

TURKISH - GREEK RELATIONS
From Conflict to Détente the Last Decade

Fuat Aksu

Turkish Review of Balkan Studies,
Annual 2001, pp. 167-201.

TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS

From conflict to *détente* -the last decade

Dr. Fuat AKSU*

The concept of international relations stands for a variety of concepts by nature. In the international system the sovereign states which are considered to be the main actors, in spite of the variations within the system, infer to the concepts of mutuality, sovereign equality, loyalty to treaties/*pacta sunt servanda* in their relations. Therefore, when these multitudes of concepts are considered there is an interaction between the actors who are already in relation or are likely to be in relation with one another. Within the interaction, the direction which the relations are taking and the methods and tools to be administered are shaped to a great extent in the frame they are perceived by the decision makers.¹

The reciprocal perceptions, although not definitely decisive in the shaping of the choices of foreign policies, are extremely important in terms of the humanitarian and cognitive dimensions of the issue² The reactions of the actors who are interactive and responsive to the issues are determined according to their perceptive means and decision making mechanisms, whereas what is asked in reality, is to execute the applied policy, as rational as possible.

Another issue to be mentioned within the same framework would be the possible reaction of the actor at a moment of crisis and the degree of density that the reaction has, its coherence with the purpose, the tools to be used, all of which necessitate the deft and correct perception of the information relevant to the situation or event in question. This purpose is not

* Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, the Department of Political Science and International Relations.

¹ See Robert Jervis "Perception and Misperception in International Politics", in Paul K. Viotti-Mark V. Kauppi, eds., **International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism, Globalism**, New York: MacMillan, 1993, pp.286-304.

² Even though the exposure process of the actors in the international relations with respect to foreign policies is subject to different discussions, generally here can be some common points in the decision making process; these are in turn according to the existence of a subject upon which to decide: 1) Knowledge, image and perception; 2) Definition of the situation; 3) Choosing between various options; 4) Taking and carrying out the decision. See on this subject to, Faruk Sönmezoğlu, **Uluslararası Politika ve Dış Politika Analizi**, Istanbul: Filiz Publishing House, 1995, pp. 172-178

easily achieved in international relations because the correct and speedy conveyance of the information regarding the event to the decision maker is time consuming and thus, it is affecting the timing of the response plus its potency or density.³

In this article, the Turkish-Greek relations of the last decade, incidents which shaped the foreign policies of the two countries and the factors affected their perception will be examined.⁴ The general characteristics of the Turkish-Greek relations and the recurrent crisis that ensue, as well as the endeavours proving differences from the last years will be taken up. The Turkish-Greek relations have been affected to a great extent by the differentiation of the national political systems and the changes within the international political system. The events to be analysed, will indicate that the problems and disputes occurring between the two countries are mostly legislative, political and technical. Furthermore with this aspect is strictly related to the sovereignty rights and the *status quo* of the countries in question. With these properties at hand, the two parties cannot reach a consensus for the determination of mutual problems and agree on their preexistence, choosing to adopt a political or legislative solution.⁵ Setting out from the disputes between the two parties, in time each side sees the other as a threat for its national security, sovereignty rights and interests. In such a circumstance the lack of mutual trust between the two countries prevail. In fact, before entering a dialogue for settling of major disputes, a relationship based on mutual trust has to be founded between the parties. Similarly, before the 1990's Confidence Building Measures (CBM) had been brought

³ When considered within this framework it is possible to gather the decision making factors under three distinct headings, *“the internal structure that the decision making process creates, the properties regarding the decision maker and finally the properties of the situation on which a decision is to be taken.”* See, Sönmezoğlu, **“Uluslararası Politika...”**, p.178.

⁴ For Turkish – Greek relations, see also; Semih Vaner (der.), **Türk – Yunan Uyuşmazlığı**, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1990; Faruk Sönmezoğlu, **Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri ve Büyük Güçler**, İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2000. Fuat Aksu, **Türk Yunan İlişkileri**, Ankara: SAEMK Yayınları, 2001.

⁵ In international relations conflicts resolution, the problem solving analyses have been more widely used in recent years. For further evaluation on this subject, see; Gülden Ayman, *“Uluslararası İlişkilerde Problem Çözümü Yaklaşımı”*, in Faruk Sönmezoğlu, eds., **Uluslararası İlişkilerde Yeni Alanlar, Yeni Bakışlar**, İstanbul: Der Publications, 1998, p. 169

in to enhance and augment the trust between the two countries.⁶ Nevertheless, the visible bringings of these CBM were to be obtained only during the second half of the 1990's.⁷ The last decade of the Turkish-Greek relations have witnessed interesting developments. Both countries have seen each other to some extent as "source of threat" and "enemy" and unfortunately this judgement has been reflected to the foreign policy process as well. As numerous times iterated while discussing the nature of Turkish-Greek relations, distinctions between the politicians and the peoples were made in order to reach a positive assessment. Generally, contrary to the politicians' vision of the other party as "source of threat" and "enemy", people conceived each other through concepts of "friendship", "solidarity". From time to time, it can be observed that the national media elaborated tension between the two to create sensation but the general tolerance still persists. However, there really exist numerous political, legislative and technical problems.⁸ During conflict solution, the perceptions, approaches and responses without determining the winner or loser, instead of determining the grounds of bargaining so that the existing problems can be solved.

Among the foremost factors that impede or render difficult the reaching of a solution to the disputes between the two countries, come the reciprocal negative perceptions of the

⁶ For instance the DAVOS process started right after the crisis caused by the continental shelf problem in the Aegean Sea in 1987, the *Memorandum of Understanding* accepted on the 27 of May 1988, *Guidelines for the Prevention of Accidents and Incidents on the High Seas and International Airspace* accepted on the 8 of September 1988 are documents which aimed to create mutual trust.

⁷ On the 24 of May 1996 the Prime Minister M. Yılmaz has invited to meet and negotiate the problems without any precondition, at hand by taking Atatürk's and Venizelos' approaches as the model in defining and solving the problems within the framework of the interests of the countries. In July 1997 in Madrid the two parties accepted the Madrid Declaration. Also within the same issue, the NATO Secretary General J. Solana has endeavoured to create CBM between the two countries that would ensure permanent peace and cooperation.

⁸ In the Turkish Greek relation, especially in problems regarding the Aegean Sea for the evaluations concerning the legislative approach of the two countries, see; Aslan Gündüz: "Greek-Turkish Disputes: How to Resolve Them?", in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, eds., **Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalisation**, The IFPA-Kokkalis Series on Southeast European policy, Volume 1, 2001, pp 81-101. Pheodon John Kozyris, "The Legal Dimension of the Current Greek-Turkish Conflict: A Greek Viewpoint", in Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, eds., **Greek-Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalisation**, The IFPA-Kokkalis Series on Southeast European Policy, Volume 1, 2001, pp. 102-115

public opinions (to some extent) and the political parties.⁹ The reciprocal perceptions of the Turkish-Greek relations can be analysed in two dimensions: the first one is concerning the *national identity and the characteristics* and the other one is the perceptive dimension of these countries with respect to their *intentions*. What should not be discarded here is that in both dimensions there is reciprocity. Within this framework, both parties need to consider, perceive and understand the other country's decision makers, trying to empathize with the other, to withhold their threat perceptions in order to be able to reach a sound result when they need to perceive the tactic/strategic positions of each other.¹⁰

In addition to this, these reciprocal perceptions render possible the flow of information to the decision maker, target country and the country in question. On the other hand, the political decisions are taken based on the knowledge obtained about the target country, and the effect and success to be obtained could be easily manipulated and diverted. It is possible to determine the strategy and tactic to be followed in such relations by following the target country's people and how they get involved in the political processes, their sensitivity to the

⁹ See, Vamık Volkan, **Kanbağı: Etnik Gururdan Etnik Teröre**, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1999. As Volkan also specifies, “... *Although war between Turkey and Greece is being avoided, a permanent solution for the Turkish-Greek relations has not been found. This relation cannot be understood solely by considering the real world factors like the economical, military, legislative and political situations. This is because the real world factors have become too “psychological” they have mingled (consciously or unconsciously) with the past historical victories and traumas regarding which perceptions, thoughts, fantasies, sentiments were shared. The process of the birth of the modern Turkish and Greek nationalities has also affected their contemporary nationalism.*” Volkan, **Kanbağı**...p.141. “*Turkey and Greece need leaders who can be sufficiently at ease psychologically when facing the indefinite issues. Thus the leaders will realize that although the two countries may not reach a political accord and this may increase the preoccupation it is not a matter of life or death.*” Volkan, **Kanbağı**...p.161.

¹⁰ In case of a long-term unsolvable dispute and conflict between the two countries, the fact that a solution could not be found can cause the two parties to adapt themselves to the way they perceive the identities and intentions of each other. As Ayman also specified, “*The fact that they focus on positions instead of focusing on the objective interests or actual needs of the two parties increases the probability of ending up with what we call ‘the self fulfilling prophecy’.* The meaning of this is that, one of the parties acts in the belief that the latter party is trying to weaken or destroy its existence, even if the latter party does not have such intentions, with its actions and the fear that this will come true, it drives the latter party to actually behave that way. The provocative actions that the Greece and Greek Cypriot Government did, putting forth as a pretence the assumptive Turkish threat, can be given as an example of attitudes that are undertaken to actualise the prophecy by the former party.” Ayman, “**Uluslararası İlişkilerde...**”, pp. 186-187.

problems and the political moves. When this issue is handled with respect to the internal dimension, it can be observed that the governments of the countries have relied on the reciprocal perceptions when they needed to publicize their policies regarding the target country. In this case, the controversies have been brought up and there is a modification in the adjectives that are being used; for example, “enemy”, “source of threat”, “aggressor”, “invader”, “barbaric”, “uncompromising”, “clamorous” and “country that impedes the national interests”.

In this article, the issues and events that have caused the two countries to conflict and go into crisis are to be analysed and the way the politicians and national public opinions’ perceptions have been effective in the decision making process of foreign policies, as well as how these are reflected to their tactics will be examined. The attempts of forming a dialogue after the crisis and the collaborative efforts within the framework of CBM will be focused upon.

If the Cyprus issue is laid aside it can be said that the problems between the two countries condense mostly on the following issues:

- The Kardak Rocks crisis and territorial water boundaries
- S-300 missile systems being placed in Cyprus
- Greece-PKK-Öcalan relations
- Greece’s influence on Turkey-EU relations

Adding to the problems above, there are also disputes coming up due to different perspectives and interests. However in 1999 a positive development reshaping both countries’ perceptions is noted.

Namely the negative and positive developments in the relations may be counted as follows:

- The opinions of G. Papandreou on recognizing identity of the Western Thrace’s Turkish minorities.
- The declaration that Kardak and the placement of S-300 missiles in Cyprus were among mistakes
- The detention of some Greek bureaucrats and government officials right after their illegal support to PKK and Öcalan has been announced

- During the İzmit Gulf and Athens earthquakes a full civil and individual aid movement and its repercussions were marked in the political circles
- The increasing positive effects of both public opinions in both countries upon on their politic leaders' discourses
- The declaration of Greece's full support on Turkey's candidacy for full membership to the EU
- The endeavour to solve the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate's request on reopening the Theological School of Halki Island and the settlement on establishing a relevant department at Istanbul University.¹¹

How does this situation affect the relations? The relations, depending on the nature of the problem existing between Turkey and Greece, that have come to the edge of war from time to time, the tensions between the two countries considerably decreased. Both countries have mentioned this warming up and softening of the relationships. Furthermore, it is considered to be the first step in opening up the dialogue process that was to amend for the lack of trust encountered in solving problems.

