determined by the states' internal matters – Kosovo partly excluded from this list here –, the EU's own internal situation, like with Turkey, plays a lesser role here.

While Croatia is on the edge of becoming a full member of the 27 member block possibly as soon as next year, Macedonia and Montenegro have official candidate status but negotiations have not been started.³²³ Albania and Serbia have applied for membership, however, Albania's application was rejected due to the political crisis in the country³²⁴ and Serbia's application has not been assessed yet (the answer can be expected in October 2011).³²⁵ Bosnia and Herzegovina faces several obstacles in becoming a candidate country, including the still presence of the Office of the High Representative (OHR)³²⁶ and the ethnic division of the country.³²⁷ The main problems with Kosovo's EU integration is that unless there is no common opinion on its

³²¹ Grabbe, Heather, and Sinan Ülgen. "The Way Forward for Turkey and the EU: A Strategic Dialogue on Foreign Policy" Carnegie Endowment. Dec. 2008. 20 Apr. 2011 <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_eu_policy1.pdf>.

³²² Pandur, József. "European Integration and the Western Balkans" International Centre for Democratic Transition. 11 Nov. 2010. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.icdt.hu/admin/download/a489Food-for-thoughtPaper-EUIntegrationoftheWesternBalkansandtheHungarianEUPresidency.pdf>>.

³²³ "Countries on the road to EU membership" European Commission Enlargement. 2011?. 26 Apr. 2011 <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/the-policy/countries-on-the-road-to-membership/index_en.htm>.

³²⁴ Jovanovska, Svetlana, and Augustin Palokaj. "Albania is refused EU candidate status" EUobserver. 10 Nov. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://euobserver.com/887/31237>>.

³²⁵ "Fuele praises Serbia's EU integration efforts" SETimes.com. 20 Feb. 2011. 26 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2011/02/20/nb-13>.

³²⁶ Pandur, József. "European Integration and the Western Balkans" International Centre for Democratic Transition. 11 Nov. 2010. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.icdt.hu/admin/download/a489Food-for-thoughtPaper-EUIntegrationoftheWesternBalkansandtheHungarianEUPresidency.pdf>>.

³²⁷ Korski, Daniel. "Bosnia: The end of integration?" European Council on Foreign Relations. 8 Mar. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_korskibosniathirdoption/>.

declaration of independence in the EU and Kosovo's disputes with Serbia are not settled,³²⁸ no process can be made here.

No clear EU accession date has been set either for Turkey or the three Balkan countries. However, it is expected that Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo might join the EU in the second part of this decade but the discourse on Turkey's accession seems to be going on for a while.

4.2.1 Albania

As the European Commission stated, the main problem with Albania's EU integration process is the political crisis in the country, the lack of dialogue between the government and opposition since the 2009 parliamentary elections.³²⁹ The political dialogue is confrontative and unconstructive, the parliament does not exercise effective control over the government and the scrutiny of legislative development is weak. Besides this, Albania also needs to tackle corruption, organised crime, smuggling and reform the judiciary to win a green light for the official candidate status.³³⁰

There is a visa-free travel agreement between the EU – the Schengen area participating countries actually – and Albania, which took effect in December 2010.³³¹

4.2.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina

The main problem, besides the presence of the OHR and official defiance of this institution's authority by the Republika Srpska,³³² in Bosnia is that state institutions do not function properly, the federal structure and the ethnically divided country are not able to handle the reforms which are definitely needed to proceed with EU candidacy talks. Despite the country is on a path of slow but steady progress – for example co-

³²⁸ "Serbia-Kosovo row mars EU-Balkans talks" BBC News. 20 Mar. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8577597.stm>>.

³²⁹ Jovanovska, Svetlana, and Augustin Palokaj. "Albania is refused EU candidate status" EUobserver. 10 Nov. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://euobserver.com/887/31237>>.

³³⁰ "Leaders trade blame for Albania's strife" FT.com. 24 Jan. 2011. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a9e12512-2720-11e0-80d7-00144feab49a.html#axzz1LC4umFEg>>.

³³¹ "EU grants visa-free travel rights to Albania, Bosnia" EUbusiness. 8 Nov. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/immigration-bosnia.6um/>>.

³³² Szewczyk, Bart M.J.. "The EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina: powers, decisions and legitimacy" European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). Mar. 2010. 20 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/OccasionalPaper83.pdf>>.

operation with the war crime tribunal in The Hague –,³³³ constitutional reforms are also required for further co-operation with the EU.

