



**A NEO-CLASSICAL REALIST ACCOUNT OF
TÜRKİYE'S FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR: THE
COMPARISON OF BÜLENT ECEVİT'S 1978-1979 AND
1999-2002 GOVERNMENTS**

**TÜRKİYE'NİN DIŞ POLİTİKA DAVRANIŞININ
NEOKLASİK REALİST BİR AÇIKLAMASI: BÜLENT
ECEVİT'İN 1978-1979 VE 1999-2002 HÜKÜMETLERİNİN
KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines and compares the foreign policy behavior of Türkiye under the premiership of Bülent Ecevit between 1978-1979 and 1999-2002 via utilization of neo-classical realist theory. The article argues that the permissive strategic environment in both periods, détente in the former and unipolar international system in the latter paved the way for Türkiye's multi-dimensional foreign policy which put special emphasis on neighboring regions. The worldviews of Ecevit and his foreign ministers Gündüz Ökçün and İsmail Cem as well as the emergence of grave economic problems in the country also contributed to the consolidation of region-centric foreign policy streak in both periods. Yet, while the arrival of the Second Cold War in December 1979 following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan interrupted Türkiye's multi-dimensional foreign policy stance for a while, the increasing trend towards multi-polarity starting from mid-2000s

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facilitated Türkiye's pursuit of more autonomous foreign policy line.

Keywords: Neo-classical Realism, Türkiye, Foreign Policy Behavior, Bülent Ecevit, Multi-Dimensional Foreign Policy.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, neoklasik realist teoriden yararlanarak 1978-1979 ve 1999-2002 yılları arasında Ecevit'in başbakanlığında Türkiye'nin dış politika davranışını inceleyip karşılaştırmaktadır. Makale, her iki dönemde de müsamahakâr stratejik ortamın, önceki dönemdeki yumuşamanın, ikinci dönemdeki tek kutuplu uluslararası sistemin, Türkiye'nin komşu bölgelere özel vurgu yapan çok boyutlu dış politikasının önünü açtığını öne sürmektedir. Ecevit ve dışişleri bakanları Gündüz Ökçün ve İsmail Cem'in dünya görüşleri ile ülkede ciddi ekonomik sorunların ortaya çıkması da her iki dönemde de bölge merkezli dış politika çizgisinin pekişmesine katkı sağlamıştır. Her ne kadar İkinci Soğuk Savaş'ın Aralık 1979'da Afganistan'a Sovyet müdahalesinin ardından gelmesi Türkiye'nin çok boyutlu dış politika duruşunu bir süreliğine kesintiye uğratsa da Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde artan çok kutupluluk eğilimi Türkiye'nin daha özerk bir dış politika izlemesini kolaylaştırmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Neoklasik Realizm, Türkiye, Dış Politika Davranışı, Bülent Ecevit, Çok Boyutlu Dış Politika.

INTRODUCTION

The neorealism's failure to predict the political changes that left its imprint on Europe in the late 1980s and the early 1990s which harbingered the unification of Germany, dissolution of the Soviet Union and eventually the finale of the Cold War precipitated introspection, discussion, along with introduction of new theoretical approaches within the realist tradition. Accordingly, Gideon Rose brought forward the concept of neo-classical realism in 1998 which contended that the foreign policy behavior of a state was dependent on systemic factors such as the relative material power capabilities which would be untangled via intervening variables at the unit level such as

apprehensions of the policymakers, domestic state structure and the nature and strength of state-society relations (Rose, 1998: 146, 152-153).

Clarity and the nature of a state's strategic environment were identified as the key systemic variables that were central to the neo-classical realism (Ripsman et al., 2016: 56). Clarity had three components: The level of a state's recognition of the constraints and opportunities surrounding its environment, the extent of international system's provision of clear information on constraints and opportunities and the presence or absence of most appropriate policy options (Ripsman et al., 2016: 46). When there existed less clarity, policymakers had more room to pursue policies based on their worldviews and preferences. The neo-classical realist theory broached two types of strategic environments based on the immediacy and prominence of threats and opportunities that states came across. In a restrictive strategic environment, the threat or opportunity was close and the threat was dangerous or the opportunity was attractive. The permissive strategic environment on the other hand, was the one where the threat or opportunity was distant and the threat or opportunity was less powerful (Ripsman et al., 2016: 52).

The neo-classical realist school acknowledged the primacy of systemic factors however it also pointed out that they were indirectly causal to foreign policy behavior of states. Unit-level variables on the other hand, remained secondarily but directly causal to the foreign policy process (Sterling-Folker, 1997: 22). Foreign policy preferences of states were affected by domestic-level mediating variables such as leader perceptions, strategic culture, relations between state and society, domestic political organizations and domestic economic constraints (Ripsman et al., 2016: 33-34). All in all, it can be said that neo-classical realism expands the expounding capacity of the realist theory by recognizing pressures of the anarchical international system on state responses and also taking into consideration how these responses are determined by domestic factors such as leader perceptions and political and economic constraints.

This article makes use of the neo-classical realist theory in order to examine and compare the foreign policy behavior of Türkiye under the premiership of Bülent Ecevit in two time periods: 1978-1979 and 1999-2002. The nature of the strategic environment will be the independent variable in this study while the leader images and domestic economic constraints will act as the intervening variables. The article argues that the permissive strategic environment in both periods, détente in the former and unipolar international system in the latter paved the way for Türkiye's multi-dimensional foreign policy which put special emphasis on neighboring regions. While the thawing out of strains between Washington and Moscow during détente years smoothed the path for Türkiye to

seek closer diplomatic and commercial association with Moscow and its allies in the Balkan Peninsula and in the Middle East region, elimination of security risks the superpower competition posed for Türkiye with the Soviet Union's downfall augmented maneuvering capability of Ankara in its foreign policy decisions and helped it to pursue more flexible regional policies.

The worldviews of the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and his foreign ministers Gündüz Ökçün and İsmail Cem as well as the emergence of grave economic problems in the country also contributed to the consolidation of region-centric foreign policy streak in both periods. However, while the arrival of the Second Cold War in December 1979 following Soviet intervention in Afghanistan interrupted Türkiye's multi-dimensional foreign policy stance for a while, the increasing trend towards multi-polarity commencing from mid-2000s facilitated Türkiye's pursuit of more autonomous foreign policy line.

