

TURKISH POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

# TURKEY IN THE YEAR 2000

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## **COMMENTS ON "TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE YEAR 2000"**

**Discussant : David Law, Deputy Head, General Affairs Section,  
Political Division, NATO**

Let me begin by commending Dr. Sezer's paper for its very thorough and thoughtful appraisal of the factors which could influence the evolution of Turkish foreign policy through to the end of this century.

As Professor Sezer has pointed out, the Alliance has played a central rôle in Turkish foreign policy for thirty-five years now. You will not be surprised to hear from Holger Pfeiffer and myself, as representatives of NATO's International Secretariat, that we subscribe to Professor Sezer's analysis that the Alliance will be as important for Turkey in the year 2000 as it is today. But in the rapidly evolving security environment of the late 1980s and 1990s, this should not be considered as a self-evident truth.

Alliance interrelationships, both in their transatlantic and intra-European dimensions, are subject to powerful winds of change. Developments out-of-area continue to pose challenges to Alliance cohesion and self-understanding. Perestroika is yet in its infancy but it has already raised the prospect of fundamental long-term modifications occurring in Soviet domestic policy, in intra-Warsaw Pact relations and in the socialist community's policies towards the West and the developing world. This, together with movement on the arms control front and heady technological change, have sparked a debate of perhaps unprecedented proportions on how much and what kind of defence we require. These questions will remain on the agenda into the foreseeable future. The Alliance will have to deal with them effectively if it is to

continue to enjoy the confidence and support of its sixteen members for its peace-keeping rôle.

In view of the limited time at our disposal, my colleague and I have elected to focus our remarks on what are probably the two most important of these inter-connecting questions. Mr. Pfeiffer will address NATO defence posture and strategy. I will focus on Soviet developments and their implications for East-West relations. But before I take up this theme, let me make a general comment on the problematics we face when we attempt to anticipate the future. This always involves a greater portion of speculation than does understanding the past or the present. But the need to speculate is no less compelling for that. And our ability to speculate responsibly and constructively about the future can be optimised by holding to two conditions. First, by proceeding from clearly-stated perceptions of current trends which can be adapted and revised as required in the light of experience. Second, by anchoring our analysis in a knowledge of history. In this sense, Churchill's statement that the further we look back into the past, the further we will be able to see into the future says it all.

Assessing Soviet intentions and capabilities correctly, and developing effective responses have been bread and butter issues for the Alliance throughout its four decades. A changing of the guard at the top of the Soviet system has traditionally brought important shifts in the direction of Soviet policy, even if just as predictably its fundamentals have remained unaltered. So change in policy there will be with virtually any replacement of a General Secretary (even the short-lived tenures of Andropov and Chernenko were no exceptions to this rule). But clearly the replacement of Chernenko by Gorbachev represents something special, if not unique in Soviet history, if only because of the combination of generational and sociological departures it represents. And understandably it has sparked a far-reaching debate about where the Soviet Union is going, or might be going, and the possible implications for the West.

Since 1985, we have witnessed changes in leadership personnel, style and vocabulary. We have observed a relaxation in censorship and the release of dissidents. We have seen some mo-

dification of the CPSU's working methods. In foreign policy, we have noted hopeful signs of greater flexibility in arms control and encouraging statements of intention with regard to Afghanistan and the whole complex of regional conflicts. Such positive, and potentially positive, developments are welcomed by the Alliance. They represent steps which go in the direction of meeting long-standing concerns of the Western community. That they have been taken provides confirmation of the effectiveness of our political and security strategy and is a tribute to our consistent efforts to work for progress with the East in both multilateral and bilateral dialogue.

Nevertheless, a number of caveats have to be attached to this judgement. The traditional structures of communist party rule have not been dismantled nor have its ideological underpinnings been challenged. And the process of change is in any case of too recent a genesis to allow for any conclusive judgement on how it may develop in the future. In view of this, while open-minded on the prospects of future change and ready to recognise confidence-inspiring developments in Soviet policy, the Alliance recognises that nothing has happened in the USSR to modify the basic parameters of East - West relations.