Since a long past it has been iterated that the governments that genuinely desired to find solutions and gain progress but also had no consider the reactions of the opposing political parties and their public opinions. In his context, the recovery in the Turkish – Greek relations has been deficient for the governments of both countries. However, he foreign policy profits and relationships as a whole were focused and indexed on the developments of the problems encountered in their relations. When the multiple interests of Turkey and Greece

¹¹ In the Theological School of Halki Island, in 1971 the decision of the Constitutional Court to render the private schools part of the government and its being closed down because there is no counterpart to such a school in the Turkish law resulted in difficulties in educating clergymen for the Orthodox religion. For a long time the request to open again the Theological School of Halki Island was expressed and in October 1999 a view to facilitate this education process of the religious men was presented to the press. According to this view, The Council of Higher Education has decided to found a department named World Religions and Cultures in the Istanbul University, Divinity Faculty, thus forming the required structure to educate the clergy for the Orthodox religion. See; Gönül Hanbay, "Ruhban Okuluna Akademik Formül", **Milliyet**, October 20, 1999, p.19; Yasemin Çongar, "Heybeliada Jesti ABD'yi Sevindirdi", **Milliyet**, October 21, 1999, p.14.

were taken into consideration, somehow both countries considered each other of vital importance. This situation is also being improved now.

In essence, despite the softening of the character of relationships there is hardly any difference in the political/legislative views and evaluations. What has changed is only approaching these views and relaying the results to the public opinion. In order to be able to talk of a radical change in the Turkish-Greek relationships, the change of style should be supported. This change is related strictly to the sincere efforts of both parties to enter into constructive relations to bring fair solutions to the problems. In fact, 1999-2000 to accomplish the change of style in both parties were displayed explicitly. Decisions to exert constructive effort on issues involving economy, culture, tourism, education, terrorism and environment were taken. On the other hand, with the Helsinki Summit wherein the candidacy process of Turkey to the EU has initiated, the expectation was iterated that until the year 2004 the problems between the two countries would be solved in dialogue or the recognition of the International Court of Justice's authority.

The issues that caused the Turkish-Greek relationships to shift from conflict to concord were the optimistic developments in the Kardak problem, S-300 missiles crisis, Greek-PKK relations, and Turkey-EU relations.

The Kardak Crisis

During the evolution of this event, which almost brought the two countries to the brink of war, it could be observed that both countries discussed the issue and presented it to the public opinion as "national case", "national sovereignty dispute" and thus the issue gained actual momentum and necessitated military measures.

As for the national territorial water boundaries, it is a technical issue and mileage on Aegean Sea in this respect is still uncertain, it is also vital it determines the national borders the sovereignty regimes.

Upon the events which followed the grounding of the Turkish freighter, *Figen Akat* on December 25, 1995 on Kardak Rocks region it becomes apparent that the sovereignty of this area is not determined within mutual acts. The Greek ships had claimed that the region was within the territorial waters of Greece and they had offered to help the *Figen Akat* ship crew. The Turkish captain claiming the area was in the Turkish territorial waters, had refused their offer. Finally the Turkish insurance company had attempted to rescue the ship.

In the meantime Greece issued Turkey a note on the 26 December 1995, claiming that the ship in question was in the territorial waters of Greece and requested the rescue operations be stopped. On the very same day, Turkey sent Greece a reply and the affirmations were denied.¹² While the salvage operations were going on, the Greek boats tried to hinder the operation, when a trailer tried to rescue the ship by pulling it ashore. The trailer's rope was stuck in the swivel of the ship and the ship finally was freed when the crew cut the rope and sailed towards the Turkish territorial waters. Later the ship was towed to Güllük Port¹³

When the official notes exchanged between the Foreign Ministries of the two states are studied, it is interesting notice that both countries had justifications of legislative and politic nature that validated their affirmations on the area being in their own territorial waters. On the other hand Turkey had stated in the diplomatic note of January 26, 1996 that they were ready to determine the status of the many islands, islets and rocks in the Aegean Sea the status of which had not been determined yet. Greece refused the proposal in the diplomatic note of February 16, 1996. After this stage the issue of the Kardak Rocks has been a source of interest for the public opinion and both I Turkey and in Greece.¹⁴

¹² For diplomatic notes, see; Ali Kurumahmut (editor) **Ege'de Temel Sorun Egemenliği Tartışmalı Adalar**, Ankara: TTK Publications, 1998, annexes: 20-21; Yüksel İnan-Sertaç Başeren, **Status of Kardak Rocks/Kardak Kayalıklarının Statüsü**, Ankara: (PY), 1997.

¹³ The events, which occurred during the Figen Akat's grounding on the Kardak Rocks and its rescuing attempts, are told differently in both Turkey and Greece. For example: "...*finally, in agreement with the Turkish Company that owned the ship, the Figen Akat was set free with the aid of a Greek tugboat, owned by the company Matsas Star, and towed to the Turkish port of Güllük*". "Turkish Foreign Policy and Practice As Evidenced By the Recent Turkish Claims to İmia Rocks", <http://mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/imiaen.htm> (02/11/1999); "*Three assault boats came alongside the board of the ship. A Greek soldier boarded the ship and with his rifle and gun he told us to give an end to this discharging event, so the salvation of the Figen Akat was stopped. One Greek rescuer boarded the ship and rescued the ship in 25 minutes by tying a steel rope to the ship. In normal conditions the ship should be towed to a Greek island.*" "Kardak Krizi", <http://www.softdesign.com.tr/32.gun/97-98/dosya21.html> (02/10/1999); "... *A Turkish ship owner rescues his ship with a brilliant idea of gathering a Greek company and a Turkish company and the salvation which was carried out in an unknown way occurred at the place which is named as our "territory"*", Mümtaz Soysal, "Fener", **Hürriyet**, February 2, 1996. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/ade/aded/aded1/3.htm> (20/09/1999).

¹⁴ In 1996, January 19, after the establishment of the Simitis Government in Greece, it can be seen that the government is under the pressure of the public opinion. It is understood from the news like "The Government is giving Greek land to the Turks" in the newspapers that

The Rise of Tension in the Kardak Issue

While the diplomatic relations between the two countries proceeded, the sovereignty claims of both countries were displayed physically as well and according to the issue was taken as a “national case” and its nature changed from “dispute” to “conflict”¹⁵

The problem worsened when the priest of Kalymnos Island together with the mayor placed the Greek flag on the Rocks with their families and the Greek TV channel named Antenna broadcasted this ceremony on 26 January 1996.¹⁶ After the event appeared on television the Turkish media boosted the issue and two journalists from *Hürriyet* landed on the island with a helicopter, replacing the Greek flag with a Turkish one. When this strife for the flags was then shown on television and the pressure of the public opinion in both countries augmented. Eventually this resulted in the harshening of the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On 28 January 1996, the Greek government could not resist the pressure any longer and sent a military team to replace the Turkish flag; the team was loaded with heavy armament and launched on the island. The same day the Turkish Ambassador in Athens was invited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was informed that anybody coming to closer the island, would be target to fire.

Finally the political and military leaders came to the conclusion that the Greek military presence and Greek flag were to be removed from the island. The reaction to be shown was to be directed with utmost care and delicacy so as not to give way to a battle. As a result, taking heed of what İnal Batu said¹⁷ the Turkish commandos landed on the smallest of

are close to Arsenis, who is his opponent. “Kardak Krizi”, <http://www.softdesign.com.tr/32gun/97-98-dosya/dosya21.html>, (02/01/1999).

¹⁵ Disagreement is used here for “*the superficial or temporary interest differences between the two parts*” and conflict is used for the problems “*which cannot be negotiated and resolved*” For this subject see; Ayman, “Uluslararası İlişkilerde...”, p.174.

¹⁶ Michael Robert Hickok shows the 20 of January as the date of the visiting of the Kalimnos Mayor to the Kardak Rocks and the 26 of January as the date of this event’s being known by both the press and the public. See; M.R.Hickok, “Falling Toward War in the Aegean: A Case Study of the Imia/Kardak Affair”, <http://dodcerp.org/proceedings/DOCS/wed00000/wed00044.htm> (23/09/1999).

¹⁷ See; “Kardak Krizi”, <http://www.softdesign.com.tr/32gun/92-93dosya/dosya1.html> for the views and the evaluations of the political, military, and bureaucratic groups about the intervention which was to be done to the Kardak Rocks.

the Kardak Rocks which was not carrying the Greek flag. The plan was carried out with success and the Turkish commandos landed on the second rock on the 30 January 1996. This intervention, though seeming to equalize the initiative of both countries with respect to the severeness of the case, also carried the risk of hot battle. Nevertheless it could prevent a “zero sum” game.¹⁸ Finally, USA intervened during the rise of the crisis and through diplomatic means tried to bring the situation back to its former status (*status que ante*) and succeeded in its endeavour.¹⁹ The attempt which rendered this return to the *status quo* possible, was the landing of the military team on the second rock and the US declaration was that “*in case of not opening fire to the Turkish soldiers there is order not to open fire to the Greek military team and in the Greek military force withdraws its presence and the Greek flag, the Turkish military forces will do the same*”, the declaration from USA stipulating: “*the party that shoots the first bullet will find the USA against it*” was also efficient.

The National Public Opinion and the Approaches of the Governments

During the crisis in Greece, C. Simitis had just come out of the elections and had become the political leader. In Turkey then Tansu Çiller was Prime Minister and there ruled the coalition government constituted by Çiller’s DYP and SHP where Deniz Baykal was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the leader of SHP. Both Turkey and Greece were caught unexpectedly without having time to prepare national thesis of the subject. So much that when the discussions on which country held the sovereignty rights of the Rocks within both countries were stipulated that the Rocks was under their sovereignty and within territorial

¹⁸ As the possibility of the loss of one of the parties because of the profit of the other part will prevent the permanent solution of the contradiction between two parties, the contradiction could be solved “temporarily” by the intervention of a “third party”. If Kardak Rocks are not formed of two separate rocks, and because of this, if Turkish soldiers are not allowed to step on the island, a battle can possibly take place.

¹⁹ In the morning of January 31, the efforts to find a remedy to this situation were carried out between President Clinton and President Simitis, Secretary of State W. Christopher and Assistant Secretary of State R. Holbrooke with Foreign Minister Pangalos, and the Ministers of Defence Arsenis and Perry, If it is stated that all the disagreement and problems were solved as a result of the evaluations that were carried out in the Greece’s National Security Council. It is also mentioned that both parties agreed to withdraw their forces from the Rocks and return to their position before this status quo (*status quo ante*). See; Krateros Ioannou, “A Tale of Two Islets”, **Thesis**, Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spring 97, Vol. I, Issue 1.; “Turkish Foreign Policy and Practice As Evidenced By The Recent Turkish Claims To The Imia Rocks”, <http://mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/imiaen.htm> (02/11/1999).

boundaries. The reactions were at maximum level. When conceived from this point of view, it was clearly observed that at the process of decision-making, the perception of the political decision makers and their level of perception were extremely effective. The way the dispute was perceived was effective to convert almost into a conflict. Here the effect of the political figures of the countries and the public opinions were witnessed very vividly. For example when Simitis won the elections and founded the new government on the 19 January 1996²⁰ he was accused his political rival Arsenis and opponent newspapers for “offering *a present of the Greek land to the Turks*” and created great impact on the government. During the crisis, it was observed that the Prime Minister Simitis and the Minister of Defence Arsenis, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pangalos and the Hellenic General Staff Admiral Lymberis were all at separate stances. According to Arsenis, “*The Greek Foreign Ministry had asked the Defence Ministry to increase supervision and attention to activities in the area of the islets [Kardak Rocks] under the direction of Admiral Lymberis and the Hellenic General Staff*”.²¹ Their raising the Greek flag on the island followed this request. During a radio speech Pangalos had delivered on 26th of January 1996 he had stated that Turkey was putting forth these sovereignty claims for the first time, and went on to underline the fact that Turkey had not demanded Greek territory and had insistently put forth the fact that the sovereignty of the Kardak Rocks was not definite. On the radio broadcast of the 28 January 1996 he stipulated, “*Turkey was leading on a new provocation for Greece*”.