The research program of neo-classical realism encompasses not only great powers or Western cases but also smaller actors and non-Western examples (Meibauer et al., 2021: 282). Thus, analyzing Türkiye's foreign policy conduct as a middle/regional actor on a temporal basis contributes to the explanatory power of the theory. Moreover, the article provides valuable insights pertaining to the foreign policy initiatives spearheaded by Ecevit during the two coalition governments in two different time periods. Politically active between the years 1957-2004, Ecevit was one of the influential figures of the Turkish political life during the twentieth century. Yet, although there are some academic studies regarding his political thoughts (Sanlı, 2021), his main traits as a politician (Kımkıloğlu, 2000), his domestic policies (Erkan, 2017; Kasapsaraçoğlu, 2021) and his specific foreign policy initiatives such as the Cyprus intervention of July 20, 1974 (Gülbay, 2019), the literature is devoid of a study that examines the main contours of his foreign policy preferences in a comparative perspective. This article, by underlining Ecevit as a significant agency in determination of Türkiye's foreign policy outlook both in the course of détente years and post-Cold War epoch, aims to fill the void in this area as well.

The study is made up of five sections. The first section elaborates on the notions of permissive strategic environment, leader image and domestic economic constraint. The second part scrutinizes the external and internal environment of Türkiye between 1978-1979 through analysis of the impact of détente on Türkiye's foreign policy decisions, along with the explanation of the economic problems that the government had to face and the revelation of Ecevit and Foreign Minister Gündüz Ökçün's ideas and views concerning Türkiye's foreign policy track. It then moves on to elaborate Ankara's endeavor to pursue multi-faceted foreign policy through exploring of Türkiye's dealings with the Soviet Union, the Middle Eastern neighbors (Iran, Iraq, Syria) and the Third

World. The fourth part delves into the external and internal environment of Türkiye between 1999-2002 through investigation of the implications of the unipolar international environment on Türkiye's decisions regarding foreign policy along with the explanation of Ankara's struggle with November 2000 capital flight crisis and February 2001 stock market collapse crisis and the explication of Ecevit and Foreign Minister İsmail Cem's key principles regarding Turkish foreign policy. The last part casts light on Türkiye's efforts to pursue multi-dimensional foreign policy line by assessing Ankara's interaction with Russia, its association with Iran, Iraq, Syria and its opening to African and Latin American regions.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The founder of neorealism, Kenneth N. Waltz revealed the main divergence between the theory of international politics and the theory of foreign policy. While the former explained the persistent and recurring patterns in the international structure such as emergence of wars, coalition building and balancing behavior of states, the latter focused on the specific behaviors and differences of individual countries (Waltz, 1979: 72). Waltz further expounded that the theory of foreign policy would try to find out the underlying causes of the different policy behavior of the states with similar material capabilities (Waltz, 1996: 54).

The neo-classical realist theory is built on the premise that the boundary between the theory of international politics and the theory of foreign policy is vague because change of foreign policy and adjustment of international system are results of behavior of nation-state. Neo-classical realism shares neorealism's assumptions about the anarchic character of the international system, the primacy of states, relative power distributions and pervasive uncertainty (Taliaferro et al., 2009: 7). Yet, it has a more flexible point of view pertaining to the limitations structural circumstances placed on state behavior. Structural settings are defined as permissive courses of actions according to the precepts of neo-classical realism which either extend opportunities to the states or put restraints on their behavior (Schweller, 1998: 3). So, anarchy is variable, and it does not apply equally strongly to all states everywhere (Wohlforth, 2016: 42).

The Type I neo-classical realism, which was also defined as the logical extension of neorealism concentrated on fixing the shortcomings of the deviant cases in which the states eschewed from pursuing the optimal foreign policy that the systemic conditions would suggest. Jack L. Snyder sought to find out why Germany and Japan pursued expansionist tendencies at different points in time although the international system rarely rewarded expansionism (Snyder, 1991). Jeffrey W. Taliaferro tried to elucidate why great powers were stuck in

peripheral conflicts despite increasing expenses and dimming chances of success (Taliaferro, 1998). Randall L. Schweller strove to explore the reasons why London, Paris, Washington, Moscow and Tokyo did not balance against an increasingly aggressive Berlin in the interwar period despite the high propensity of an imminent power transition in Europe (Schweller, 2004). These anomalies were attributed to the unit-level variables such as nature of domestic political regimes, perceptions of policymakers and domestic political constraints. The neo-classical realist theory's main virtue would be the demonstration of inevitable foreign policy failures in the event of expanding influence of subjectivity and domestic politics in foreign policy making (Rathbun, 2008).

The Type II neo-classical realism contended that in case of a lack of a clear and pressing threat emanating from the international structure, states might enjoy the liberty of choosing among many policy actions. Furthermore, under these circumstances, the foreign policy choices of the states might be dictated by worldviews of decision-makers, strategic cultures, nature of domestic coalitions and domestic political limitations (Ripsman et al., 2016: 29). William C. Wohlforth underlined that the First World I broke out because of the foreign policy choices of the German leadership and because of their ambition to enhance the relative status of Germany although Great Britain, the chief trading partner of Germany posed the least possible threat to its security (Wohlforth, 2009). Mark Brawley averred that although London, Paris and Moscow devised their foreign policy strategies by taking into account the likelihood of an emergence of an assertive Germany in the 1920s, they nevertheless followed different policy paths owing to their unique strategic settings and their domestic political limitations because of the distant possibility of a German threat at that time (Brawley, 2009).

The Type III neo-classical realism that was introduced by Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell in their book *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* reemphasized the importance of the systemic incentives which have causative significance (the independent variable) and placed the domestic drivers in the middle as intervening variables in order for them to act as a connection between the independent variable and the dependent variable (foreign policy outcomes). The structure and the structural modifiers (geographical location, the degree of technological permeation, the offence-defense balance in military technologies) are the main determinants of the possible strategic preferences of the states which are followed by clarity and the level of the permissiveness or restrictiveness of the strategic environment (Ripsman et al., 2016: 56-57). This study conforms to the theoretical framework put forth by the Type III neo-classical realism as this model expands the explanatory power of neo-classical realism by providing the opportunity to examine the medium and long-term foreign policy making. Thus, it helps to

explain similarities and variations in the foreign policy behavior of Türkiye over time (both in *détente* years and immediate post-Cold War era) through utilization of intervening variables such as the leader images and domestic economic constraints.