But let us take a closer look at the two scenarios for the evolution of Soviet policy which are evoked by Professor Sezer and which represent, I believe, mainstream thinking on this subject in Western academic and governmental circles. One scenario supposes that it is Mr. Gorbachev's purpose, and his mandate, to carry out a long-overdue modernisation of Soviet society and its structures. The second scenario has Mr. Gorbachev carrying out a revolution from above which would bring systemic change to the Soviet Union. Where would these two scenarios put the Alliance?

The modernisation scenario is viewed by Professor Sezer as by far the likeliest of the two scenarios and as a process accompanied by the transition of the USSR to a status-quo military power, as a result of which the Alliance would be obliged to assume increasingly a political, rather than a military, function.

This view harbours a misconception which requires correction. The Alliance is not now, nor has it even been, a military organi-

sation. It has always been both military and political in nature. This was implicit in its mode of operation at its very inception. It became explicit at the very latest in the mid-1950s when de-Stalinisation and Khrushchev's resurrection of the Leninist concept of peaceful coexistence signalled that the threat to the Alliance was far more complicated and challenging than one which could be expressed in terms of East-West force comparisons or the threat of a frontal attack by the Warsaw Pact.

Nor can we assume that modernisation necessarily implies a de-emphasis of things military. It could in fact be just as likely that proponents of within-system change in the Soviet Union see modernisation as bringing benefits to the military sector: in other words quantitatively, or at least qualitatively, improved military capabilities for the same or a lower input of resources.

At any rate there is no hard evidence that Mr. Gorbachev's reforms are being accompanied by a downgrading of military might in the leadership's priorities. Despite the forceful talk from Moscow about the transition to a defence based on a reasonable sufficiency of forces, the Soviet military build-up continues. Soviet defence remains three to four times higher than the Allied average. And I need not document for you the Soviets' continuing military engagement beyond their borders.

But what if the USSR were to redirect substantial resources to the civil sector and pull back from military involvement abroad? Could this be taken as confirmation of a fundamental change in Soviet foreign policy objectives and the rôle of military power in their pursuit? It might but then again it might not. If our judgement is based on the historical record, there is no escaping the question whether the Soviet leadership has not again decided to step back temporarily from traditional policy objectives in order to gather strength to pursue them with greater vigour another day. Soviet history provides several examples of rapid reversals in Soviet policy. Think of Allied and Soviet co-operation in World War II and the concomitant loosening of communist party control over society. In the West there were great hopes that these tendencies would be accentuated in peace time. As subsequent experience showed, however, they were a response to the objective necessities of prosecuting the war successfully rather



than a manifestation of any intention to carry out far-reaching changes on either account. Or think of the professed Soviet commitment to detente with the West in the late 1960s and 1970s, and the widening gap which appeared between that commitment and Soviet behaviour as the decade progressed and the concept of mutually desired and practised detente was sapped of its credibility.

These two examples lead me to my next point. Unless the West had responded with determination and resolve in both these instances, there would have been little to halt or contain Soviet aggression and intimidation at our expense. Similarly, unless the Alliance maintains the cohesion and unity it has shown in recent years, prospects for building on the improvements which have been forthcoming in Soviet policy under Gorbachev could diminish and might even be compromised.

These observations also hold true when we turn to the second scenario, that of a full scale revolution from above, aimed at the introduction of a market economy, rule of law and political freedoms such as are enjoyed in the West. Putting aside the question of the likelihood of this coming to pass, what implications would it have for East - West relations?

First and foremost, this would mean a withering away of the fundamental socio-economic and political differences which divide East and West, and with them, the key factor giving rise to East - West rivalry. Would the Atlantic Alliance survive such a development? It would not, of course, its sole *raison d'être* was the management of East - West relations. But as an organisation whose objectives and values go profoundly deeper than the East - West conflict, the Alliance, while undergoing significant change, could be expected to remain the privileged forum for consultation and joint action in political and security affairs in the democratic world.