At the press conference by the Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller on 30 January 1996 she proclaimed Turkey’s opinions on the matter. She had abandoned previous views on the sovereignty of Turkey over the Kardak Rocks, and claimed that the Rocks were within Turkish territory, also emphasizing that the records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs justified this claim and validated it.

It was apparent that the simple naval accident of *Figen Akat* gradually turned into a violation of sovereignty rights and territorial demand issue and finally both sides conceived

²⁰ After the resignation of A. Papandreou on 15 January, 1996, Costas Simitis, the former Minister of Trade and Industry became the Prime Minister having majority of the voters against Akis Tsochatzopoulos in the election which took place in PASOK Parliament Group. But he could not be the leader of the PASOK. Due to this, this situation caused some conflict both in the government and in PASOK. Arsenis, the Minister of Defence managed to turn the situation to his advantage by criticizing Simitis’ approach to Turkey.

²¹ Hickok, “Falling Toward war...”

this fact. While the diplomatic endeavours were continuing each country created a national thesis out of the incident and tried to validate it by creating situations to support it through their own means and the media has facilitated this task. The issue that under normal circumstances could be considered to be a violation of the national territorial water boundaries or search and rescue (SAR) responsibility areas (in either case the fact that the Rocks are under the sovereignty of one country or the other has no significance in the context of SAR) and solved by forming a commission of the two countries' experts to analyse and take decisions concerning the case, the reaction was treated at the top level military methods.²²

In fact all to be done in this issue was to enter into a discussion regarding the sovereignty. Unfortunately it is Greece and not Turkey who controverted the situation. In the reciprocal perception of the case “the perception of the realities” and “the perception of the problem” have to be taken up respectively. However this has not been achieved at that specific stage of the matter. Greece opposed the requests for a dialogue under prejudice started discussing the sovereignty rights of many other little islands like Kardak. the Turkish government naturally refused leaving the sovereignty rights of these islands which were not determined to belong to either party by any treaty so far. It in fact would lead to the vital interests of Turkey in the Aegean Sea, and of course was inadmissible.

On the other hand, the Kardak Rocks crisis is interesting with respect to the decision-making and perception processes. After the exchange of diplomatic notes the institutions in both countries and have stressed the importance of the issue. For instance, the Naval Force Commander G. Erkaya expressed his opinions in the meeting held at the General Staff thus: *“A ship has ran aground and there is a sovereignty problem in the region due to a diplomatic note sent from the Greek government, if the issue can not be resolved through diplomatic means it may necessitate military intervention.”*²³ On the 28 January the Turkish Ambassador

²² The point mentioned here is that Turkey and Greece have not signed a pact about the policy related to the entire Aegean Sea and due to this, there is political gap about their sovereignty areas and the borders of these areas. The situation of the sharing of sovereignty between these two countries is being told here with the word “normally”. With this aspect, Kardak Crisis has become an event which helped these national sovereignty conflicts to be revealed. It is natural that according to the Greece situation before the crisis was “normal”.

²³ “Kardak Krizi”, <http://www.softdesign.com.tr/32gun/97-99-dosya/dosya21.html> (02/10/1999)

in Athens Ümit Pamir was invited to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was informed that the Kardak Rocks belonged to Greece and that in case of landing on these Rocks the soldiers would open fire. Upon this proclamation on the 29 January top-level meetings were held in Turkey Turkey's stance and opinion on the issue were determined.

According Güven Erkaya: *“There was tension at the meeting, because the matter had risen to such extent that it necessitated immediate action within the course of one or two days, be it either by using diplomatic means or military ones. The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs seemed decided in recurring to the latter solution if the first does not solve the case, and when the possibility of recurring to military forces came to the foreground the implications of what might be the consequences also hung in the air and this created tension which dominated all... A helicopter did some research on the Kardak Rocks and the information it brought affirmed the presence of soldiers in the island. At the meeting first the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller turned to Onur Öymen and asked ‘is our documentation strong? Does the island juridically belong to us?’ the answer the Prime Minister got was, “Yes it is strong”*

...Later the question of “how important are the Kardak Rocks for Turkey” was asked. The diplomats explained that these Rocks were exemplary of 150 other rocks in similar political position. The discussion expanded from two rocks to all the rocks and islets in the Aegean, to the continental shelves and even as far as to whom the islands belonged. Underlying the problem of to whom the Kardak Rocks belonged was the problem of the 12 nautical miles...thus the possessor of the Rocks would also be the authority in determining the borders of the Aegean.”²⁴

When scenarios regarding the reactions were being discussed all the possibilities that could be faced in case of military intervention and that such intervention could result in a small battle were also considered. In case this solution was to be preferred the heavy responsibilities and consequences of the action were apparent. İnal Batu's proposal of sending soldiers to the smaller rock on which there were no Greek soldiers settled is worth mentioning. The fact that there were two Rocks and that the soldiers were positioned only on one of them offered Turkey considerable lift to reach a decision. According to Inal Batu *“The*

²⁴ Kardak Krizi

strength of this perception lay in its diminishing the risk of war visibly and it creates equity of position and initiative.”

Even though this proposition was not foreseen applicable in the first meeting, at the second one held at the General Staff on the 30 January, it was noted worthwhile at that critical political position. “...*First we land on the smaller island in which there are no Greek soldiers, then the following day, if there are no political advancements the Turkish soldiers would position themselves on the Rocks in which the Greek soldiers were posted. This last possibility, presented Turkey with a great advantage. Most important of all, Turkey gained time and the equality in the international arena was rendered.*”²⁵

While preparations are being made according to this plan, Greece was getting prepared for reaction that Turkey might display; in fact, when it was understood that the Turkish soldiers had landed on the second islet, discussions on the issue diverted in favor of the Turks and Greek political and military leaders had started to discuss whether the reaction was to be diplomatic or military.²⁶

The S-300 Missile Crisis

The second issue to be assessed within the framework of security and threats between the two countries is the declaration of the Greek Cypriot Government for the purchase S-300 missiles and deploy them in Cyprus.²⁷ When we look into the crisis and its development, within the Joint Defence Doctrine of the Greek Cypriot Government, within the endeavour to increase their military presence and the desire to situate the missiles purchased for this specific purpose in Cyprus, can be regarded as a tactic endeavour as well as trying to reach a strategic target, at least to some extent.

All through the crisis Greece has tried to legitimise the whole case as “self-defence” in the eyes of the Greek and international public opinions, trying to draw their cautiousness away from the peace that has been maintained since 1974 and tried to keep the tension within the framework of invasion and mistrust. It is clear that the peace and cease-fire conditions of 1974 are valid in Cyprus, and there is no possibility to invert the military balance of power in

²⁵ Kardak Krizi

²⁶ See also; Hickok, “Falling Toward War...:”, **Kardak Krizi....**

favour of Greece and the Greek Cypriot Government. This is so because the military superiority of Turkey in Cyprus is unquestionable. Furthermore, it has been expressed that in case the S-300 missiles were to be placed in Cyprus, Turkey would not remain a spectator and counter remedies would be found. Turkey's view, over the situation, especially when considered under the principles of the Joint Defence Doctrine, signed between Greece and the Greek Cypriot Government, is directly related to the armament activities carried out in Cyprus. The air base that was being built in Paphos, the naval base that was being built in Limassol and the S-300 missiles that Greece wanted to place in Cyprus, are all directly related to the endeavour to change the balance of power in the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea in favour of Greece. Similarly, the Crete, Rhodes and Cyprus chain constitute a link that could render the south of Turkey a front for them in case of a Turkish-Greek confrontation. When the warplanes which Greece keeps in Paphos and the S-300 missile systems that are supposed to provide protection for those are considered, the armament is no longer for defence purposes but menacing. In fact, when the expenditures made for this purpose and the military systems that the Greek Cypriot Government tried to procure, Turkey proclaimed anxiety that Greece might ruin the peace which was preserved for 25 years in Cyprus.²⁸

The declarations made by the Greek Ministry of Defence have indicate that the reason underlying the placement of the S-300 missiles in Cyprus was to be able to put the presence of Turkish soldiers on the island to negotiation ground. Within this perspective another target was the demilitarisation of the Island and then realizing Enosis through bringing Cyprus under the protection of EU/NATO, thus impeding the intervention of Turkey and annulling its position of protector.

On the other hand, when the attempt to place the S-300 missiles and the underlying reasons are levied with the defence and co-operation pacts that Greece had signed with Syria, Iran and Armenia they encountered risky for the security of Turkey.²⁹ Turkey and these three

²⁷ For S-300 missiles crisis, see also; Gülден Ayman, **Tırmandırma Siyasetine Bir Örnek: S-300 Krizi**, Ankara: ASAM Yayınları, 2000.

²⁸ It is stated that Greek Cypriot Government has spent approximately 450 million dollars on armament.

²⁹ In a similar way, it is possible for Greece to evaluate Turkey's relations with Balkan countries like Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria as Turkey is trying to find some forces in favour of it, and due to this, Greece may begin to consider about its national interests and security. The point that should not be disregarded here is that, although Turkey is one of

neighbouring countries have been encountering serious problems. Particularly upon the acceptance of the Baku-Ceyhan Petrol Pipe Line project³⁰ Turkey's economic and political interests have gained sensitivity, security and concerns accordingly augmented.

On the other hand, when the attempt to the placement the S-300 missiles to Crete instead of Cyprus have not eased the heavy concerns and preoccupations of Turkey. In this case the delicate position was diverted to the Aegean Sea, Turkey had to improve the radar system and reconsider her defence priorities in the Aegean, where a new armament composition would began. In this respect Greece has proclaimed that it would not activate any of the missiles that it placed in Crete but that they were there for storage. This proclamation was meant to keep the present balance of power intact. With respect to the reciprocal perceptions, after Greece announced that the S-300 missiles would be placed in Cyprus Turkey brought up the issue to the military level of security, upon Greece and the Greek Cypriot Government backed not to create actual conflict.

The Greek Relation to PKK/Öcalan

Being encountered as a problem in the Turkish and Greek relations, the Greek relations to PKK has started with these groups were allowed to organise in Greece. Moreover the Greek military and political offices were following a supporting policy that could be defined to be guiding the terrorist groups. These facts have provided justifications to Turkey's preoccupations as to the security of its national prosperity and territorial integrity. The success that Turkey accomplished in the Southeast Anatolia in combating the separatist/terrorism has also had political reverberations and in 1998 one of the group leaders Şemdin Sakık was captured in Iraq, later followed by Abdullah Öcalan (the actual leader of the PKK) who was captured in Kenya after an operation.³¹

the Balkan countries like Greece, Greece does not have the same relations with Middle East, Black Sea/ Caucasias. For an analyse on the Turkey's security priorities, see, Şükrü Elekdağ, "2 ½ War Strategy", **Perception**, March-May 1996, Vol. III, Number 4.

³⁰ On this subject see; Şükrü Elekdağ, "Atina Neyin Peşinde?" **Milliyet**, June 22, 1998, p. 19. November 1999, in the OSCE Istanbul Summit, Turkey, Azerbaijan and the USA signed the act related to Bakü-Ceyhan oil conduct project.