The decision-makers formulate, execute, review and modify their foreign policy choices in the light of opportunities and constraints emanating from the international environment. The dominant power structure plays a crucial role in determination of the level of external freedom of maneuver for the state (Mouritzen, 2022: 103). When freedom is narrow, states prioritize survival whereas in the event of widening freedom it becomes possible to make some calculations and plans. (Mouritzen, 2022: 117-118). Furthermore, the widening of freedom of maneuver may also help a state to pursue a more assertive foreign policy path. When a state has a permissive security environment that maintains its political autonomy; it may also seize the opportunity to realize its political, economic and social goals (Fiammenghi et al., 2018: 198).

The international distribution of material capabilities and the position of a state in the international system take precedence in indication of whether the strategic environment is permissive or restrictive. Türkiye's ranking between great powers and small powers owing to its material power ensures a relative permissive international environment for the country (Dewitt and Kirton, 1983: 22). The number of great powers in the international arena has also influence on the designation of a state's level of permissiveness or restrictiveness.

The bipolar system, in which states are attached to one of the competing poles based on their interests and values, imposes impediments and constraints on the decisions of the middle and small powers with regard to foreign policy matters. Yet, *détente* years expanded the grey zone between forbidden and permitted actions for middle powers like Türkiye and helped them to chart a hybrid strategy that balanced between loyalty to the pole and moderate independence. The unipolar system on the other hand, permitted middle powers significant action space in foreign policy as the international environment was regarded relatively peaceful due to the low probability of other states to counterbalance the unipolar state. Thus, Türkiye seized the opportunity to make inroads to its immediate neighborhood.

The leader image of the foreign policy executives is one of the intervening variables of this study. The leader image can be defined as the belief system, from the filters of which input coming from the outer environment is received, processed and interpreted (Holsti, 1962: 245). Foreign policy executives' views of the inner and outer environment designate definition of their state's desirable role in foreign policy (Brecher et al., 1969: 87).

Bülent Ecevit, who came out as an actively-independent leader whose focus of attention directed at maintaining his government's maneuverability and independence (Çuhadar et al., 2021: 14) became the mastermind behind Türkiye's multi-dimensional foreign policy track both during détente and immediate post-Cold War periods. Cognizant of the lenient strategic environment and the decline of the Soviet threat, Ecevit opted for better political and economic association both with Moscow and its allies in the Balkan Peninsula as well as in the Middle East region. Moreover, he reached out to the Third World as a result of substantial input from his Foreign Minister Gündüz Ökçün who shared similar foreign policy orientation with him. Ecevit returned to the premiership of Türkiye in late 1990s in a unipolar world where middle powers like Türkiye had more room for expanding their influence in neighboring regions. Building on the premise that sustaining amicable political and economic relations with the neighbors would enhance Türkiye's autonomy in its dealings with the Western world, Ecevit struggled to elevate Türkiye's ties with Russia and its Middle Eastern neighbors and also initiated mechanisms to strengthen Türkiye's interaction with states of Africa and Latin American countries thanks to efforts of his Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem, who, owing to similar foreign policy vision and mindset with Ecevit, backed up his multi-directional foreign policy line.

The domestic economic constraints which impinged on capabilities to realize foreign policy plans is the second intervening variable in the article. The energy needs, mounting external debt and trade deficit impelled the governments in both periods to diversify foreign policy in order to reduce energy expenses, secure necessary loans and promote Turkish goods and services abroad. Another objective of the commercial diplomacy conducted especially in the early 2000s was to attract foreign direct investment to Türkiye which might alleviate the growing youth unemployment in the country.

2. BÜLENT ECEVİT'S 1978-1979 GOVERNMENT: THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

From the late 1960s up until the December 1979 Soviet intervention of Afghanistan, the world witnessed the easing of tensions between the Eastern Bloc and the Western bloc gradually. The signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between Washington and Moscow in 1972 became a significant milestone in controlling arms race in nuclear weapons. A few years later, in 1975, all the European countries except Albania and Andorra, in addition to Canada and the USA, put their signatures on the Helsinki Final Act that acknowledged political borders, promoted human rights, brought out military confidence building measures, and facilitated trade and cultural exchange between the two blocs (United States of America Department of State Office of

the Historian, 2022). Moreover, China and the European Economic Community concluded the first trade agreement in April 1978 (Commission of the European Communities Spokesman's Group and Directorate General for Information, 1979: 3) and China and the USA established diplomatic relations in January 1979. In June 1979 the USA and the two great powers hammered out the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty II (SALT II) which anticipated the further reduction of strategic nuclear weapons.

The détente between the Eastern and Western blocs equipped the middle powers with the opportunity to chart a more independent course in foreign-policy making and to strengthen diplomatic, commercial and cultural bonds with the states from the rival bloc. Türkiye, in this regard, succeeded in carrying out the military intervention on the island of Cyprus on July 20, 1974, without interruption from Washington or Moscow. Bülent Ecevit, who headed the coalition government, comprised of Republican People's Party (CHP) and National Salvation Party (MSP) during the Cyprus Peace Operation assumed again the position of prime minister in January 1978 in another coalition government founded with the contribution of the CHP, Republican Reliance Party (CGP), Democratic Party (DP) and independent ministers.

Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit was quite active and influential in foreign policy resolutions in the government of January 1978-November 1979. Ecevit had demonstrated keen interest in foreign policy issues since the early years of his career as a journalist. He wrote up many articles about diverse foreign policy matters for many national newspapers such as *Halkçı*, *Pazar Postası*, *Son Havadis*, *Ulus* as well as for American newspapers of *Sunday Journal* and *Sentinel* during the 1950s. The Foreign Ministry officials who worked with him remembered that Ecevit issued directives to the Foreign Ministry on a regular basis with regard to the general guidelines as well as day to day policymaking (Sowerwine, 1987: 183). Ecevit had conveyed his thoughts pertaining to the foreign policy stance of Türkiye in a series of interviews conducted in 1976. Ecevit underlined that Türkiye needed to make new arrangements in its defense and foreign policy with the aim of safeguarding its well-being and security which necessitated closer and friendlier relations with the states in its neighborhood. Accordingly, he stated that the CHP countenanced Demirel government's attempts to advance commercial bonds with the Soviet Union and suggested the establishment of similar economic ties with the Balkan, Middle Eastern and Scandinavian states as well (Ecevit, 2010: 52-55).

The post of foreign minister was handed to CHP during the coalition government of January 1978-November 1979 which provided the Party with the opportunity to initiate, shape and set the foreign policy agenda. The bureaucratic resources and the expertise that came with the Ministry also facilitated to

develop issue ownership in the foreign policy field (Oppermann et al., 2017: 494). The Foreign Minister Gündüz Ökçün, similar to Ecevit, was in favor of expanding the foreign policy options of Türkiye. In March 1978, shortly after his inauguration to the post, The Foreign Ministry and the General Staff announced that they were working on a new mission for a more independent foreign policy and a new national security doctrine (Cumhuriyet, 25 March 1978). It was also planned to establish a new division under the Foreign Ministry called General Directorate for Strategic Research and Disarmament. Ökçün placed special emphasis on the Third World and instigated the formation of a working group under the Ministry which would search ways for enhancement of diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with the Non-Aligned Movement members (Özcan, 2021: 286-287).

Türkiye's struggle with drastic economic problems since the mid-1970s was another compelling reason of Ecevit's region-centric foreign policy. The sharp increase in petroleum bills triggered by supply reduction decision of OPEC and subsequent recession in wealthy countries took its toll on Türkiye's economy. The demand for Turkish goods and services in foreign markets and employment of Turkish workers abroad declined while the trade deficit widened due to the rising cost of the energy imports. Türkiye began to borrow in increasing amounts from the richer countries which brought out \$ 11.3 billion foreign debt at the end of 1977, \$ 6.6 billion of which was short-term (Singer, 1981: 30). Türkiye inked a stand-by agreement with IMF for \$ 45 million in March 1978 to alleviate the debt crisis. However, IMF did not release the second and third tranches because of its dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Turkish economic policy (Öniş and Riedel, 1993: 35). Therefore, the Ecevit government went in urgent search of funds. Pursuing a multi-faceted foreign policy which aimed to improve Türkiye's relationships with the neighboring areas might help the country to raise new loans, expand its export base and decrease its energy expenses.

The government program read at the Turkish National Assembly on January 12, 1978, pointed out that foreign policy could not be separated from national defense policy. While Türkiye would formulate a new national security concept to mitigate its overdependence on foreign aid, it would also carry out the requisite revisions in the foreign policy domain. Ankara would strive to strengthen its national security by building its associations with neighboring states on mutual trust and common interest (Neziroğlu and Yılmaz, 2014: 579). Portraying Türkiye as a country with close ties to the Balkan Peninsula, Mediterranean world and Middle Eastern region, the Program stressed the need for the country to make the best use of its historical and geographical importance by boosting economic cooperation and commercial exchanges with its neighbors and also by reaching out to developing states with economic potential (Neziroğlu

and Yılmaz, 2014: 579-580). The next part delves into Türkiye's foreign policy activities carried out in correspondence with the government program by focusing on its relations with the Soviet Union, with its Middle Eastern neighbors and with the Third World.

3. TÜRKİYE'S OVERTURES TO THE SOVIET UNION, THE MIDDLE EASTERN NEIGHBORS AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

The signals of Türkiye's opening to the Soviet Union were given in May 1978 during the NATO Summit that took place in Washington. A few days before the meeting Ecevit had stated that Türkiye felt no threat from the Soviet Union (Gwertzman, 1978). Furthermore, when the American President Jimmy Carter suggested the consolidation of NATO's military power to cope with the increased military capability of the Soviet Union, Ecevit proposed the cessation of unnecessary military rivalry between the Eastern and Western blocs and maintenance of political dialogue (Kornilov, 2013: 176).

Accompanied by Ökçün and the Minister of State Hikmet Çetin, Ecevit visited Moscow on June 21-25, 1978 and met with the Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev, Premier Alexei Kosygin and the Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. The two states clinched many accords in the course of the visit including a political document which stressed good neighborly ties and friendly cooperation between the two countries (Whitney, 1978). Brejnev in his meeting with Ecevit on June 23, 1978 also stated that a settlement on Cyprus might be reached through discussions between Greek and Turkish communities thus, compromised the earlier Soviet standing that an international meeting was indispensable for resolution of the Cyprus issue (Sowerwine, 1987: 137). The second accord was a continental shelf agreement which accepted demarcation in the Black Sea on the basis of a median line equidistant from the closest shores of the each country (TBMM, 1980). The third agreement set its sights on cooperation in commercial and economic fields. Ankara would buy three million tons of petroleum from Moscow annually starting from 1979 which would provide one-fourth of its needs (Whitney, 1978). Moscow also gave Ankara the opportunity to pay the energy bill with goods which suited Ankara well due to cash shortage in the country (Whitney, 1978). The two states also agreed on a cultural protocol to increase the academic, scientific and cultural exchanges with each other (Gençalp, 2014: 343).

In October 1978 a group of Turkish ministers led by Çetin visited Soviet Union to discuss details of Moscow's possible contribution to Turkish economy. A protocol was concluded with which the Soviet Union undertook to extend credits of up to \$ 4 billion for investment projects in Türkiye such as the Can Thermal Power Station, Orhaneli Power Station, Seydişehir Aluminum Plant

and Iskenderun Steel Mill (Boll, 1979: 366). In 1978, with the extension of the assistance worth of \$ 800 million, Türkiye had risen to the status of largest benefactor of Soviet funds save for the COMECON participants (Stergiou, 2021: 120).