There is a visa-free travel agreement between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took effect in December 2010.

4.2.3 Kosovo

From the three Balkan countries in this row, Kosovo's EU accession seems to be the most far away. Due to the reason that not all of the 27 members of the EU have recognised Kosovo's independence, the EU is not likely to sign any contracts with Kosovo, therefore an SAA could also not take effect.³³⁴ Kosovo also needs to tackle crime, corruption, strengthen the rule of law, media freedom and to guarantee the political stability and security for all communities in Kosovo.³³⁵ Political interference into the judiciary is also a major problem in the country.³³⁶

4.3 EU membership not in sight: implications for Turkey and the three countries in focus

As we have seen, no rapid EU accession is expected for Turkey and the three Balkan countries. On the other hand, all of these countries have reiterated that they see their future in Europe – and NATO –, no other alternatives are possible. However, until EU accession is reached there is some time to go.

The implications of Turkey's EU accession process in the Balkans are diverse. First of all, there has been some suggestions³³⁷ that, given Turkey's successful EU facilitated political and economic reforms, Turkey could serve as a model state among Balkan countries. The EU has praised Turkish reforms several times in recent years and this could be an impetus for Balkan countries to proceed with such an agenda – they see an example which is positively graded. However, due to the fact

³³³ Pandur, József. "European Integration and the Western Balkans" International Centre for Democratic Transition. 11 Nov. 2010. 21 Apr. 2011 <<http://www.icdt.hu/admin/download/a489Food-for-thoughtPaper-EUIntegrationoftheWesternBalkansandtheHungarianEUPresidency.pdf>>.

³³⁴ "Orban: No EU-Kosovo contracts until all members recognise Kosovo" SETimes.com. 14 Apr. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2011/04/15/nb-10>.

³³⁵ "EU's Fuele visits Kosovo and Albania" SETimes.com. 21 Mar. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/03/21/nb-03>.

³³⁶ Jovanovska, Svetlana, and Augustin Palokaj. "Albania is refused EU candidate status" EUobserver. 10 Nov. 2010. 26 Apr. 2011 <<http://euobserver.com/887/31237>>.

³³⁷ Aybet, Gülnur. "Turkey's long and winding road to the EU: implications for the Balkans" Journal of Souther Europe and the Balkans 8.1 (2006): 65-83.

that the EU – and its officials – are physically present in Bosnia and Kosovo, Turkey's model role might be rather limited, the EU is directly involved in those two states,³³⁸ and the reforms are to be done by local politicians, authorities – not the EU.

Secondly, as all the remaining Balkan states will step on the path for EU candidacy, the common lobby force of these states would increase in negotiating with the EU, if common issues come up.³³⁹ Emphasising the common heritage, cultural bonds could provide additional means for co-operation in this field. In addition, as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo maintain good relations with Turkey, Turkey's voice in these potential EU candidate countries could also be valued more, as an experienced partner of the EU, Turkey could provide useful information – regarding EU accession negotiations – for these countries. Although, the block accession – like those of the eastern European states in 2004 – of these countries into the EU is rather unlikely and this could weaken this common lobby force.

Perhaps the most important part of these implications is economy. This issue has two points worth to mention. First, until the western Balkans is not incorporated into the EU, and do not have access to the common market, Turkey is a great partner to trade with. Turkish exports to Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo are increasing and the number is not expected to stall or decrease in the near future. FTAs are in place between Turkey and the individual countries (with Kosovo it is expected to take place soon) to facilitate trade. The possibility for Albanian, Bosnian and Kosovar companies to export easily to Turkey is also increasing. Turkish investments, compared to their previously low levels these countries, are also increasing rapidly. The emphasis of the common past, cultural bonds and Ottoman heritage in the economic relations too makes the trade and investments more smooth.

The other aspect of the prolonged EU accession negotiations is that Turkey is a more dominant player, than any other Balkan countries. Turkish politicians, businessmen are keen to focus on the region and there is a huge trade surplus for Turkey with these countries. Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo are relatively poor countries. The amount of FDI they could export is rather limited, Turkey dominates the trade

³³⁸ The possibility of Turkey's overlapping engagement policy with those of the EU is getting visible in the Balkans, where for example the EU is the major guarantor of security. See also: Ülgen, Sinan. "A Place in the Sun of Fifteen Minutes of Fame? Understanding Turkey's New Foreign Policy" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. December 2010. 7 April 2011 <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_new_foreign_policy.pdf>.