³¹ After being arrested, Semdin Sakık stated that they took help from Greece. "Greece is the main supporter of the PKK. The Greek Cypriot is just a detail. Greece gave us 80 rockets. Some people from the Greek Parliament came and a general also came from Greece. These were shown on the Iranian and Greek television channels." Güneri Cıvaoğlu, "PKK'ya 80 Füze", **Milliyet**, March 11, 1999, p. 17.

The capturing process of these two important names in the PKK has also rendered visible the international links of the rest of two terrorist groups. After the capture of Sakık, the leader Öcalan had to flee from Syria due to the incessant political pressure exerted by Turkey. The countries in which Ocalan could reside were Syria, Armenia, Russia, Iran, Greece and Italy. Turkey has requested that these countries would not give shelter to Öcalan. This process prevailed the fact that these terrorist actions which occurred in Turkey were of international nature. While trying to combat against the separatism threatening its territorial integrity and national security, Turkey also had to face international pressures quite frequently. As a matter of fact in this struggle Turkey was often alone. This negligence could be understandable when the positions of Russia, Syria, Armenia and Iraq were considered. However in terms of the approaches those countries such as Italy, Greece, Holland, Belgium and Germany took, were out of sense since these countries and Turkey joined in the same alliance. Moreover, these countries have tried to impede Turkey's long struggle in maintaining her integrity and national security instead of supporting her.

Especially within the framework of problems encountered with Greece, the response that Turkey gave to this countries' attitude rendered no result for a considerable period of time and Greece, officially proclaimed that it did not consider PKK as a terrorist organization and added that they respected their struggle in terms of human rights and democracy.³² Indeed, some political figures in Greece have tried to deny their relations with Abdullah Öcalan and PKK. For instance Constantin Stefanopoulos (The President of the Greek Republic) in the book entitled "The Greek Paradox", puts his remarks as follows:

*"Greece is involved in no malevolent action against Turkey. The assumptions that our country supports the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in an active way are unfounded and for this reason Turkey could not find any standing proof to justify its accusations."*³³

³² For example, in 1995, most of the newspaper articles put emphasis on the relations between Greece and the PKK and they also mentioned Turkey's reaction to this situation. "Çiller Atina'ya Rest Çekti". **Cumhuriyet**, July 5, 1995, p. 10, Lale Sariibrahimoğlu, "Ankara Yunanistan'ı Teşhir Edecek" **Cumhuriyet**, July 5, 1995, p. 10, İsmail Soysal, "Atina'nın Tutumuna Seyirci Kalınmaz", **Cumhuriyet**, July 5, 1995, p. 10.

³³ Konstantin Stefanopoulos, "Yunan Dış Politika Meseleleri", in Graham T. Allison-Kalipso Nikolaydis, eds., **Yunan Paradoksu**, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 1999, p. 175.

Similarly, Greece rejected Turkey's accusations on this matter insistently but the fact that Öcalan was taking shelter in the Greek Embassy in Kenya was disclosed and Greece had to accept the accusation.³⁴

The President of the Turkish Republic, Süleyman Demirel, proclaimed Greece to be a "rogue state" after Öcalan turned up in the Greek Embassy and also added that Greece did not respect the international laws by taking place among the countries supporting terrorism and that such actions were not befitting to a country which considered traitors as ally and friend. Furthermore, he went on to say that unless Greece desisted from this policy Turkey would go on to demonstrate the rightful response by searching for its legitimate rights with respect to the principles of the UN. The President also underlined the following:

Greece which is among the greatest supporters of PKK should be added to the list of countries that "support terrorism" and has also added that "Turkey would use its legitimate right of self defence which results from the international laws if Greece did not stop these actions." He then went on to say that "Greece has offered shelter to the PKK terrorist who are looking for a refuge and is offering them training facilities and logistic support. Greece has never criticised PKK's terrorist actions instead a short time ago it has proclaimed that it did not consider PKK and Öcalan as terrorists. Lastly before he was captured in Kenya, the aid that was given to him by Greece, admitted by the Greek authorities themselves is open proof of the current situation. With these developments Greece and its accomplice Greek Cypriots have been caught on the deed."

*"Such a country can only be defined as an 'rouge state' Nevertheless we want to give Greece another chance. Within this framework I invite the Greek authorities to respect by the obligations that every country, which is respectful to the legislation and civil law, should do: abide by the constrictions of the international law. If, in spite of this, they prefer to continue with their actions then, we reserve our legitimate right of self defence which the international law grants us."*³⁵

³⁴ In Greece, the Simitis Government put forward that the groups supporting Öcalan are not from the government and they wanted the ones who were responsible for this action to be judged. Meanwhile, Pangalos, the Minister of Foreign Affairs had to resign.

³⁵ Mustafa Balbay, "Atina Terör Destekçisi", **Cumhuriyet**, February 23, 1999, p. 1-17, "Atina'ya Savaş Uyarısı", **Milliyet**, February 23, 1999, p. 16. Demirel used the adjective "rogue state" for Greece in his statement. This word can be translated to Turkish as

According to Şükrü Elekdağ, (a prominent ex-ambassador of Turkey) who evaluated Demirel's speech against Greece, as follows *“More than a heavy warning tone and it was almost an ultimatum. Turkey is perfectly justified in addressing Greece as such because the UN laws regarding the struggle against terrorism and the decisions regarding the definition of assault which are specified in 2/4 article define Greece to be actually and legislatively assaulting Turkey by supporting a terrorist group which aims to destroy the territorial integrity of Turkey.”*³⁶

The comments of Sami Kohen, a Turkish columnist, states that the following expressions taken from Demirel's speech indicate the following implications and meaning:

The lines where Greece is included among countries that *“support and give shelter to terrorism”* and *“reserve our legitimate right of self defence which the international law grants us.”* Also come to mean, *“in case Greece persists in maintaining the same attitude, Turkey will consider this a casus belli.”*³⁷

The discovery of Öcalan's relation with Greece has demonstrated that the accusations put forward by Turkey were not unfounded. In fact, the press declarations of Öcalan and the confessions that he made during his trial openly exhibited how after fleeing from Syria, they have received help from the Greek intelligence service (EYP) and political figures. In the press there were different evaluations of the matter, nonetheless, in Greece the government has declared that the circumstances had developed beyond their initiative and has applied to court for the penalization of those who were considered responsible. As a result the Minister of Foreign Affairs, T. Pangalos and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Papadopoulos as well as the Minister of Public Order, Petsalnikos have resigned. The report that was prepared by the Attorney of Athens regarding illegally bringing of Abdullah Öcalan to Greece was such:

“Especially Öcalan's being brought illegally to Greece and being offered shelter here may be regarded as an act of enmity against Turkey. Turkey's thesis of this being cause for

“yasadışı devlet” or “haydut devlet”. After that, this word has been used for the states which used terror as a mean of policy and which do not obey the rules of the international law.

³⁶ Şükrü Elekdağ, “Yunanistan Ayağını Denk Al”, **Milliyet**, February 23, 1999, p. 16.

³⁷ Sami Kohen, “Dış Politika'da Sertleşme”, **Milliyet**, February 23, 1999, p. 16. Also see; Hasan Cemal “Demirel'den Yunanistan'a Ağır, Hatta Son Uyarı”, **Milliyet**, February 23, 1999, p. 17; Güneri Civaoglu, “Suç Ortaklığı”, **Milliyet**, February 23, 1999, p. 17.

waging war is already known. These actions have not been done within the knowledge of the government and they are against the government thesis, which states that Öcalan's coming will be harmful on a national basis and therefore shelter will not be given to him. This action has caused Greece to stand in a very difficult position and it is only natural for the Turkish population to resent Greece and for tension to be built between the two countries."³⁸ In the framework of reciprocal perception it can be collected that Athenian Law Court has perceived the negative impact in the Turkish public opinion of such an action and has also conceived the probable results of such an issue.

If we look at the developments that took place in Greece, after the capture of Öcalan, the declarations of those who were accused of having taken part in this were interesting; for instance the retired Admiral A. Naksakis, after his defence has declared that the Simitis Government was to blame, *"I brought Ocalan but I feel remorse, I was the involuntary cause of his arrest...The government that caused the arrest of Ocalan is now trying to discharge the responsibilities of the deed to the lower level authorities."*³⁹ This declaration renders it possible to arrive at similar deductions with Öcalan's words. In his declaration Ocalan tells how on the 9 October he fled from Syria with a Kurdish representative who knew Greek, named Ayfer Kaya the code name of whom was Rozerin: *"...When we arrived in Greece, the former expressions that they were friends of PKK changed and they behaved entirely differently. They informed me that either I was to go back to where I had come from or go wherever I wanted. Meanwhile Rozerin got in touch with Dimitris from the Greek service [EYP]... On the 29 of January we left Russia...Badovas and Naksakis assured me of my security and told me I would be accepted in Greece. We came to Greece...but Dimitris who was in charge became nervous again when he saw me and told me that I would be sent away directly."*⁴⁰ Probably after years of strong support Öcalan regarded Greece as a natural ally.

³⁸ "Türkiye'ye Düşmanca Davranıldı", **Cumhuriyet**, March 13, 1999, p. 11. In the report in question, it was also mentioned that the retired admiral, Naksakis played a role in Öcalan's bringing in Greece and it is told that *"Kalenderidis immediately told this demand of help to Haralambos Stavrakakis, the leader of EYP and Stavrakakis immediately told this to the Ministry of Public Order and to the police to take some measures. After that although both EYP and the police knew that Öcalan was about to be brought in Greece, it is understood that the necessary measures were not taken. Due to this, some negative events affecting the country took place"*.

³⁹ Taki Berberakis, "Soruşturma Başladı", **Milliyet**, February 24, 1999, p. 16.

⁴⁰ Tolga Şardan, "Nairobi'de Çatışabilirdik", **Milliyet**, February 28, 1999, p. 21.

Similarly the understanding that ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend’ was adapted by Greece and PKK actions were supported, but since the peril of the support being considered a Turkish-Greek problem or cause of battle have made Greece change its policy. This change was naturally regarded by the PKK as “treason”. For instance, Ş. Dilan Kılıç, one of the escorts of Öcalan in his flight to Kenya has criticised Simitis in Athens in a press conference: “Öcalan has been hand over to Turkey with an international conspiracy and those who were the accomplices were CIA, MOSSAD, Kenya, Russia and Greece” also adding that “On the Greek front of the conspiracy the heroes of the conspiracy were declared to be the three resigned ministers and the Greek Intelligence Service’ Chief.” She went on to say : “We are dubious of Simitis’ moral values and level he has indulged in immoral deeds, Simitis and Pangalos have deliberately handed Öcalan over.”⁴¹

According to another evaluation “everybody thinks that the whole case is a fiasco and that we have handed over Öcalan to Turkey. But those who can reflect calmly can see that the government succumbed to the over nationalist groups within the government party and the intelligence services, and that Öcalan was brought to Greece with their impositions. PASOK has acted under the influence of the sins which it had committed in the years of its foundation”... “in 1997 the letter of invitation for Öcalan was signed by 75 New Democracy Party members but now this party is no longer in favour of supporting the Kurds just because they are against the Turks and they know well that the consequences of offering shelter to Öcalan will be heavy.”⁴²

The Washington Ambassador of Greece, Aleksandros Filon had a meeting with the USA Under-secretary of State M. Grossman. According to journalist, Çongar who reported this speech “...Filon said something else; ‘The Greek Government has great sympathy for the Kurd cause’ It is for this sympathy that the ambassador claims the operation was held in secret. According to him Athens intended to get rid of Öcalan by sending him to a third country. Extradition to Turkey was not possible due to the capital punishment that the constitution had. But if it were declared that Öcalan was trying to take refuge in Greece there could be great tension between Athens-Ankara. In his own words, ‘many people would have

⁴¹ Taki Berberakis, “Simitis’e Ağır Hakaretler”, **Milliyet**, February 28, 1999, p. 23.