For the time being, however, the most important operational conclusion which can be drawn in contemplating the second scenario is that we are faced with a process which :

- could easily last a generation; i.e. well beyond the time-frame under consideration;

- would be fraught with ambiguities about the Soviet leadership's objectives throughout this period;
- would be continually overshadowed by the threat of domestic instability and possible new changes in leadership and policies;
- and finally, would call for continued vigilance on the part of the Alliance for some time to come.

Thus in dealing with either scenario, the best recipe for the Alliance in dealing with the Soviet Union through to the year 2000 is that which has been used most successfully in the past.

- maintaining political cohesion and effective political consultations on East-West developments, and strong and adequate defences;
- pursuing all possibilities for extending the dialogue and deepening co-operation on the whole range of issues which are pertinent to the East-West relationship, from arms control to human rights;
- and in this way, assuring for all NATO members an optimal framework for participating in the East-West process on both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

At the same time, the Alliance will have to redouble its efforts to understand the process of change in the Soviet Union, the continuing and possibly new threats to our security which it can engender and the opportunities which may be created for gradual improvements in the East-West relationship. We will also have to reinforce our efforts in the information field, to ensure that the right messages get through to our publics and their Eastern counterparts. And we will as well have to be prepared, where necessary, to go more often and more quickly to the offensive to ensure that the East-West agenda remains soundly structured and balanced. These are not easy tasks for an Alliance of sixteen sovereign nations in which decision by consensus is the golden rule. But by the same token, we have the enormous advantages of free-flowing information, free debate and freely-chosen political representatives to help us on our way.

In conclusion, the Alliance has made great progress in opening new and better prospects for East-West relations in the years ahead. All the same, it would be totally inappropriate to proclaim peace for a generation. We can, however, best provide peace for this and future generations by maintaining the resiliency of our political strategy and defence posture and maximising the strengths of our free societies. If we do so, we will have made a key, perhaps decisive, contribution to ensuring that the Soviet Union, and thus the world as a whole, could be a much better place in which to live in the year 2000. And if we do so, there is every reason to believe that the Alliance will continue to represent the cornerstone of the foreign policy of Turkey, and indeed of all its NATO partners, when the century turns.

**Discussant : H. Pfeiffer, Head, Force Planning Analysis Section,  
Division for Defence Planning and Policy, NATO**

Before commenting on Prof. Sezer's very interesting presentation I should like to make it clear that I am speaking for myself only, not for NATO. My views are of course influenced by my position and experiences in NATO, and I shall also occasionally quote agreed NATO texts, but I am not "a NATO spokesman"; taken as a whole my comments are personal and non-official.

On that basis I shall begin by criticising my own organisation and admitting right from the start that NATO is not very good when it comes to longer-term forecasting and analysis. In fact it is surprisingly and regrettably weak in this respect, at least in the field of defence planning.

In theory that should not be so, because for a number of years already it has been generally agreed that defence plans and defence policy need a longer-term perspective. The long lead-times required for the development and introduction of new weapons and equipment and for adjusting defence structures to changing conditions and requirements dictate that.

But in practice, in the working bodies of the Alliance, we devote most of our time and energy to the tasks and problems of today and tomorrow, and possibly next week. Anything further ahead must all too often wait.

Nevertheless we have made some progress recently in trying to place our day-to-day work into a framework of longer-term conceptual thinking. A particularly noteworthy element in these efforts has been the development of a so-called Conceptual Military Framework for long-term planning, now generally referred to as the CMF.

Although this CMF is largely dealing with military-technical matters which are of limited interest in the context of our discussions here, it contains some basic assumptions about the political framework within which defence planning is likely to take place, which I believe are relevant, and can be related, to Prof. Sezer's presentation.

When I refer to them as basic I mean this in the double sense of both fundamental and rather simple, non-elaborated.

Let me mention four of these and then comment on each in turn.

- (a) Allied security and defence policies will primarily be determined by East - West relations.
- (b) Canada, the United States and most of the democratic European nations will be members of the Alliance.
- (c) Broad public support for NATO action to counter the threat will continue.
- (d) The Alliance will continue to subscribe to the deterrence strategy laid down in MC 14/3.