Türkiye also made an effort to improve its diplomatic and commercial relations with Bulgaria and Romania, two Eastern Bloc countries in the Balkans. Romanian Premier Manea Mănescu carried out an official visit to Ankara in April 1978 and signed a protocol with his counterpart Ecevit that aimed to expand technical, scientific, commercial and cultural collaboration between the two states (Giritli, 1981: 237). Ecevit returned the visit in November 1978 and stroke an energy deal with Romania to meet Türkiye's diesel oil need (Ecevit, 2008: 241). Ecevit's visit to Bulgaria took place in May 1978. The two sides established joint economic committees in economics, business, tourism, and commerce domains. They also decided to set up joint agricultural and industrial ventures in Third World states (Boll, 1979: 366). Türkiye also started to purchase diesel oil from Bulgaria (Ecevit, 2008: 241).

Türkiye's opening to the Eastern Bloc states induced Ankara to tread a careful line regarding the Eastern-Western matters. Concordantly, although the USA lifted the arms embargo and the freeze on aid to Türkiye in September 1978 (Sowerwine, 1987: 118), Türkiye dragged its feet in granting permission to the USA to utilize its bases to control Soviet Union's nuclear tests (Stergiou, 2021: 120).

The second important aspect of Ecevit government's foreign policy was the revival of Türkiye's political and commercial bonds with its neighbors in the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, and Syria). These states could relieve Türkiye's energy shortage to some extent and might also be promising target markets for Turkish consumer products. Türkiye's relations with Iran however, tensed up in June 1978 when Iran accused Türkiye of harboring anti-Shah opposition groups, especially the Marxist People's Fedayin (Kayaoğlu, 2014: 473-474). Ankara on the other hand, claimed that Tehran was backing up Kurdish militant groups against Türkiye. Furthermore, neither Ecevit nor Ökçün had any sympathy for the monarchical rule in Iran. So, when the Iranian Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi fell from grace in February 1979, the Turkish government rapidly recognized the legitimacy of the new Islamic regime. Ecevit highlighted that Türkiye eschewed from interfering in internal matters of Iran and his government was ready to get into contact with the new regime (Neziroğlu and Yılmaz, 2014: 688-689). As a result, Turgut Tülümen, Türkiye's ambassador to Iran became the first diplomatic representative that officially visited the leader of the new regime, Ruhollah Khomeini. A few months later, in June 1979, Ökçün visited Iran and was received by Khomeini in Qum. The meeting, however, was

far from cordial as Khomeini criticized Türkiye's secular and pro-Western political system (Kumral, 2020: 187). Nevertheless, Ökçün managed to finalize an energy deal with Iran to purchase oil in exchange of Turkish goods (Akdevelioğlu and Kürkçüoğlu, 2009: 806).

Ecevit, Ökçün, Çetin, along with the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Deniz Baykal carried out an official visit to Iraq in December 1978 and conferred with the Head of State Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, his aide Saddam Hussein, Minister of Planning Adnan Hussein al-Hamdani and Foreign Minister Sa'dun Hammadi. Iraqi authorities accepted to sign a debt deferral agreement for Türkiye's accumulated debts arising from previous oil purchases and the two states also arranged another energy deal for the export of Iraqi oil to Türkiye (TBMM, 1979a: 163). Moreover, Türkiye and Iraq decided to prepare programs for the exchange of students and teachers. Shared security concerns arising from growing Kurdish separatism in the region was another pressing matter on the agenda of the Turkish-Iraqi interaction. Ankara and Baghdad settled an agreement in 1978 which enabled them to conduct hot pursuit operations to fight against terrorist and separatist groups (Gözen, 2005: 75).

Türkiye's relations with Syria made some progress when Türkiye criticized Israel's invasion of Lebanon in March 1978 but remained silent regarding Syria's interventions in Lebanon. Moreover, the Ecevit government did not endorse the Camp David Accords signed by Egypt and Israel in September 1978 and the subsequent peace treaty that was hammered out between the two states in March 1979 on the grounds that these agreements did not mention the Palestinian problem and they did not include any resolutions concerning Israel's occupation of other Arab lands (Aykan, 1993: 100). This Turkish stance elicited a positive reaction from Syria and Damascus renounced registering reservations to final declarations of the OIC that underscored a federal solution to Cyprus matter that was based on two-regions and two communities (Salık, 2018: 317). Türkiye also took steps to assuage its energy needs with the help of Syria. Ankara started to purchase electricity and fuel oil from Damascus following the signing of energy deals in July 1978 and July 1979 (Salık, 2018: 314, 322) with this country.

The final significant facet of Ecevit government's foreign policy maneuvers became the improvement of diplomatic and commercial bonds with Third World states. Ökçün, in his speech at the Senate pointed out that Türkiye had thus far prioritized ties with the European and NATO states but in accordance with requirements of the new international economic order Ankara would attach importance to the North-South dialogue and would endeavor to strengthen its commercial and diplomatic bonds with the Third World states (TBMM, 1978: 316). Moreover, Ökçün argued that Türkiye could act as a bridge between the Western countries and members of Group 77 at the UN, thus enhance its

prestige and position in international area (TBMM, 1979b: 614). In line with this view, Ökçün met with 18 ambassadors from the member states of the Non-Aligned Movement in July 1978 and instigated the organization of an international conference under the wings of the Foreign Ministry in August 1978 named “The New International Economic Order and Türkiye: The Balance Sheet of the Four Years” (Sert, 2020: 119). Both Ecevit and Ökçün delivered speeches in the opening session of the conference and emphasized creation of a more equitable international economic order and Türkiye’s contribution to it through cooperation with the developing states. Ökçün also declared that Türkiye might consider participating to the meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement as an observer if the Forum deemed it appropriate (TBMM, 1979a: 172).