⁴² Zafer Arapkirli, “Apo’ya Destek Atina’yı Böldü”, **Milliyet**, February 28, 1999, p. 23.

pressed for Öcalan to be offered the right to take refuge in Greece but we were determined not to.”⁴³

The separatist warfare which caused the loss of ten thousands of lives was openly displayed for the international public opinion and also Greece’s support to this movement was revealed. This has also affected the image of Greece in Turkish public opinion and at least for that period Greece’s attitude towards Turkey could hardly be considered friendly.⁴⁴ In Greece, after having been accused of these deeds, the government tried to indicate that this was not a government policy and that those who were involved in it were punished. Consequently Prime Minister Simitis had the chance to clear the political figures within PASOK and members of the government who supported views, and policies against Turkey. He removed those who were involved in bringing of Öcalan to Greece and formed a new group, thus also consolidating the position of the ruling party. The political leaders of both countries regarded this development as a warning for a transition to co-operation based on mutual trust. Turkey was pleased with the reaction of Greek government and also offered support to the Simitis government’s efforts improvement of relations between Turkey and Greece. Upon these developments Turkey has thus perceived the political structure of Greece and reflected its satisfaction regarding the appropriate developments.

⁴³ Yasemin Çongar, “ABD Gidişattan Rahatsız”, **Milliyet**, March 8, 1999, p. 17. The stresses belong to its writer.

⁴⁴ The use of “enemy” and “friend” as adjectives that refer to the whole of the countries in question shows that in the mutual perception of the two countries there has been a generalization. Nevertheless, Turkish people who have suffered from the terrorist attacks or have been affected from the consequences in any way, have believed in the Greek government has responsibility in supporting of the PKK and the other terrorist groups. This situation will perhaps necessitate an evaluation of the situation from two different aspects of the affair. The first aspect would be that the military, political, economical support given to the PKK could be given without the Greek government or national intelligent service’s overt or open support. This is not very credible. The second aspect would be that Öcalan’s quest for a new shelter after not being able to remain in Syria any longer and that in this quest he tries to take advantage of his friends in Greece, as well as the fact that these people who favoured Ocalan would support him in spite of the government, brought with itself the risk of this tension being carried to the battlefield. For this reason, the Simitis government was about to suffer the consequences of the old understanding that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. For evaluations concerning this issue see; Joshua Black, “Greek Diplomacy and the Hunt for Abdullah Ocalan”, WWS Case Study 4/00, <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/-cases/papers/greekdiplomacy.htm> (18/03/2001).

Similarly, the Greek government also perceived the sensitivity of Turkey during the Öcalan crisis. When Öcalan was brought to Greece and asked for asylum, the Greek officials were confronted with a quadruple choice; “*offering Öcalan asylum, deny Öcalan asylum and expel him from Greek territory, arresting Öcalan and extradite him to Turkey, and deny Öcalan asylum, but offer him temporary shelter until asylum could be negotiated with a third country.*”⁴⁵ In case the first option was chosen Greece would have confronted Turkey since Turkey had stated clearly that offering asylum to Öcalan would be considered an “act of enmity”. Also it would shake Greece’s relations with the EU and USA concerning terrorism. The other two options have not been preferred because they might shake the position of the Simitis government in the internal policy and also its status as the leading party. The last option was preferred because they might have shaken the position of the Simitis government domestically and also its status as the leading party. The last option was preferred because it was the average and would not cause a confrontation between two countries. However it was also evident that this last option was risky due to its co-ordination and secrecy. This option was chosen in spite of the drawbacks mentioned above and the consequences resulted in a Turkish-Greek depression over Öcalan’s request to take refuge in Greece.

The Influence of Greece in Turkey-EU relations

When the general aspects of the relations between Greece and Turkey are taken into consideration, it is observable that both countries have been in conflict and search for superiority within the international organizations and alliances of which they are members. Within this framework it would be possible to talk of a balance in the diplomatic attempts within the organization they are both members of, despite this fact that Turkey is not a full member of the EU enables Greece to exert pressure on Turkey, thus taking full advantage of its position as a full member. The fact that Turkey is a country desirous to be a full member, necessitates to consider Greece’s right to veto this request. Nevertheless, Greek factor it is not the only impediment to Turkey’s full membership in EU.⁴⁶ In reality Greece was openly

⁴⁵ See, Black, “Greek Diplomacy...,” p.7.

⁴⁶ From Mehmet Uğur’s point of view, “*It is a known fact that Greece has tried to do everything to impede the relations between EU and Turkey...Besides this, the impact of the Greek pressure can only be seen in the subject of the propping up of the fourth financial protocol. In other words, Greece could impede neither the relations between EU and Turkey after 1986 nor the political dialogues going on after this*”; See, Mehmet Uğur, **AB**

impeding the application for a full membership as well as the flow of the funds that Turkey needed for the actualisation of the projects in the process of becoming a full member and putting forth some prerequisite conditions. In the long run, when the general interests were in question Greece removed its veto on the 6 March 1995 when the treaty of customs union was signed between Turkey and the EU, accepting the treaty.

The priorities and conditions that are put forward by Greece in Turkey's relations with the EU can be listed as follows:

- Giving full membership to the Greek Cypriot Government as the sole representative of Cyprus
- Withdrawing the Turkish military presence from Cyprus and forming a Cyprus under the EU/NATO protection
- Impeding Turkey's gaining more effective position with respect to Greece by providing economic, political, military priority in the region through the EU financial funds
- Efforts for Turkey getting a lower share of the EU funds to finance Turkey's harmonisation projects.
- The superior position of Turkey, as a potential full member of EU, with respect to Greece in mutual relations and the fact that Greece will no longer be able to make use of the veto right against Turkey which is still being used as a political tactic/strategy
- Ensuring the support of EU in problems concerning the Aegean Sea.⁴⁷

Within the framework of all these interests and benefits, Greece got the covert support of all the other EU countries. In fact, when the membership of Turkey is in question, one of the major impediments that Turkey is presented with its objection of Greece. On the other hand it is also true that the other members are taking refuge behind this pretence to evaluate Turkey's request to become a full member.⁴⁸ Therefore, it could be inferred that if the

ve Türkiye; Bir Dayanak / İnandırıcılık İkilemi, İstanbul: Everest Publications, 2000, pp. 236-237.

⁴⁷ On this subject see; J. Gaunt, "Greece Offer EU Way to Make Turkey Candidate", **Focus**, <http://www.mfa.gr/altminister/releaseng/july99/focuseng/200799.htm>

⁴⁸ From Mehmet Uğur's point of view; *"The thesis 'Greek factor' which is often used by Turkey means this: The more turkey tried to improve its relations with EU, the more EU began to succumb to Greek pressure. This thesis is not only ineffective, but also wrong*

countries that hold an effective position in the EU were to support the efforts of Turkey to become a full member and if Turkey were to accomplish the requisite structuring, then the impediment posed by Greece could easily be overcome.

Even though in official declarations Greece has, in a diplomatic approach stated that they were not against the full membership of Turkey and that on the contrary they supported it, at the time of voting they declared that Turkey's structural properties did not meet EU's criterion. In fact, there were the doubts of whether Greece's veto could be surpassed in the Helsinki Summit held on 10-11 December 1999 where Turkey's candidacy for full membership was discussed, and positive voting was guaranteed only after the views of both countries reached a common ground. G. Papandreou, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a declaration prior to the Summit has stated that:

“Turkey’s membership is accepted by almost everyone but Turkey is far too eager. Our dialogue with Turkey concerning the EU has reached its last level. We must continue to cooperate in friendship for the benefit of the two countries’ populace no matter what the results of Helsinki may be...

Turkey is liable to meet the required standards regarding the EU...we could not solve our problems up to now but if Turkey is granted the membership status we will accept this. The EU membership is a chance and a reform for Turkey. I hope the results will be positive in Helsinki. If Turkey becomes a full member then it will have to abide by the Copenhagen criteria regarding the issues of Cyprus and the Aegean Sea.”⁴⁹

Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, I. Cem in the declaration he made before the Summit has stated that:

“If the EU were to divide the Aegean Sea into two, excluding Turkey then there will be a potential controversy. When EU is deciding, it must primarily weigh this possibility...we do not expect anybody to be close to us or make exceptions for us. We want the EU to evaluate us under the same criteria that they evaluate the other candidate countries. EU has taken its

*because of three reasons. The first one, it supposes that Greece has a power in EU but in fact it is unreal. The second one, both before and after its membership, Greece has neglected the involuntary attitude of EU to turkey's membership. The third one, both Turkey and EU show Greece as a scapegoat, and this way the dilemma of support/persuasiveness can be possibly neglected.” M. Uğur, **AB ve Türkiye...**, p. 236.*

⁴⁹ Murat İlem, “Adaylığı Olumlu Karşılıyoruz”, Cumhuriyet, December 8, 1999, p. 9.

*decision. It has also written this to the 2000 agenda, we will apply these. But if it wants to do in Helsinki what it did not do to others just because Turkey is a candidate, if it includes extra requisites merely because Turkey is a candidate then this will not do,*⁵⁰

These declarations have increased the expectation that there would be ground for a compromise before the summit and Turkey's candidacy would not be vetoed by Greece. In fact, on 10-11 December in the meetings that were held, the existing problems between Greece and Turkey were discussed and was settled to a great extent, and Turkey's candidacy was accepted. It also was stipulated that the problems between Greece and Turkey, as discussed in the Agenda 2000, be solved by the year 2004 and if a solution can not be reached then the problems would be revised in the European Council. This situation gave rise to different interpretations.⁵¹ Greece proclaimed that the above date would be the date when they would take the unsolved problems to the International Court of Justice. In the declaration made by Simitis *"We want to solve the continental shelf problem and I do not think there will be any further problem in the process. If other problems arise we will take them into consideration as well. There is a long time period ahead of us, until the year 2004. We believe that by that time positive steps and measures will be taken and if our problem were not to be solved by that date then we will bring to the foreground the decisions of the International Court of Justice."*⁵²

According to the declarations made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Cem, *"The date 2004 in the text is not the date to go to the ICJ but the date when the EU will reconsider the issue. The EU has shed light upon the issue... If the reciprocal concordance ways are blocked then we also know that the issue will be brought to the ICJ. We wanted to solve many of the problems by sorting them via meetings and discussions and the text brings this opportunity to the foreground."*⁵³

⁵⁰ "Cem: AB'ye Muhtaç Değiliz", **Cumhuriyet**, December 9, 1999, p. 9.

⁵¹ "Lipponen'in Ecevit'e Tarihi Mektubu", **Hürriyet**, December 12, 1999, p. 22.

⁵² Murat İlem, "Yunanistan Başbakanı Barışta Kararlı", **Cumhuriyet**, December 15, 1999, p. 9.

⁵³ Ankara, "Geri Adım Atamayız" **Cumhuriyet**, December 1, 1999, p. 11. In the letter sent to the Prime Minister Ecevit by the EU Finland President of that period, it says, *"the date specified in the fourth paragraph, the year 2004, is not the date when under the supervision of the ICJ the controversies will be solved but it is the date when the European Council will consider everything. Regarding Cyprus, a political solution is what is desired"*

In the Agenda 2000 document, accepted on the 15th of July 1997 where the expansion of EU and the rules regarding this process were indicated, the stipulations regarding border problems within the accordance endeavours necessitates that the candidate countries solve their problems before their membership. According to the text: *“Enlargement should not mean importing border conflicts. The prospect of accession acts as a powerful incentive for the states concerned to settle any border disputes. The Stability Pact promoted by the Union between May 1994 and March 1995 has also been influential in this regard. Today several disputes, of low intensity, among applicants remain to be resolved.*

The dispute between Hungary and Slovakia over the dam on the Danube is before the International Court of Justice, while the question of the maritime frontier between Lithuania and Latvia is in the process of being settled. Some of the applicant countries also have unresolved disputes with third countries. The Commission considers that, before accession, applicants should make every effort to resolve any outstanding border dispute among themselves or involving third countries. Failing this they should agree that the dispute be referred to the ICJ.