³³⁹ However, because Turkey more ahead in EU accession talks this issue might be limited, Turkey's interests are not to wait for the other candidate countries to catch up.

and investments, Turkish companies are able to invest in the region. Therefore, despite the sometimes unstable political situation in these countries, Turkey consistently buys up companies there – at a good price. These assets, once the region will be inside the EU would be valued more and have access to the common market, which Turkish companies – in case of Turkey will not become an EU member – would be able to achieve with more difficult conditions. However, the investments in these countries serve mutual interests: the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo are eagerly looking for any foreign investment to speed up economic growth in order to modernise their economies and Turkey seems to be an eligible and adequate partner for deeper co-operation.

5. Conclusion

There has been great changes in Turkey's Balkan oriented foreign policy in the past decade. The political events in the region and the reshaping policy of a new Turkish governing party resulted in a much different approach to the Balkans – then it was in the previous decades.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo occupy important and special position in Turkish foreign policy, as it is voiced on many occasions by leading Turkish politicians and businessmen. This opinion, albeit with less emphasis, is also voiced by Albanian, Kosovar and Bosniak politicians and businessmen too. Turkey feels that not only diplomatic and economic relations are needed in the policy toward these countries, but to explore other fields of co-operation, including cultural, educational, humanitarian and military ones too. Common religious ties and the focus on the positive aspects of the Ottoman past, the positive perception of the Ottoman heritage in these countries – not in whole of Bosnia –, also contribute to this special atmosphere and relationships.

The Turkish approach is more than a foreign policy initiative, it goes beyond it. Turkey's influence, Turkish Islam, companies, schools, TV-shows etc. have spread around the western Balkans, especially in the last 5-6 years. With fast EU membership prospects for these countries fading, co-operation with Turkey is observed more and more positively by the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Federation part – and Kosovo. Claims, that Turkey's approach toward these countries is neo-Ottomanist, have some groundings. However, this neo-

Ottomanism is not that most of the experts use in connection with this topic. The portrayal of neo-Ottomanism as an imperial approach and as a policy to spread its sphere of influence is no longer valid because these expressions have lost their meanings in today's international relations frame of reference. Multilateralism, the involvement of all actors in the region to foster relations is the way how Turkey moves forward in the Balkans.

On the other hand, we can not just simply label the Turkish foreign policy directed toward this region as a "new foreign policy approach" because it might be new, but the approach is more than strengthening political and economic ties. Neo-Ottomanism, with new elements and branding, that can be of today's Turkish foreign policy in these countries.

Turkey's relations with these three countries spread into many fields, the citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo could face with the increasing relations with Turkey even in their homes (TV-shows). However, Turkey's approximation is not perceived with negative sentiments by the majority of the people residing in these countries: citizens look at Turkey as a friend and Turkish involvement in several layers of the society is supported by local politicians too. The mutual benefits started to overrule past disagreements and perceived prejudices. The "win-win" situation, as described by Davutoglu, fits for everyone so far. In addition, if populist and nationalist rhetoric would also cool down in several areas – mainly in the Bosnian Serb entity – a more solid co-operation could start with these territories too. The Serbs' suspicion is a factor which Turkey needs to tackle in the upcoming years. There is also a high chance of this due to Serbia's currently friendly relations with Turkey,³⁴⁰ this results in that Serbs politicians in Bosnia are losing support for anti-Turkey policies.

The economic aspect, which Turkey is promoting in its new foreign policy approach, also shows great developments. Turkish investments into the region have just started to arrive on a bigger scale and the pace of further investments will possibly increase in the near future, as economic growth will catch up in these countries and a more business friendly environment would develop. However, the level of Turkish trade and investments with these countries still lags behind those of the other Balkan countries, like Greece or Serbia, but the trend is changing. The economic emphasis in the relations aims to intertwine the economies of these countries with Turkey's to a

³⁴⁰ In addition, no major actors want Bosnia and Herzegovina to be divided, including Turkey, the EU, Serbia and Croatia too.

level, which would exclude any major further conflicts, facilitate stability and to a level, which was previously unthinkable.