Ökçün also encouraged the inauguration of an African Department within the Foreign Ministry in 1978 and prepared an action plan to step up relations between Türkiye and the African countries. New embassies commenced operations in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Mogadishu, Somalia in 1979 (TBMM, 2020). Türkiye sent technocrats as well as representatives of private businesses to African states such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda to explore opportunities for the augmentation of Türkiye’s exports to these countries (TBMM, 1979b: 613). Ecevit carried out a visit to Libya on 26-30 June 1979. Tripoli agreed to increase oil supplies to Ankara whereas in return, Türkiye would train Libyan military units and would share its expertise and labor in building and engineering initiatives in the country (Ronen and Cohen Yanarocak, 2013: 500). Türkiye was also engaged in political issues that mattered to African states, especially the independence movements in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Türkiye supported the UN resolutions that urged South Africa to end its colonial rule in Namibia, called on the Security Council to pursue a more active policy to ensure cessation of economic and military cooperation with South Africa and condemned attempts of the racist minority government to control Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) (UN, 1978; UN 1979). Ankara also sent financial aid and medical assistance packages to Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The mitigation of tensions between the Eastern and Western blocs as a result of the détente period coupled with the severe economic difficulties in the country induced Ecevit and Ökçün who also opted for a diversified foreign policy line for Türkiye to reach out to the states both in the immediate geographical environment and in the Third World to beef up political and economic bonds. Although the revival of diplomatic association with these states fulfilled Türkiye’s energy needs and assuaged its economic woes to some extent, the straining of ties between the two great powers following Soviet intervention of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the succeeding military takeover in

Türkiye in September 1980 brought these efforts to a halt for some time and reinvigorated the pro-Western streak in Turkish foreign policy.

4. BÜLENT ECEVİT'S 1999-2002 GOVERNMENT: THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The Soviet Union's moving away its military forces from Afghanistan in February 1989, mass demonstrations against ruling regimes in the eastern part of Europe in June 1989 along with fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 precipitated the finale of the Cold War. The USA captured the opportunity to take on a leadership role across the globe following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. It became preponderant in major aspects of power such as geopolitical, military, economic as well as technological in this new unipolar international environment (Wohlforth, 1999: 7).

The unipolar system provided states with more riposting and maneuvering capabilities in their foreign policies. In the immediate unipolar era, the European continent witnessed the strengthening and expansion of the EU with substantial contribution of France and Germany whereas China and Japan began to vie for influence in East Asia (Kupchan, 1998: 43). Furthermore, the eruption of conflicts in the Balkan, South Caucasus and Middle East regions in the early 1990s demonstrated importance of regional roles that might be played by middle powers which would contribute to the efforts to uphold regional peace and economic collaboration in these hotspots (Müftüler and Yüksel, 1997: 187).

Türkiye, as a middle/regional power with knowledge and experience in the Balkan and Middle East regions along with interest and historical and ethnical commonalities with Azerbaijan and Central Asian Republics broke free of restraints imposed by Cold War and commenced to engage more energetically with these regions. The lack of a joint frontier with Russia for the first time in centuries, the decline of the neighboring Soviet allies (Iraq, Syria) and emergence of regional opportunities also contributed to more active courses of actions in foreign policy in late 1990s (Makovsky, 1999: 5-8).

Bülent Ecevit returned as Premier in January 1999 after a two-decade hiatus at the head of a minority government which ran the country until the April 1999 general elections. Ecevit's Democratic Leftist Party (DSP) ranked first in the elections. Ecevit constituted a coalition government in May 1999 with Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Motherland Party (ANAP). He again took office as prime minister and became decisive in shaping Türkiye's external relations. Ecevit accentuated Türkiye's unique and multi-dimensional geopolitical position between Europe and Asia and averred that Türkiye was a Balkan, European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Caucasian and Asian country He advocated revival of region-centric foreign policy of the interwar

years which according to him would elevate Türkiye's position in the neighboring areas while also helping it to strike a balance with the West and Russia (Ecevit, 2008: 401-402).

Ecevit picked up İsmail Cem¹, DSP's Member of Parliament (MP) from Kayseri to assume the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs. Cem made a stride in professional life by working as a journalist at the *Milliyet* newspaper and preparing a short news section about foreign countries (Örmeci, 2011: 23). He also published articles at *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers regarding foreign policy matters. Cem was appointed as the General Manager of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation by Ecevit in February 1974 during the CHP-MSP coalition government and undertook this role until May 1975. He entered the Turkish Parliament in November 1987 as an MP from İstanbul.

Cem, similar to Ecevit, accentuated that Türkiye encompassed the characteristics of both Asia and Europe. He stated that Türkiye should pursue a rational and multi-dimensional foreign policy line via strengthening its ties with neighbors, leading states, and significant international organizations. Cem set two foreign policy goals for Türkiye. The first one was Türkiye's participation to the EU as a full member. Cem appraised Turkish membership to the EU as a win-win situation both for Ankara and Brussels. While Türkiye's accession to the EU would consolidate democratic rule and supremacy of law and would improve human rights in the country, the Union would benefit from Türkiye's historical experience, cultural wealth, dynamic economy and strong defense capability (Cem, 2002: 4). The second goal was to alter Türkiye into a central and wealthy country at the center of Eurasia (Cem, 2002: 4).

The severe capital flight crisis of November 2000 and stock market collapse crisis of February 2001 aggravated the already vulnerable economy and prompted Ecevit and Cem further to ameliorate problematic relations with the neighboring countries and to reach out to the untapped markets to expand export potential of the country. Türkiye had long been suffering from high inflation, weak currency and towering external debt. The August 1999 İzmit earthquake which caused serious human and property losses became the last straw in Turkish economic saga and Ecevit took a decision to negotiate a stabilization program with the IMF in December 1999. Yet, despite the agreement with the IMF, the exit of foreign investors by unloading government securities from their portfolios in November 2000 in the aftermath of liquidity problems of a private

¹ Cem had also served as Foreign Minister during the ANAP-DSP-Democrat Türkiye Party (DTP) coalition government led by Mesut Yılmaz and Ecevit's minority government. He resigned from his post in July 2002 to become the leader of the New Türkiye Party (YTP). Şükrü Sina Gürel became the Foreign Minister in the final four months of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government.

bank brought forth a capital outflow of \$ 5.2 billion which ended only when the IMF declared an aid package of more than \$ 15 billion in December 2000 (Tunç, 2003: 42-45). To make matters worse, in February 2001, Ecevit embarked upon a bitter quarrel with the Head of State Ahmet Necdet Sezer during a National Security Council meeting in which Sezer accused Ecevit of failing to investigate malpractice and corruption allegations in state banks and at the Ministry of Energy (Hale, 2013: 152). The result of the incident was another massive capital outflow of \$ 6.3 billion (Tunç, 2003: 40). Another stabilization program was introduced by Kemal Derviş who became new Minister of Economic Affairs in March 2001. However, as acknowledged by Cem, Türkiye was still in need of new export and investment opportunities to remedy its ailing economy which necessitated foreign policy diversification (Kut, 2010: 28).