*In any event, all candidate countries should therefore, before accession negotiations are completed, commit themselves to submit unconditionally to compulsory jurisdiction, including advance ruling of the ICJ in any present or future disputes of this nature, as Hungary and Slovakia have already done in the abovementioned disagreement.”*⁵⁴

When assessed within this framework according to the Agenda 2000, for Turkey to become a full member to the European Union all the existing problems between the two countries should be solved and in case a solution is not reached then the two countries should bring their problem to the ICJ, accepting any result and verdict beforehand. When the candidacy to EU is in question, the issues which the controversies with Greece prevail are those concerning the Aegean Sea, particularly the continental shelf problem, the withdrawal of the Turkish military forces from Cyprus and the full membership of Cyprus to the European Union. At core, Turkey has declared that it is not against going to the ICJ. According to Turkey the two countries should start their discussing their isputes before they

and when the membership of Cyprus is in question every related factor will be considered” Lipponen’in Ecevit’e Tarihi Mektubu”, **Hürriyet**, December 12, 1999, p. 22.

⁵⁴ “Border Disputes” <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/agenda2000/strong/22.htm>, (4.12.1999).

bring the issues to the ICJ. In this process the problems between the two countries should be specified and they should decide on which items to go to the ICJ. In fact, as Greece often states, the only real problem between Turkey and itself is the settling of the continental shelf and that this should be the problem to take to be the Court of Justice. Turkey, on the other hand insists that the continental shelf problem is not the only problem that the two countries are facing, that the expanding of the territorial waters boundary, airspace and the FIR responsibility regions, the demilitarisation of the islands, the islands, islets and rocks the status of which are yet undetermined are mainly the sources of dispute between the two countries.

As a matter of fact, we can observe that Turkey is not willing to have third parties interference in the decision taking process. Contrary to Greece, Turkey does not deem necessary for a dispute between Turkey and Greece to be transformed into a dispute between Turkey-EU. Similarly, EU does not wish for the dispute and conflict to be carried into the Union and has stipulated this as a condition in the acceptance of Turkey's full membership to the Union.

The Earthquake Diplomacy

The crisis which caused the tension between the two countries after the Öcalan case soon after turned into a friendly dialogue process. At this point the USA's mediation which could not be disregarded, has been useful for the current governments to conceive that their interest lay in cooperation. In the Öcalan case, the role played by some political figures and high level bureaucrats hindered way to a serious hindered the dialogue process which was being formed at the time. This has resulted in Greece's reconsidering the tactic /strategic evaluations in the decision taking process. Parallel to the governmental measures Greece removed the figures who were contrary to co-operation with Turkey, and changed the discourse which until then was used while referring to its national security issues. The support given to the divisive terrorist movement of PKK in the South-eastern of Turkey hindered the credibility of this country and lessened its respectability from Turkey's point of view. This situation has also revealed another fact for the two countries; Greece has made a tactical fault, which could bring the two countries on the edge of war by trying to deal with the problematic issues between the two countries in an illicit manner. These tactics could easily discard the pretence and approach that until then Greece had been adopting: "the threat comes from the east". Since, Greece has supported PKK attacks in North Iraq, the Greek Cyprus Government

and also the islands on the Aegean by furnishing means to facilitate their actions. This has rendered legitimate all Turkey's endeavours to protect its national security.

When Greece saw that the tactic/strategic measures adopted up to that point were harming the main cause, it decided to change its approach to a peaceful, co-operative political one. In fact, soon after, they have left the concrete problems they were facing and started to deal with tourism, terror, environment, cultural problems and trade, which were issues that would build confidence and co-operation among the two countries. In this respect some meetings in Athens and Ankara were held. The correspondence between the Minister of Foreign Affairs İ. Cem and the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs G. Papandreou is interesting in its indicating the desire to cooperate of the political figures of the two countries.⁵⁵ The views that were expressed in the letter written by İ. Cem on the 24 May clearly underlined the sensitivity that Turkey infers on terrorism and that in order relations between Turkey and Greece to be friendly, it is necessary to take an action against it. It has also been expressed that such an act would be facilitating the process whereby the two parties gained mutual trust and confidence. On the other hand, besides the sensitivity that was demonstrated with respect to issues regarding national security, Turkey has also stressed the fact that it is open to a peaceful dialogue and solution, thus emphasising its will as to the initiation of this process between the two countries. The Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Papandreou, in his letter dated the 25 June, stated that the positive development in the relations between the two countries was also what Greece desired and that the commencement of the attempts and endeavours of the past would add the process. In this perspective, tourism, culture, environment, crime, economical co-operation and ecological problems would be items of co-operation between the two countries.

This dialogue, initiated between the two ministers was an enterprise, which got the support of the national and international public opinion as well as the USA, NATO and EU. The significance of the positive development of the relationship between these two countries

⁵⁵ On this subject, look up Sibel Utku, "Turco-Greek Dialogue Resumes After a Decade-Long Pause", **Turkish Daily News**,

<http://www.turinfonet.org.tr/frame/news/anasayfa.htm> (18.10.1999). For the complete texts of the letters written by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs I. Cem and the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs G. Papandreou see; <http://www.turinfonet.org.tr/frame/docyuments/lettercem.html>, <http://www.turinfonet.org.tr/frame/documents/leeterpapan.html>

with respect to the accord and welfare of the Balkan countries was stressed. The search and endeavour of a warmer relationship in June-July 1999 has also reflected itself to the press, and conveyed it to the public opinion. Furthermore, the press also expressed the doubts regarding the continuation of such positive relations. Nevertheless, these doubts did not turn into a opinion that the endeavours were in vain. The Kardak Rocks, the S-300 depression and the Öcalan case, which created tension in the relationship, resulted in pressure exerted by the NATO and USA for efforts at reconciliation. In addition to this, there have been certain developments, which increased the liberty of action of the political powers of the two countries. One of these happenings was the earthquake disaster that struck Gölcük/Marmara region on 17 August 1999. After this disaster Greece joined in the rescue and search operations of other European countries. This sad opportunity increased the faith of the Turkish public opinion in the victory of solidarity and co-operation over antagonist politics.

When the case is analysed with respect to the national identities and characters, the fact that the pain and suffering that the people encountered in their daily lives was shared, solutions and aid was offered, which affected the image of Greece from being an “enemy” to a “friend”. No doubt, this sort of evaluation brings with itself the problem of generalisation. In Turkey and Greece there are some nationalistic fanatics who regard the relationship of the two countries from this ideological perspective but, also there are people who believe and understand that the discord is not between the people and the nations but between the governments. There were some goodwill and solidarity messages exchanged between the two countries, forgetting the controversies and bringing to the foreground the feelings of humanly help and support. From the very first day of the earthquake, aid campaigns were initiated in Greece and Greek government sent a search/salvage team right away “*200 tents with doctors and nurses, 1000 blankets and 12 tonnes of every sort of aid*” to Turkey⁵⁶ The humane approach that was displayed in the Greek press and news regarding the disaster was also watched with interest by the Turkish public opinion and was appreciated. On the other hand, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pangalos declared that there was a direct relationship between the incidents after the earthquake and Turkey’s membership to the EU: “*The Marmara earthquake has shown that Turkey is not ready to become a member of the EU*”

⁵⁶ On this subject see the Turkish press of the period; August 18-19-20-21-22-23, 1999 dated Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet, Milliyet newspapers. “Teşekkürler Komşu”, **Hürriyet**, August 21, 1999, p. 18.

yet. There have been 15 thousand deaths and 30 thousand are still missing. This tableau has demonstrated that the government mechanism does not function properly in Turkey and the circumstances being what they are, Turkey is not only unfit to become a member of the EU but it has not matured yet.”⁵⁷ The article titled “ *Whereas the Pain of the Enemy Made Us Cry*”, written by Anna Stergiou in the *Eleftheropia*, a national newspaper, is an interesting example which displays the common values of humanity and the fact that these values are far from fanaticism. “*Family, school and military service... We Greeks who pass through all these institutions have been persuaded through some historical and political examples that the Turks were our enemies and we nourished hatred. Then how is it that this feeling of hatred and enmity, which lasted for centuries, vanished in one day and the foe becomes a friend overnight?*

We have all been struggling with our feelings these days. We cried, were deeply moved and we suffered for them. Those feelings of hatred and enmity literally disappeared. It was as if we did not know that we possessed these humane feelings and we discovered them suddenly. We caught ourselves in tears when watching how the Turks were being rescued from the demolished buildings. Those same mothers who would shed tears in a probable Turkish-Greek war for their sons cried for the Turks. However, the god of the earthquake does not recognize difference of culture or nation.

When we heard the screams and moans of those who were struck by the earthquake we felt as if we had been punched on our stomach. There is no god of poverty and pain. For this reason we joined the lament of the Turks and we lamented as if they were our own people. Those billions that had been spent on armament all these years did not suffice nor serve to bring happiness nor did they prevent catastrophes from befalling. On the contrary, this lavish and futile expenditure leaves a queer, bitter aftertaste in our mouth when such natural disasters hit us.”⁵⁸

Examples of help and support between the two countries’ people within the framework of civil initiatives were brought to the foreground by written and visual media and the feeling of solidarity was tried to be bolstered. Within this context, civil search/rescue teams like AKUT (Turkish Civil Search and Rescue) and EMAK of Greece, the aid

⁵⁷ Murat İlem, “Pangalos’tan İlginç Bir Açıklama”, **Cumhuriyet**, November 04, 1999, p.8.

⁵⁸ Stelyo Berberakis, “Yunanlı Dost Gibi Ağlıyor”, **Sabah**, August 20, 1999, p.17

campaigns to which artists and writers of both countries participated have contributed in the transformation of those conceptions like “*enemy*” and “*threat*” to perceptions of friendship. Though fanatic right wing of coalition and its supporting media spread negative news, the majority of the Turkish people received the aid offered by Greece, Bulgaria, Russia, Armenia and Israel in gratitude and appreciation. Reciprocally, soon after, the earthquake that hit also Athens, the Turkish General Staff ran to help the Greeks with a plane given to the service of AKUT and this gesture has also contributed to the feelings of peace and solidarity to flourish between the two countries.⁵⁹

The *détente* that has been developed between the two countries was extended to the military field as well. Some activities that might be considered of extreme relevance in the mutual perception of the two countries’ public opinion and in the shaping of it, in terms of reforming their images were carried out so as to shape the new developing relations favourably. The fact that the Command of the Greek Naval Forces came to the ceremony on the 30 of August 1999 (Turkish National Victory Day) and following that, the fact that the celebrations on the 9 September held annually to celebrate the salvation of Izmir were not as pompous as they usually were, (the representation of salvation from Greeks was included) is indicative of the *détente* in the relations.

Meanwhile, another development which brought the two military forces closer is that in the NATO military operations, the Turkish forces were commanded by a Greek general and the Greek forces were commanded by a Turkish general. In the months of September and October, the differences of opinion concerning the NATO command bases, built in İzmir and Larissa were sorted out and the bases were opened.