I would argue that neo-Ottomanism, under the changed meaning, is the main driving policy in these countries, the direction is visible. The hypothesis of the thesis seems to be valid. The examples, trends and all other aspects mentioned in the thesis point to a different foreign policy, a pragmatist and mutual benefit-seeking approach concentrating on the common past and ties. Claims, that there is no overarching neo-Ottomanist policy regarding the Balkans may have some foundations, however, neo-Ottomanism in Turkey's relations with individual countries appears and these bilateral relations also add up to a multilateral picture in this region.

The other factors of the new Turkish foreign policy approach, the zero problems policy and the country's mediating role also contribute to the increasing role of Turkey in the Balkans. Successful negotiations between Bosnia and Serbia and the offer to take part in the Kosovo-Serbia talks are examples when Turkey was able to overcome its previous foreign policy objectives toward the region (e.g. no interference) and pursue with a constructive approach.

The future of neo-Ottomanism in these countries and the region could take diverse curves in the upcoming years. Nevertheless, the most possible scenario for the following years is that these countries enhance co-operation with Turkey in all fields, strengthen their relations for mutual benefits to speed up economic growth with the help of Turkish investments. This would also reduce several social problems, including unemployment, which in many occasions are the roots of wider difficulties (e.g. ethnic tensions).

The main issue here is that all three countries have certain issues which could slow this political and economic normalisation. The ethnic division in Bosnia, Kosovo's disputed status and the political stalemate in Albania are the grand factors which we currently do not know when will come to a still point. These problems affect the relations with Turkey and the EU, like Albania's rejection of EU candidate status.

Moreover, the EU is also an important, perhaps the most important player in the region and Turkey knows that without the consent and agreement of the 27 member block, the future of the region could not be imagined. However, this is true for Turkey too, without Europe's biggest Muslim country no major breakthroughs can be achieved in the Balkans. The interdependence of the two entities in shaping the

political and economic image of the Balkans is obvious, but the realisation of the co-operation for these states for a better future is rather bumpy and ambiguous. Cengiz Aktar mentioned that the lack of this co-operation between the EU and Turkey in the Balkans causes disturbances and doubts in both sides about the other's intentions. This notion is of crucial significance: Turkey is aiming at full EU membership, but it is not a usual candidate country, its means are able to pursue an independent and confident foreign policy in the EU's backyard which are sometimes not 100 percent parallel with those of the EU. Turkey's neo-Ottomanism also belongs to this category.

The success, depends on what we consider as success of neo-Ottomanism – increasing public support for Turkey? Enhanced economic co-operation? Friendly political relations? Culture as a driving factor in relations? etc. – in these countries is uncertain. Albania, as the country with which Turkey has the longest relations from this group, is perhaps the state which is on the way to become a success story for this Turkish foreign policy in the region. The emphasis which politicians and businessmen put on the excellent relations between the two countries and the public's reshaping attitude, thanks Turkish schools and other cultural elements, are point to the positive realisation of this policy. Kosovo is also following Albania in this line, however, due to the fresh and new relations with Turkey, the volume is lagging behind those of Albania but the intensity, how the public supports Turkey is really visible. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the country where the ethnic division also divides the success of this policy for Turkey: the more the division exists and deepens, the more Turkey is seen in Republika Srpska as an "alien" actor in this field. Unless Turkey is not able to change the Bosnian Serbs' opinion and perception about its policies and itself, success can not be achieved in this field.

There has been a new foreign policy paradigm shaping in Turkey, which is more confident and assertive than previous Turkish foreign policies. Turkey is more aware of its geostrategic, economic, demographical and cultural peculiarities and weight. The country uses these advantages to pursue its aims in the international arena. The Balkans is one of the most important "laboratories" of this Turkish foreign policy in the ex-Ottoman field, neo-Ottomanism is the driving force behind this policy which also brought new impetus into the region.

ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the aspects of neo-Ottomanism in Turkish foreign policies toward three Balkan countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo –, focusing on the developments of the last decade. Turkey has become quite active in the Balkans and in these countries in the last few years, however, this activism is not without any antecedents. These areas were the core European territories of the Ottoman Empire and after the dissolution of this entity, Turkey still attached special importance to these countries, albeit during the Cold War relations were cooler. On the other hand, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, the rise of the AK Party to government position and Ahmet Davutoglu becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs in Turkey, the Balkans started to receive particular “limelight” in Turkish foreign policy. New ideas, expressions, approaches were incorporated into the forming self-confident and assertive foreign policy of Turkey. However, this new policy, referred to as neo-Ottomanism in many cases, inferred criticisms too, from the West and from local politicians in the Balkans too. The thesis aims to remake and remodel this expression by highlighting other, more positive elements of it. Turkey’s political, economic, cultural and military relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are developing at an unprecedented pace these days but the Ottoman past and ethnic divisions cast doubts in some occasions on Turkey’s intentions. Nonetheless, economy is more and more becoming the driving factor in relations, with Turkish investments soaring in these countries. In addition, the perception of the Ottoman past is also changing in these countries, with major shifts in some states in favour of Turkish involvement. However, the increased relations with Turkey remain highly debated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where this issue is also in connection with the country’s ethnic division. All four countries aim at EU membership, but there are various obstacles which set back their progress. The implications of the fading fast membership progress pushes Turkey and the other three countries for enhanced co-operation, mainly in the field of economy, to get the most out of bilateral – and multilateral – relations. The thesis attempts to highlight that most of the factors of the current Turkish foreign policy in this region underline the approach of neo-Ottomanism, however, this approach is more beneficiary than disadvantageous for all sides and the involved actors observe Turkish approximation mostly positively.

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Appendix 1.

Personal interview with Harun Karcic – made on 4th Marc 2011 –, a Sarajevo based former researcher at the Roberto Ruffilli Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Bologna and a member of Islam in South East Europe Forum (ISEEF)

How would you describe the new foreign policy of Turkey? What elements of it are worth to mention? Neo-Ottomanism is a controversial expression, often used by the Western media. What is your opinion on this expression? How do you try to grab the key focuses of the argument around the expression?

First of all, Ottomanism was a term coined by Ottoman statesmen in the 19th century to try and forge a common Ottoman identity in the wake of ever stronger nationalist movements in the Balkans and Middle East which threatened the political and social stability of the Empire. The term never had any connotation to Ottoman foreign policy, it was simply an attempt at forging a common identity. Hence, labeling Turkish foreign policy as 'neo-Ottoman' is simply wrong. I would simply label it as the 'new Turkish foreign policy'. We have to bear in mind that Turkey has been largely ignoring its neighboring countries (Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Armenia, Greece) in the last couple of decades. It was desperately trying to get closer to the Europe, and applied for EEC membership a few decades ago. However, Europe has been divided on Turkey's entrance and Turkish leadership and the ordinary people became increasingly frustrated with the EU. Since the AKP came to power, the Turkish leadership tried to make use of its immediate neighborhood for its own economic gain as well as for political stability.

Turkey has become quite active on the Balkans in the last decade too. What is the reason of this? Why Turkey started to focus on this region and how Turkey is pursuing its policy aims in these countries?

Turkish foreign policy must be observed from a higher perspective. In 2009 alone, the Turkish Foreign minister (Ali Babacan, and after 1 May Ahmet Davutoglu) paid 93 official visits: 47 to Europe, 15 to Asia, 23 to Middle East, and 9 to USA. From this we see that Turkish foreign policy has been West oriented and of these countries, the Balkans received the least number of visits. If Davutoglu's visits to the Balkans are only observed, it may seem that Turkey has become more active in the Balkans. If however Turkey's overall European visits are observed, we see that there is a general

trend in pro-active Turkish foreign policy. Also, Davutolgu, being an international relations professor knows well that any tremor in the Balkans or Caucasus will be felt in Turkey. In the last 130 years alone, the Austro-hungarian occupation of Bosnia, the first and second Balkan wars, the first and second World Wars, the expulsion of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria (1960s, 1970s, 1989) resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees being expelled to Turkey. For this reason, Davutoglu has realized that in order for Turkey to be in peace and stability and not overwhelmed with Balkan refugees, there must be peace and stability in the Balkans. His activism resulted in Serbia accepting a Bosnian ambassador after 3 years of a stalemate, in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia signing the Istanbul Declaration on stability and cooperation, in the Serbian parliament passing the resolution of Srebrenica, and in Turkey and Serbia signing a free trade agreement.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are countries, where there is a strong Muslim population, in Albania and Kosovo there is a Muslim majority. Does religion play a role in Turkey's Balkans approaches? Does Turkey use the religious connection to proceed with its foreign policy?