The government program of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition underlined that Türkiye would strive to realize its potential as a regional power by establishing multi-dimensional and balanced relations both with the neighboring states and the leading powers. Türkiye would try for the development of bilateral and multi-lateral ties with Russia, would continue to sustain special bonds with the Arab countries and would pay heed to improvement of its relations with the Islamic countries (Neziroğlu and Yılmaz, 2014: 743). Furthermore, Ankara would also carry out new openings to African, Latin American and Far Eastern states which were anticipated to bring out new opportunities for Türkiye. The next part examines Türkiye's moves to boost its political and economic association with Russia and its Middle Eastern neighbors and looks into its initiatives to gain a foothold in Africa and Latin America.

5. TÜRKİYE'S OPENINGS TO RUSSIA, THE MIDDLE EASTERN NEIGHBORS AND AFRICAN AND LATIN AMERICAN REGIONS

The Turkish-Russian relations entered into an ascending trend with Ecevit's official visit to Russia in November 1999. He was received by the Russian Premier Vladimir Putin and the two prime ministers put signature on a joint declaration to combat against terrorism. Ecevit's portrayal of the war in Chechnya as Moscow's internal matter (Başlamış, 1999) along with Türkiye's drifting apart from the separatist Chechen movement which started to utilize terrorist methods extensively led to a significant thaw in the bilateral interaction.

The Russian Premier Mikhail Kasyanov came to Türkiye in October 2000 accompanied by a large delegate of Russian ministers. The most significant outcome of the visit was the signing of an agreement to increase and diversify the activities of the Joint Economic Commission in order to bolster economic links, grow bilateral trade volume and intensify energy sector cooperation. The Turkish-Russian association reached to new heights with the conclusion of the

Joint Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia: From Bilateral Cooperation towards Multi-dimensional Partnership by Cem and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov in November 2001 as the document underscored the determination of Türkiye and Russia to extend their political discussions and experiences in economic collaboration to Eurasia (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022a).

Economic cooperation between Türkiye and Russia during the DSP-MHP-ANAP government grew considerably. The Blue Stream gas pipeline project which would carry Russian natural gas directly to Türkiye kicked off in 2001. Türkiye also continued to receive Russian gas from the Western route which nearly satisfied 70 percent of its natural gas demand. The suitcase trade, Turkish firms' construction and renovation works in Russia and various Turkish investments in retail, fast moving consumer goods, textile, glass, chemicals sectors of the Russian economy turned Russia into one of the indispensable markets for Turkish products and services.

Türkiye pursued an active policy of reconciliation with its Middle Eastern neighbors during the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government. Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's "détente with neighbors" approach which toned down the revolutionary rhetoric and zeal towards challenging the regional status quo (Sinkaya, 2012: 139) corresponded to Ecevit and Cem's region-centric foreign policy line and increased the motivation on both sides to advance political and economic relations. Cem and the Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi agreed in January 2000 to create a diplomatic coordination and bureaucratic consultation mechanism (Kumral, 2020: 242). In May 2000, in the course of Undersecretary of Foreign Trade Kürşad Tüzmen's visit to Tehran, the two states signed trade agreements to reduce customs taxes, to open Gürbulak and Bezergan crossings day and night, to ensure closer cooperation of respective foreign trade banks and to turn the Economic Cooperation Organization into a common market (Olson, 2000: 887). The formation of Turkish-Iranian Business Council in November 2001, inauguration of the Tabriz-Ankara gas pipeline in December 2001 and Sezer's June 2002 two-day trip to Iran in company with 120 Turkish businessmen (Jenkins, 2012: 25) demonstrated the growing importance of commercial bonds in the bilateral interaction.

The government program of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition had announced that Türkiye attached special importance to the inviolability of borders of Iraq. Iraq was also a significant economic partner for Türkiye in terms of foodstuffs and light industrial products. Moreover, Ecevit also attributed the escalation of the terror attacks to the dire economic conditions in the southeast region of Türkiye which were exacerbated largely due to the cessation of commerce with Iraq in accordance with UN's embargo (Nachmani, 2003: 45).

As part of the rapprochement process with Iraq, Türkiye managed to organize the Turkish-Iraqi Joint Economic Commission six years later in Baghdad in February 2000 with the partaking of 90 Turkish companies and 1,000 businesspeople and they clinched many deals with their counterparts (Aydın and Aras, 2004: 116). The Joint Economic Commission convened regularly until the USA occupied Iraq in March 2003. Tüzmen visited Iraq many times in tow with the Turkish entrepreneurs to explore new business opportunities in the country. Türkiye also invested in the infrastructural links between the two states to revitalize bilateral economic collaboration. Minister of State Tunca Toskay concluded a protocol with the Iraqi authorities in November 2000 to reopen the Türkiye-Baghdad railway which had been inactive for 20 years (Hürriyet, 3 November 2000). When it became quite clear that the USA was in preparation of an intervention in Iraq (Kumral, 2016, 160), Türkiye tried to prevent the impending invasion through organization of a regional conference between Iraq and its neighboring states but failed at this endeavor (Örmeci, 2011: 290).

The Turkish-Syrian relations entered a reconciliation phase with the expulsion of head of PKK Abdullah Öcalan from Syria and signing of the Adana Accords between Ankara and Damascus in October 1998, with which Syria accepted that PKK was a terrorist organization and ceased weapon supplies as well as logistical support to it. Sezer's visit to Syria in June 2000 for the funeral of the late Syrian President Hafez al-Assad constituted another milestone for better political interaction between the two states. The ongoing hostility with Israel, the USA's pointing finger at Syria because of its backing up of Hezbollah and radical Palestinian groups and problems with Iraq expedited Syria's efforts to bring out a thaw in its relations with Türkiye. Türkiye responded positively to Syria's overtures as straightening out the kinks in its association with Syria might increase its weight in the wider Arab world and also provide new opportunities for the Turkish business world (Benli Altunışık and Tür, 2006: 240). Accordingly, the Joint Economic Commission was revived in Damascus in May 2000 after 12 years later and the Turkish-Syrian Business Council carried out its first meeting in June 2001 in Istanbul (Aydın and Aras, 2004: 123). The Türkiye-Syria railway which had been idle since 1993 commenced operations in the early 2001 as well. Regular exchanges between the technocrats and the expanding contacts between the business communities of the two states enhanced Türkiye's economic influence in Syria.