After the earthquake the developments and approaches that followed were also significant to show marked differences in the tactic impediments of the two countries had been encountering. For instance, Greece has found it necessary to declare that it would not block the aid that would be given to Turkey within EU after the earthquake. Following the declaration of Greece, it was expected that one of the major stumbling blocks in Turkey’s becoming a full member to the EU was to be lifted. Actually, in October the EU proclaimed that Turkey’s full membership candidacy would be considered, but that Turkey had to take

⁵⁹ AKUT and EMAM have won the appreciation of the national public opinion and they have been awarded the “ Abdi İpekçi Peace and Friendship Award”.

some measures take further steps. This was ample proof that the factor of Greece in creating impediments on the way to the membership to the EU still persisted.

The *Détente* in the Relations

When the fact that Turkey and Greece managed to fit into last five years all these tension building events and that in a very short time this tension left its place to a visible softening, it should be noted that the mutual consideration of the politicians of their concerns of each other has also ameliorated to some extent. Following the Kardak Crisis, on 8 July 1997, in the NATO summit that was held in Madrid, both countries accepted the Declaration and aiming to lessen the tension was an important effort. In the declaration the two parties accepted:

- To continue the development of the peace, safety and good neighbourhood relations
- To respect the other country's sovereignty
- To respect the international laws and pacts
- To show respect for the vital benefits of the other country and its legitimacy in the Aegean Sea.
- The desire to avoid from misunderstandings that may give rise to military conflict and founding on mutual respect accepting to stay away from one sided actions
- Both parties have accepted to use peaceful methods based on mutual decisions, to sort out the conflicts without resorting to the threat of using power or actually using power, thus developing their relationships.⁶⁰

The Madrid Declaration is one of the serious steps taken in order to diminish the tension between the two countries but in reality it has been insufficient in the taking necessary steps to prevent the development of new tensions and for the development of relationships. Furthermore, the acceptance to adhere to the international laws and treaties is also very important, therefore when within this context, the Madrid Declaration can be accepted as a goodwill declaration wherein both countries stipulate their rights and status

⁶⁰ "Greek-Turkish Relations: The Madrid Joint Declaration", **Thesis**, Summer 97. <http://mfa.gr/thesis/summer97/section.htm>. (02.03.1999).

reciprocally.⁶¹ After the declaration the opinion that the tension might be decreased and steps to speed up the dialogue, could be taken was marked but no visible care was rendered to reach the core of the problems.

Although the efforts to lessen the tension between the two countries continued, it was not possible to talk of a complete success in the efforts made to make up for the lack of trust between the two countries. The change of equilibrium in the relationships of the two parties, as well as the changes of equilibrium in the international systems has indicated that the tension should be replaced with co-operation and the two countries were influenced by the changes and declarations in which they stress that the matters of discord were to be sorted out by peaceful means. From Turkey's the point of view of, besides the minor problems and the major ones, what is necessary, as stated in the Madrid Declaration was to apply the principles with integrity, abiding closely by them. In order to achieve this, the dialogue process must continue. In this respect, Turkey follows a rather more consistent policy compared to Greece. In fact, after the Öcalan issue, the initiative and opinion rendered by Turkey to restore the relations with Greece was remarkable. According to the Prime Minister, Ecevit "*First of all Greece has to renounce giving support to these terrorists. What are we going to discuss and sort out with them if they continue supporting the terrorists? First Greece should renounce and then it should accept the idea of handling our problems via dialogues.*"⁶²

The President of the Turkish Republic, Süleyman Demirel has declared that they have 8 requests from Greece to ensure that the support had really been cut out.

"We asked Greece to do the following: close down the camps, deliver the terrorists that are being sought to Turkey, do not supply the terrorists with armament, put an end to all logistic support, do not allow PKK to make propaganda that encourages people to commit

⁶¹ In fact, with respect to Greece, especially regarding the territorial waters, what they have heard from Turkey, the spy *casus belli/reason of war* considering policy and the decision taken on not recurring to military forces or threats regarding this sort of intervention it is an important development. Also in terms of Turkey, the fact that its vital rights on these waters have been acknowledged and the Treaty of Lausanne are eminent.

⁶² "Atina'yı Yeterince Uyarmıyorsunuz", **Milliyet**, March 10, 1999, p.9 According to the declaration made by the USA Cyprus Coordinator, T. Miller, USA has discussed matters concerning Greece and the PKK with Greece. But, the Government Spokesman Dimitri Reppas has stated in a press declaration that the "*USA has not requested that Athens declare PKK as a terrorist group.*" See. "Talep Gelmedi", **Milliyet**, March 10, 1999, p.9.

crimes and massacres, do not let them realize activities in districts and foundations, do not let PKK terrorists cross your country, do not be a mediator in the money justifying operations.

Our aim is not to corner Greece but to help it regain its identity as a democratic country, which abides by the requisites of international law. We have no interest in calling Greece a rouge country but if Greece persists then it will indeed become such a country. The issue is not PKK, we give Greece the opportunity to clear itself in front of the international public opinion and to cut its relations with terrorism.”⁶³

In this framework the opposition to Greek government stated that there should be cooperation with Turkey in the issue of terrorism. One of the former prime ministers Constantine Mitsotakis, in a declaration he made, underlined that in the last 20 years Greece had been unsuccessful in its struggle with terrorism, *“This failure affects the foreign policy of Greece in a very negative way, we must sign a collaboration pact with Turkey, refusing to collaborate will render them more suspicious, whereas Greece has never supported terrorism, be it in the past or in the present.”⁶⁴* The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Papandreou, in a discussion appeared in the Kathimerini has stated that with the dialogue initiated in New York has created no change in the policy of the Greek government and that this process should have made a positive effect on the lessening of tension between the two countries. According to Papandreou, the issues that were dealt with in this dialogue process were important even if they are of little relevance to the mutual problems existing. *“Of course this is not a new experience, it has been tried in the past. But we are starting this tactic-like endeavour to see whether we can find the definite channels of accord and solution.”* The dialogue that was started was *“a tactic movement intended to show whether these endeavours could be carried to a higher level. This whole process could have positive effects on the really significant problems between the two countries. Yet again, it may have no effect on very important problems; nevertheless we have accepted this as something that should be tried. This is not to say that the existence of some problems will not affect our relationships in a positive or negative way, it means that the existence of these problems do not affect the initiation of other processes or relations...Personally, I do not accept discussion over issues such as the sovereignty rights indisputability and other principles regarding important issues*

⁶³ “Yunanistan’dan 8 İstek”, **Cumhuriyet**, March 11, 1999, p.17.

*(dogmatic. I am not dogmatic regarding tactics. In fact this is a change of tactic in response to the change of tactic in Turkey. Until recent times Turkey used to say two things, the first of which was that the entire meetings regarding Greece should focus on important issues and points, the second was that if after the Öcalan depression an agreement over PKK could still not be reached and a declaration was not made by Greece then, Turkey would not have any relations with Greece.”*⁶⁵

In fact, the warm, amicable dialogue, being created between the two countries rendered the signing of some pacts bringing solid solutions to important issues. On the 21st of January 2000 the Minister of Foreign Affairs, G. Papandreou formally visited Ankara and following this visit the Minister of Foreign Affairs İ. Cem returned it and visited Athens. During these visits, in the pacts that were signed, the collaboration of the countries in issues concerning tourism, environment, culture, terror, education and security was stipulated. Meanwhile, the cautious attitude displayed by the Greek Government was noted over the proposal of constituting a Common Security Committee to take precaution measures to avoid tension and misperceptions experienced during the military activities in the Aegean Sea. Turkey had proposed that the two military forces performs manoeuvres together and, that the navy ships of the two countries visit respective ports plus, promoting of know-how exchange in the military aspects such as, the military aviation perform without arms, that a red telephone line be formed between the Heads of General Staff, as well as the lessening of military manoeuvres in the Aegean Sea. In response Greece, in the year 1988 put forth the idea of CBM process, which was agreed upon by the two ministers of foreign affairs to be revised.⁶⁶ While efforts to reach a consensus on the issues were made, an important development in the process of Turkey’s endeavour to adapt to the EU came to the foreground

⁶⁴ Nur Batur, “Mitsotakis Smitis’i PKK’ya Karşı İşbirliğine Çağırıldı”, **Hürriyet**, June 23, 1999.

⁶⁵ Costas Iordanidis, “We Stand to Gain a Great Deal from Dialogue”, **Kathimerini**, July 5, 1999. <http://www.mfa.gr/gpap/july99/synkathmerini4799.html> (28.7.1999).

⁶⁶ For the evaluations regarding these proposals see; Serkan Demirtaş, “Yeni Bir Gelecek Arayışı”, **Cumhuriyet**, January 20, 2000, p. 9. ; “Papandreou: Tabuları Yıkalım”, **Cumhuriyet**, January 22, 2000, p.9.; “Atina Öneriye Soğuk Bakıyor”, **Cumhuriyet**, February 3, 2000, p.8.

and it was agreed that, experienced advocates and bureaucrats would go Turkey for exchanging ideas and views.⁶⁷

As a matter of fact Greece's efforts in establishing, the peaceful relations with Turkey have also suited its own interests within the EU. The determination of the Simitis Government in making Greece a member of the EU Monetary Union/Euro System has become a national ambition and target and its search for stability has facilitated the collaboration with Turkey.

Conclusion

The last five years of the Turkish-Greek relations have been displayed many tense incidents between the two countries. Issues such as the Kardak Rocks crisis, the S-300 missiles, the process of capturing Ocalan, the İzmit earthquake, Turkey's candidacy to the EU were the issues which brought the relations between these countries to the world agenda of relevant international issues. Furthermore, this situation has necessitated a visible effort also of the other countries in order to prevent their foreign policies from the impact Turkish-Greek relationships.

The policy pursued by PASOK during A. Papandreou's term, stressed that "Greece was threatened from the east", had negatively affected the mutual conception of the two countries. This had also resulted in reaching a dead-end and the dialogues between them also impeded. The tactics that were recurred to, more than oftenly resulted fruitless. Therefore, after Simitis was chosen as the president of PASOK a new era began for Turkey's relations with Greece. In this new process, firstly, due to the Kardak Rocks crisis the two countries had almost been on the verge of battle, but what was observed in Greece was that within the Simitis government, there were different approaches regarding the relations with Turkey and it is also true that these people had long been under the influence of the policies determined

⁶⁷ The fact that the relations between the two countries were kept at this level has facilitated their increase of freedom of movement in their international relations. On the 12 of February 2000, during the summit of collaboration among South Eastern European Countries which was held in the capital of Romania, Bucharest, Ecevit and Simitis came together and declared that they would continue to show goodwill in the perpetual reinforcement of the relations between the two countries. While Ecevit specified that Turkey would be giving full support to the elections that were to be held in Greece on the 9 of April, he asked Simitis to support the candidacy process of Turkey for the full membership to the EU. Önder Yılmaz-Taki Berberakis, "Simitis'e Seçim Desteği", *Milliyet*, February 13, 2000, p.23.

by governments which were adopted towards Turkey. In fact, while the Öcalan issue took place the Simitis Government had to face considerable difficulties in taking the situation under control and eventually the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Pangalos), Interior Minister (Papadopoulos), Minister of Public Order (Petsalnikos) were forced to resign. The cabinet was formed again and with this change the expectations bloomed for the political figures of both countries to start the dialogue process again. It is clearly visible that Turkey followed a very tolerant policy toward the Greeks even at the time of confusion.

The immediate release of the tension in the relations was considered a very favourable outcome both by the countries and their allies. In fact, the strategic partnership that Turkey had with the USA and the endeavours for being a candidate for full membership to EU rendered necessary no expedient the solution of the problems between them. Also it is possible to observe that the policy, adopted by Greece, was harmful for itself both in the international and national system. In this prospect, the dialogue process to be formed, the policies of the USA and EU, regarding stability to be established in the Balkans, Caucasian and the Middle East, necessary for the economic and political collaboration was backed up being in line within their policy.