Islam does not play a role in Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans. Turkey today has greater trade with Orthodox majority countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Serbia than it has with Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo. (You can check official statistics on Turkey's foreign trade). Although Turkey could use its religious connections in the Balkans, Balkan Muslims are, after half a century of communism, too secularized to see it as a major link.

Turkey has become active not just in the political, but in the economic field too in these three countries. What advantages/disadvantages could emerge from this? Which sectors might be affected the most?

Turkish products are of relatively good quality and are much cheaper than imported Slovenian, Austrian, or German products. Greater trade with Turkey will provide the Balkans with cheaper and good quality goods which will be affordable to a greater population.

How the politicians, decision makers, business community and every day people, the population of these three countries observe Turkey's approaches? What is their opinion on Turkey's policies? For or against?

I can only speak for Bosnia here as I am most familiar. Bosniaks and Croats were generally friendly towards Turkey's activism in the Balkans. Bosnian Serbs generally have an aversion towards Turkey, and Milorad Dodik was a major figure in spreading this animosity. However, after a recent visit to Banja Luka by Davutoglu and his meeting with Dodik, Dodik changed his attitude and at a press conference even declared that he supports Turkey's engagement in Bosnia and that he sees Turkey as a partner in Bosnia's stability. I do not know the reasons for such a swift change in attitude.

Appendix 2.

Personal interview with Cengiz Aktar – made on 11th April 2011 –, Professor at Turkey's Bahcesehir University and the Chairman of the Department of EU Relations.

The interview can be found on two mp3 files provided on the CD attached or in the uploaded version of the thesis.

Appendix 3.

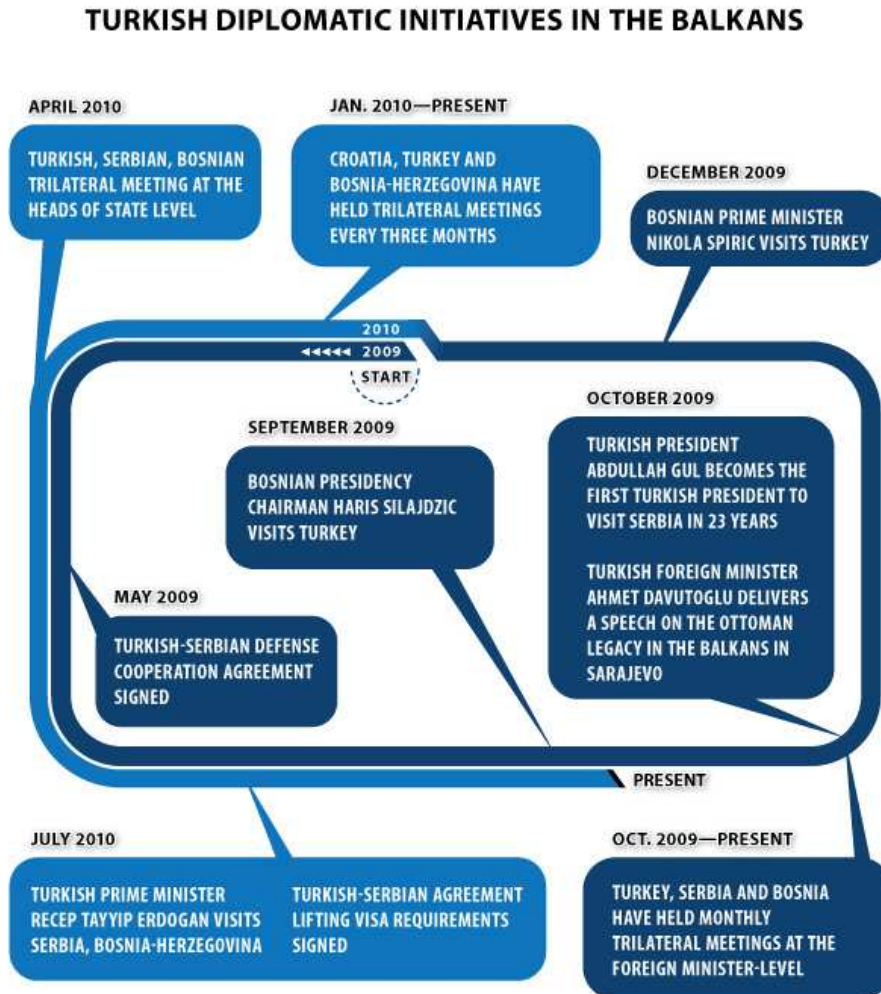
Maps, charts

1. The Ottoman Empire in the 19th century



Source: STRATFOR. Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. 22 April 2011. <http://web.stratfor.com/images/maps/Balkans_Boundaries_v2_800.jpg>.

2. Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives in the Balkans



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Source: STRATFOR. Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives in the Balkans. 22 April 2011. <http://web.stratfor.com/images/maps/balkan_influence_800.jpg>.

3. Turkey's Economic Presence in the Balkans

TURKEY'S ECONOMIC PRESENCE IN THE BALKANS

COUNTRY	TO TURKEY			FROM TURKEY			
	EXPORTS (2007)**	IMPORTS (2007)**	NET FDI FLOWS (2007)**	NET FDI FLOWS (2008)**	% OF MAIN INVESTORS (2008)	FDI STOCKS**	% OF MAIN INVESTORS
Macedonia	\$ 53,249	\$ 194,766	\$ 9,448	\$ 10,604	1.91%	\$ 56,480	0.67%
Serbia	\$ 45,123	\$ 293,851	\$ 10,512	\$ 19,711	0.42%	N/A	N/A
Montenegro	\$ 1,339	\$ 48,494	\$ 1,314	\$ 3,942	0.29%	\$ 5,256	0.38%
Albania*	\$ 6,016	\$ 292,522	\$ 26,282	\$ 2,628	0.21%	\$ 48,621	0.99%
Croatia	\$ 140,011	\$ 304,347	\$ 0	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0	0%
Bosnia	\$ 36,406	\$ 260,557	\$ 5,256	\$ 9,198	1.57%	\$ 151,121	1.51%

*No FDI data for 2009/2010, but according to local media, Italy and Turkey have become the main investors in Albania.

**In thousands

SOURCES: Eurostat, national central banks and statistics offices, UNCTAD, European Commission, Trademap

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Source: STRATFOR. Turkey's Economic Presence in the Balkans. 23 April 2011. <http://web.stratfor.com/images/maps/turk_balkan-ties_800.jpg>.

Appendix 4.

Photos of determining, important politicians mentioned in the thesis. All photos are free to be copied, distributed, shared and remixed (no copyright) – with proper attribution under Creative Commons licences.

1. Ahmet Davutoglu



Source: Kathrin Möbius, Munich Security Conference. [Munich Security Conference 2010](http://www.securityconference.de/Saturday-17-00-19-00-Uhr.589.0.html?&L=1). 20 April 2011. <<http://www.securityconference.de/Saturday-17-00-19-00-Uhr.589.0.html?&L=1>>.

2. Recep Tayyip Erdogan



Source: Flickr, World Economic Forum. [World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2009](http://www.flickr.com/photos/worldeconomicforum/3488049687/). 21 April 2011. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/worldeconomicforum/3488049687/>>.

3. Abdullah Gül



Source: Flickr, World Economic Forum. [World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2007](http://www.flickr.com/photos/15237218@N00/374717721/). <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/15237218@N00/374717721/>>.

4. Milorad Dodik



Source: Flickr, Demokratska Stranka. [Electoral Meeting of the Democratic Party \(DS\) of Serbia](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Milorad_Dodik_mod.jpg). 20 April 2011. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Milorad_Dodik_mod.jpg>.

5. Bakir Izetbegovic



Source: Flickr, European People's Party. [EPP Summit December 2010](http://www.flickr.com/photos/eppofficial/5266299267/). <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/eppofficial/5266299267/>>.

6. Sali Berisha



Source: Flickr, European People's Party. EPP Congress Bonn 2009. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/eppofficial/5016885181/>>.

7. Bamir Topi



Source: Lorenza e Vincenzo Iaconianni, Fotoguru.it. Bamir Topi. 22 April 2011. <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/58/Bamir_Topi_2.jpg>.

8. Hashim Thaci



Source: Wikimedia, White House. Hashim Thaci. 22 April 2011. <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:President_Bush_with_leaders_of_Kosovo.jpg>.

Appendix 5.

I have made an audio slideshow on my recent visit to Istanbul as an illustration of Turkey's – and Turkey's foreign policy's – position between East and West. The video can be watched on the CD attached, on my personal webpage on this link (<http://harsfatea.posterous.com/istanbul-commuters-on-the-bosphorus>) or can be found in the uploaded version of the thesis.