That security and defence policies will continue to be primarily determined by East - West relations seems so obvious that it appears hardly worth mentioning. Yet, as I was preparing myself for this conference I was wondering whether the same view would be held here. Why that? I think if this conference had taken place ten or fifteen years earlier and I had read out the same simple basic assumptions, many in a mainly academically oriented audience would have seen this as a typical example of bureaucratic immobility and lack of imagination. At that period, at least in the part of Europe where I come from, there was a growing feeling that the East - West dimension of world politics,

including the power and security aspect, was about to be complemented and perhaps even to be overtaken by the North-South dimension, or the first and second versus third world context. As time went by, however, this feeling seems to have disappeared again. Nevertheless I was wondering whether Turkish academics, trying to look ahead to the year 2000, would devote some thoughts to this possibility.

Prof. Sezer has indeed, also under security aspects, devoted some thoughts to factors outside the NATO - Warsaw Pact context. But if I understand her correctly her overall assessment does not put into question the above-mentioned assumption about the dominance of East - West relations for security. Her remarks about Turkey's relations with the countries in the Middle East are essentially in a local context, concern Turkey as an immediate neighbour, not as the south-eastern outpost of the Western (or in that other perspective : Northern) world. The only possible exceptions I detected were one or two short references to the political impact of American aircraft operating from Turkish bases. But again, this impact, the associated risk, is seen either as a complication of the local political relations of Turkey in the area, or as a possible escalation into an East - West conflict.

And if I have interpreted her correctly, I would in fact agree with her. The concentration of military power in the two big alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, is such that for the foreseeable future their relations to each other will continue to dominate their security policies. The biggest risk emanating from conflicts without a direct East - West dimension —of which unfortunately there are many, and Prof. Sezer has mentioned a number— is their spilling over into the East - West context.

By these remarks I do not want to downgrade the importance of these conflicts in their own right, and the often tragic consequences for the peoples involved, which must be of concern to all of us. Nor am I questioning the particular significance of some of them to Turkey, notably for example the Iran - Iraq war. And we all know, of course, that conflicts in this part of the world can have the most serious economic consequences for our nations, with all that may entail. All I am saying is that for the external security of our nations, which is the subject of our defence plans

and policy, these conflicts or problems do not, and do not seem likely to, diminish the dominance of the East - West relations.

The assumption that membership in the Alliance will essentially remain as it is today calls for no more than a brief remark, I think. As far as Turkey's role is concerned, Prof. Sezer mentions some potential dangers or strains, mainly flowing out of possible frustration in the Turkish - U.S. and Turkish - European relations, but I don't think these difficulties are likely to undermine continuing Turkish membership in the Alliance and its integrated military structure. With regard to the latter, however, it will be necessary that we find, bilaterally and within the Alliance, a solution or at least a reasonable *modus vivendi* for the Greek - Turkish problems. But in the final analysis there is no sensible alternative to continued membership in NATO, neither for Turkey nor indeed for any of the other present members of the Alliance.

The next assumption, broad public support for NATO action to counter the threat, is no doubt more questionable than the others. Indeed one wonders whether it is not more a pious hope than a real assumption. In any event it will pose a considerable challenge to those who, by formulating and explaining NATO decisions, will have to maintain that support. Not the smallest of the challenges will be to maintain a degree of consensus on what constitutes the threat. Defence planners, national and international, tend to define the threat essentially in terms of capabilities, leaving aside the intentions of those who control the capabilities. The public, on the other hand, is concentrating more on what it perceives as the likely intentions of the potential adversary. The more threateningly he behaves, the easier it is to convince people of the need to keep up our guards, and vice versa. The key problem we face, apart from the difficulty of assessing intentions in the first place, is of course that defence plans and their execution cannot be changed nearly as quickly as intentions or the individuals whose intentions count. But while it is easy to make a logically sound case for orienting defence plans at capabilities, the fact remains that people who do not consider themselves particularly threatened are reluctant to maintain, let alone increase the allocation of resources to defence.