However, in such a process, it is not expectable that the incumbent problems between Turkey and Greece, regarding sovereignty would be solved in a short period of time. In the Helsinki Summit where Turkey's candidacy was passed, the decisions taken regarding the deadline of the year 2004 for the solution of the existing problems by peaceful means or choosing to go to the ICJ are of extreme importance. The decision process has to be considered through a long and unbiased period, free of the political influences and this situation has not yet natured for either country. In both countries the political powers are ruling under very sensitive equilibrium. The elections held on the 9 April, 2000 were of extreme significance for Greece. The successful rise of Simitis and the continuation of his government are indicating the fact that the dialogue process between Greece and Turkey has met the approval of the public opinion. It could be concluded that the progress in the relations has proven the faith of the public opinion for stable friendship. Accordingly there is no big conflict between the Turkish and Greek people and that the conflicts and problems exist between the political powers. The co-operation of people was evident during the earthquake

disaster. If the two countries can establish permanent peace and collaboration this will be mostly based on the public opinion's will. Similarly it is anticipated that predominance of reconciling traits in both Greek and Turkish culture will also prevail over the solution of the conflict issues between the political powers also. In this contest the countries will still continue to determine their international relations in line with their public opinion and also consider their long-term interests. In fact, when the problems that Turkey has encountered in its national and international relations are considered, especially with respect to the full membership candidacy to the EU and the alleged Armenian genocide developments, it is indicative that some initiatives were taken deteriorating the relationship between Turkey and Greece. Therefore the problematic in the relations perseveres and both countries should try to approach the key conflict issues with utmost care and tolerance never disregarding the choice of their people for lasting friendship.

REFERENCES

- Aksu, Fuat (2001). **Türk – Yunan İlişkileri**, Ankara: SAEMK Yayınları.
- Arapkirli, Zafer (1999). “Apo’ya Destek Atina’yı Böldü”, **Milliyet**, 28. 02. 1999, p. 23.
- Ayman, Gülden (2000). **Tırmandırma Siyasetine Bir Örnek: S-300 Krizi**, Ankara: ASAM Yayınları.
- Ayman, Gülden (1998). “Uluslararası İlişkilerde Problem Çözümü Yaklaşımı”, **Uluslararası İlişkilerde Yeni Alanlar, Yeni Bakışlar**, Ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu, İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1998, pp. 167-196.
- Balbay, Mustafa (1999) “Atina Terör Destekçisi”, **Cumhuriyet**, 23. 02. 1999, pp.1-17.
- Batur, Nur (1999). “Miçotakis, Simitis’i PKK’ya Karşı Türkiye’yle İşbirliğine Çağırır”, **Hürriyet**, 23. 06. 1999.
- Berberakis, Stelyo (1999). “Yunanlı Dost Gibi Ağlıyor”, **Sabah**, 20. 08. 1999, p. 17.
- Berberakis, Taki (1999). “Simitis’e Ağır Hakaretler”, **Milliyet**, 28. 02. 1999, p. 23.
- Berberakis, Taki (1999). “Soruşturma Başladı”, **Milliyet**, 24. 02. 1999, p. 16.
- Black, Joshua (2000). “Greek Diplomacy and the Hunt for Abdullah Öcalan”, WWS Case Study 4/00, <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/~cases/papers/greekdiplomacy.htm> P. Date: 18/03/2001.
- Cemal, Hasan (1999). “Demirel’den Yunanistan’a Ağır, Hatta Son Uyarı,” **Milliyet**, 23. 02. 1999, p. 17.
- Civaoğlu, Güneri (1999). “PKK’ya 80 Füzeye”, **Milliyet**, 11. 03. 1999, ps. 17.
- Civaoğlu, Güneri (1999). “Suç Ortaklığı,” **Milliyet**, 23. 02. 1999, p. 17.
- Çongar, Yasemin (1999). “Heybeliada Jesti ABD’yi Sevindirdi”, **Milliyet**, 21. 10.1999, p. 14.
- Çongar, Yasemin (1999). “ABD Gidişattan Rahatsız”, **Milliyet**, 8. 03.1999, p. 17.
- Demirtaş, Serkan (2000). “Yeni Bir Gelecek Arayışı”, **Cumhuriyet**, 20. 01. 2000, p.9.
- Elekdağ, Şükrü (1999). “Yunanistan, Ayağımı Denk Al,” **Milliyet**, 23. 02. 1999, p. 16.
- Elekdağ, Şükrü (1998). “Atina Neyin Peşinde?” **Milliyet**, 22. 06.1998, p. 19.
- Elekdağ, Şükrü (1996). “2 ½ War Strategy”, **Perception**, March-May 1996, Vol. III, N. 4.
- Gaunt, J. (1999). “Greece Offer EU Way to Make Turkey Candidate”, **FOCUS**, <http://www.mfa.gr/altminister/releaseseng/july99/focuseng/200799.htm>
- Gündüz, Aslan (2000). “Greek – Turkish Disputes: How to Resolve Them?”, **Greek – Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization**, Eds. Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, The IFPA – Kokkalis Series on Southeast European Policy, Volume 1, 2001, pp.81-101.
- Hanbay, Gönül (1999). “Ruhban Okuluna Akademik Formül”, **Milliyet**, 20. 10. 1999, p.19.
- Hickok, M. R. “Falling Toward War in the Aegean: A Case Study of the Imia/Kardak Affair”, <http://dodccrp.org/proceedings/DOCS/wcd00000/wcd00044.htm> P. Date: 23.09.1999.
- Ioannou, Krateros (1997). “A Tale of Two Islets”, **Thesis**, Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Spring 97, Vol I, Issue 1.

- Jordanidis, Costas (1999). “We Stand to Gain a Great Deal from Dialogue”, **Kathimerini**, July 5, <http://www.mfa.gr/gpap/july99/synkathimerini4799.html> P. Date: 28.7.1999.
- İlem, Murat (2000). “Atina’da Başarı Beklentisi”, **Cumhuriyet**, 20. 01. 2000, p. 9.
- İlem, Murat (1999). “Yunanistan Başbakanı, Barışta Kararlı”, **Cumhuriyet**, 15.12.1999, p.9.
- İlem, Murat (1999). “Adaylığı Olumlu Karşılarız”, **Cumhuriyet**, 8.12.1999, p. 9.
- İlem, Murat (1999). “Pangalos’tan İlginç Açıklama”, **Cumhuriyet**, 04.10.1999. p.8.
- İnan, Yüksel– Başeren, Sertaç (1997). **Status of Kardak Rocks/Kardak Kayalıklarının Statüsü**, Ankara: (YY), 1997.
- Jervis, Robert (1993). “Perception and Misperception in International Politics”, Paul Viotti K.– Mark V. Kauppi Eds. **International Relations Theory, Realism, Pluralism, Globalism**, New York: MacMillan, 1993, pp. 286-304.
- Kohen, Sami (1999). “Dış Politikada Sertleşme”, **Milliyet**, 23. 02. 1999, p. 16.
- Kozyris, Pheodon John (2000). “The Legal Dimension of the Current Greek – Turkish Conflict: A Greek Viewpoint”, **Greek – Turkish Relations in the Era of Globalization**, Eds. Dimitris Keridis and Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, The IFPA – Kokkalis Series on Southeast European policy, Volume 1, 2001, pp.102-115.
- Kurumahmut, Ali (Ed.), (1998). **Ege’de Temel Sorun Egemenliği Tartışmalı Adalar**, Ankara: TTK Yayınları.
- Sarıbrahimoğlu, Lale (1995). “Ankara, Yunanistan’ı Teşhir Edecek”, **Cumhuriyet**, 5. 07. 1995, p. 10.
- Soysal, İsmail (1995). “Atina’nın Tutumuna Seyirci Kalınamaz”, **Cumhuriyet**, 5. 07. 1995, p. 10.
- Soysal, Mümtaz (1996). “Fener”, **Hürriyet**, 2 Şubat 1996, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ad/ade/aded/aded1/3.htm>, P. Date: 20/09/1999.
- Sönmezoğlu, Faruk (2000). **Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri ve Büyük Güçler**, İstanbul: Der Yayınları.
- Sönmezoğlu, Faruk (1995). **Uluslararası Politika ve Dış Politika Analizi**, İstanbul: Filiz Kitabevi.
- Stefanopoulos, Konstantin (1999). “Yunan Dış Politika Meseleleri”, **Yunan Paradoksu**, Der. Graham T. Allison-Kalipso Nikolaydis, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 1999, pp. 167-176.
- Şardan, Tolga (1999). “Nairobi’de Çatışabilirdik”, **Milliyet**, 28. 02. 1999, p. 21.
- Uğur, Mehmet (2000). **Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye: Bir Dayanak/İnandırıcılık İkilemi**, İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2000.
- Utku, Sibel (1999). “Turco-Greek Dialogue Resumes After a Decade – Long Pause”, **Turkish Daily News**, 1 July 1999, <http://www.turinfonet.org.tr/frame/news/anasayfa.htm> P. Date: 18.10.1999.
- Vaner, Semih (Ed.), (1990). **Türk – Yunan Uyuşmazlığı**, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları,
- Volkan, Vamık (1999). **Kanbağı: Etnik Gururdan Etnik Teröre**, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları.

Yılmaz, Önder - Berberakis, Taki (2000). “Simitis’e Seçim Desteği”, **Milliyet**, 13. 02. 2000, p. 23.

NEWS ITEMS

- “Ankara: Geri Adım Atmayız”, **Cumhuriyet**, 12. 12. 1999, p. 11.
- “Atina Öneriye Soğuk Bakıyor”, **Cumhuriyet**, 3. 02. 2000, p.8.
- “Atina’yla Yeni Dönem”, **Cumhuriyet**, 21. 01. 2000, p. 9.
- “Atina’yı Yeterince Uyarılmıyorsunuz”, **Milliyet**, 10. 03. 1999, p. 9.
- “Atinaya Savaş Uyarısı”, **Milliyet**, 23. 02. 1999, p.16.
- “Cem: AB’ye Muhtaç Değiliz”, **Cumhuriyet**, 9. 12. 1999, p. 9.
- “Çiller Atina’ya Rest Çekti”, **Cumhuriyet**, 5. 07. 1995, p. 10.
- “Lipponen’in Ecevit’e Tarihi Mektubu”, **Hürriyet**, 12. 12. 1999, p. 22.
- “Ne Diyor Bu Adam”, **Hürriyet**, 23. 08. 1999, p. 9.
- “Papandreu: Tabuları Yıkalım”, **Cumhuriyet**, 22. 01. 2000, p.9.
- “Talep Gelmedi”, **Milliyet**, 10. 03. 1999, p. 9.
- “Teşekkürler Komşu”, **Hürriyet**, 21. 08. 1999, p. 18.
- “Türkiye’ye Düşmanca Davranıldı”, **Cumhuriyet**, 13. 03. 1999, p. 11.
- “Yunanistan’dan 8 İstek”, **Cumhuriyet**, 11. 03. 1999, p. 17.

INTERNET

- “Border Disputes”, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/agenda2000/strong/22.htm> P. Date: 4. 12. 1999.
- “Greek-Turkish Relations: The Madrid Joint Declaration”, **Thesis**, Summer 97. <http://mfa.gr/thesis/summer97/section.htm>. P. Date: 02.03.1999.
- “Kardak Krizi”, <http://www.softdesign.com.tr/32gun/97-98-dosya/dosya21.html>, P. Date: 02/10/1999.
- “Turkish Foreign Policy and Practice As Evidenced By The Recent Turkish Claims To The Imia Rocks”, <http://mfa.gr/foreign/bilateral/imiaen.htm> P. Date: 02/11/1999.