Türkiye's reaching out to the African and Latin American countries to diversify its political and economic partners became another notable foreign policy design of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government. Cem, in his capacity as the Foreign Minister of the ANAP-DSP-DTP coalition government, introduced the Action Plan for Africa in June 1998 which aimed to boost

diplomatic, commercial and cultural ties with African countries through upgrading of Türkiye's official representation on the continent, establishing political consultation mechanisms, concluding trade agreements and encouraging exchange visits and regular contacts between Turkish and African businesspeople (Özkan, 2010: 534; İpek and Biltekin, 2013: 128). Cem and various ministers of the DSP-MHP-ANAP government paid visits to both North African countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) and the Sub-Saharan states (Burkina Faso, Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Senegal, Sudan) (Hürriyet, 28 June 1999; TBMM, 2000: 199) to explore export prospects in these states. The goal of augmenting the number of Turkish embassies in Africa to 15 by opening consulates in Abidjan, Accra and Harare however, could not be realized due to logistical and economic difficulties (Hazar, 2012: 8).

The Action Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean, similar to its African equivalent, was presented by Cem in July 1998 during his stint as Foreign Minister in ANAP-DSP-DTP coalition government. Through the Plan, Türkiye intended to create political dialogue at high level, boost commercial bonds with the contribution of private sector and become involved in regional dynamics via participation in regional organizations (Levaggi, 2013: 107). In line with the objectives of the Plan, Türkiye opted for an observer position in the Organization of American States in 1998 and in the Association of Caribbean States in 2000 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022b). The remarkable economic performance of some of the Latin American states such as Brazil, Chile and Mexico in the early 2000s was the main reason behind Türkiye's opening to Latin America. Türkiye might purchase primary products from these countries in exchange of export of low and medium technology goods (Donelli and Levaggi, 2016: 107). Accordingly, Ankara received the Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry of Mexico in June 2000 to explore commerce and investment opportunities between the two states (Önsoy, 2017: 254). Türkiye revealed some degree of policy harmonization with the states of Latin America and Caribbean regarding Cuba as well. Starting from 1999, Türkiye supported the UN resolutions which called on the ending of several embargoes imposed by the USA on Cuba (UN, 1999; UN, 2000; UN, 2001; UN 2002).

The emergence of a unipolar international environment in mid-1990s enabled middle powers to increase their influence in neighboring regions and to make more autonomous foreign policy decisions. By making use of this window of opportunity, Ecevit and Cem who had advocated an independent and multi-faceted foreign policy stance for Türkiye since the détente years launched an active policy of rapprochement with states in the neighboring regions to promote political interaction and economic collaboration. Strengthening commercial ties

with the neighbors and discovering potential markets for Turkish goods and services became especially crucial after the devastating capital flight crisis of November 2000 and stock market collapse crisis of February 2001 in Türkiye. Ankara, under the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government made significant progress to revamp its political and economic relations with Russia and Middle Eastern neighbors of Iran, Iraq and Syria. It also drew up action schemes to reach out to the African and Latin American countries to expand the export and investment base of the country. Although some of these initiatives, especially the African and Latin American action plans could not be implemented in full due to economic and technical problems, they, nevertheless, constituted the building blocks on which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) would shape its foreign policy actions starting from mid-2000s and would diversify Türkiye's foreign policy options.

6. CONCLUSION

The pro-Western Turkish foreign policy behavior of early Cold-War years underwent substantial transformation in mid-1960s following disagreements with Greece pertaining to Cyprus. Türkiye set out a policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union, the Middle Eastern states and the Third World countries to garner their support for its Cyprus policy. The multi-dimensional track in Turkish foreign policy however, became much more noticeable during détente period when the constraints on middle powers emanating from the exigencies of the bipolar international system eased off to some extent.

The 1978-1979 coalition government led by Ecevit took the occasion to follow a more independent and multi-dimensional foreign policy line which included vivification of diplomatic and commercial bonds with neighboring states along with making inroads to the Third World countries. Despite being in a coalition government, Ecevit had the opportunity to determine the main contours of foreign policy aided by his Foreign Minister Ökçün whose ideas regarding the main direction and goals of Turkish foreign policy coincided with Ecevit's foreign policy views and designs. Türkiye's struggle with acute financial problems even with the existence of an IMF deal also necessitated diversification of Turkish foreign policy to reduce foreign trade deficit and to satisfy energy needs. The eruption of Second Cold War in December 1979 triggered by Soviet Union's Afghanistan operation however, increased systemic restraints on Türkiye. The constraints of the bipolar international system coupled with the military takeover of September 1980 put the multi-directional and region-centric foreign policy on hold for a while.

Ecevit reassumed the premier position in a coalition government two decades later in a completely changed international setting. The unipolar

international structure endowed Türkiye with much more resilience and discretion to pursue a region-centric foreign policy streak. Ecevit, similar to the previous period, managed to steer the course of foreign policy as the junior partners in the government most of the time countenanced his foreign policy moves of beefing up diplomatic and commercial relations with Russia and the Middle Eastern neighbors especially after the drastic repercussions of the financial crises. Foreign Minister Cem was a keen supporter of the multi-dimensional foreign policy stance as well. He also launched the African and Latin American initiatives to broaden Türkiye's foreign policy horizons. All in all, the 1999-2002 coalition government took important steps to consolidate the eastern dimension of Turkish foreign policy which would be further advanced with the succeeding AKP governments in an international system that demonstrated the traces of multi-polarity which opened more space for a middle/regional power like Türkiye to pursue an autonomous and diversified foreign policy line.

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