And the problem is not confined to the financial side of the defence effort. The reluctance to make sacrifices for defence when

there appears to be no imminent danger embraces also other elements of the defence effort which are not exactly popular for their own sake, such as conscription, exercises and last but not least, participation in nuclear matters. And that leads me to the fourth and last and most important of the assumptions I mentioned at the beginning: the continued validity of the current strategy of the Alliance.

Our strategy, as you all know, is the strategy of flexible response which replaced, about 20 years ago, the strategy of massive retaliation. It depends on a triad of forces - strategic nuclear, theatre nuclear and conventional. The assumption of the CMF, with which I personally would concur, is that in the year 2000 this strategy will still be valid. In the academic and media world this view is by no means unanimously held. In fact I am not at all sure that it is a majority view. But in the world of NATO defence planners it is hardly contested.

Prof. Sezer, it seems to me, has at least doubts about the future strategy. She speaks of the diminishing role of nuclear weapons, of the approaching new possibility of a nuclear-disarmed Europe, of a possible major upheaval in the principal political and military assumptions. She bases these views on the current arms control negotiations, especially the INF negotiations, on the strategic defence initiative SDI, and on the recent emphasis on conventional defence improvements.

I think one must distinguish between the prospects of reducing the numbers of nuclear weapons, even the elimination of certain types of nuclear weapons, and the reduction of their roles or importance. Even if the numbers were to decrease, and even if certain types, e.g. land-based missiles of a certain range, were to disappear, the importance of the two basic categories of nuclear weapons, with strategic and theatre roles, would in my view remain essentially the same. And the recent emphasis on conventional defence improvements is not motivated by a changing assessment of the role of nuclear weapons, but by the assessment that within the terms of the present strategy the conventional forces which we have need to be improved if they are to retain their proper role, if we are to avoid undue reliance on the early use of nuclear weapons.

And to show that these are not just personal views, let me quote to you from the two most recent Ministerial Communiqués of NATO, the first issued by Defence Ministers after their meeting at the end of May, the second by Foreign Ministers just little over a week ago at Reykjavik :

“We reaffirmed that there is, for the foreseeable future, no alternative to NATO’s concept for the prevention of war, which must continue to be based on an appropriate mix of conventional and nuclear forces; both are essential to provide a credible deterrent against all forms of aggression.”  
“We reaffirm that there is no alternative, as far as we can foresee, to the Alliance concept for the prevention of war - the strategy of deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces, each element being indispensable.”

I do not know how seriously official communiqués are taken in academic circles and whether they are read at all. But I can assure you, as one of those involved in drafting them, that they usually are the product of a lot of thought and long debates; they should be taken seriously.

In sum, therefore, I believe that Prof. Sezer has somewhat over-estimated - and consequently over-dramatised - the likelihood of fundamental changes in the strategic environment for the period up to the year 2000. That is not to say that I would exclude the possibility of some fairly dramatic developments in the field of arms control. But I do not think they would change the fundamental elements of our strategy, in particular our continuing reliance on a triad of strategic nuclear, theatre nuclear and conventional forces.

Where does that leave Turkey? With her large armed forces, the second largest in the Alliance, and her exposed geostrategic position, Turkey will no doubt remain a key factor in the East-West security equation. In particular with regard to the conventional leg of the triad the Turkish contribution will, if anything, become even more important than at present. The fact that Turkey does not have the demographic problems which make it more difficult for a number of other countries, notably Germany, to



maintain the size of their active forces, support that assumption. The main problem for Turkey will be the - costly - modernization requirements of the armed forces. To meet these, military assistance from her allies will remain essential, and the Alliance is keenly aware of this. But realism dictates that we do not expect too much from this source. Key to the future state of the Turkish forces will be the national effort. In this regard Prof. Sezer's presentation, in particular concerning the general trend towards modernization of the society and economy, and the special remarks about a developing national defence industry, paints an encouraging picture. I share her optimism, and I hope the future will prove us right.