

Contrasts and Solutions in the Caucasus

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The Turkish Approach to Transcaucasia and Central Asia

Baskin Oran

Turkish Foreign Policy Before the 1990s

The great earthquake that shook up international relations in the beginning of the 90s has also had very important repercussions in Turkey in general, and in Turkish foreign policy in particular. Turkish foreign policy has always had two pillars since the foundation of the Republic on October 29, 1923: Westernism, and a status quo policy (anti-revisionism).¹

The Kemalist nationalist struggle that started in 1919 right after the War was indeed the first of the revisionist movements in Europe, but unlike the two most important adherents of this movement (Germany and Italy), it came to stick to a strict policy of status quo as, according to the Treaty of Lausanne of July 24, 1923, it *nearly* reached its intended frontiers.² It had to turn its undivided attention inwards because it was necessary on the one hand to overcome the Kurdish uprisings, and on the other, start to consolidate the Westernist reforms.

1. Here, Westernism has two meanings. For domestic policy it means an endeavour to adopt the West as a whole by making reforms 'from above' ('The West', again, should be understood: 1) From the infrastructural point of view, as a private property-based socio-economic order, and 2) From the superstructural point of view, a parliamentary democracy-based socio-politico-cultural order). In foreign policy Westernism means to follow a policy aiming to be a political and military ally of the West. Anti-revisionism (Status quo policy) particularly means to be content with the present frontiers, therefore, a policy that does not try to change (i.e., broaden) them.
2. 'Nearly', because the treaty failed to include within the frontiers of the new Republic some of the regions of the Misaki-Milli, the National Pact that defined the intended frontiers of the nationalist movement. Voted by the last Ottoman House of Representatives (Meclisi Mebusan) on Jan. 28, 1920, this document had declared in Art. 1 that those regions under Ottoman sovereignty at the time of the 1918 Armistice were uncedable. The Lausanne Treaty had to yield Batumi (to Georgia of the USSR), Mosul (to the British mandate Iraq) and the Sandjak of Alexandretta (to the French mandate Syria). The last of these, however, was annexed in 1939 following a treaty with France.

Kemalist Turkey approached Britain and France step by step, especially after it solved its problems with them by agreeing to cede the future oil-rich region of Mosul to Britain in 1926. This was no indelicate move to make. Turkish diplomacy had to deploy a lot of energy as it could not afford to frighten or alienate the 'big neighbour in the north', the Soviet Union, the nightmare of the Ottomans and the only contributor to the independence movement of 1919-23. Turkish diplomacy was aided in this difficult endeavour not only by a welcome improvement of the West-Soviet relations, but also by the very policy of status quo it applied. This policy renounced, among other things, any claim on the Turkic peoples living in the Soviet Union in contradistinction with the Young Turks' Panturanist policies.

In brief, in the period between the foundation of the Republic (1923) and World War II, Turkish foreign policy had been Westernist, anti-revisionist, and very active.

During the unstable years leading to the War, Turkish Westernism gained momentum and ended in the Turkish-British-French alliance of October 19, 1939. Again, Turkish diplomacy had to deploy a painstaking activity because it now had to calm down both Germany and the Soviet Union. What's more, by this time the policy of status quo was hardly helpful in the precarious atmosphere of the war.

In brief, during World War II Turkish foreign policy kept on being Westernist, anti-revisionist, and very active.

At the end of the War, Turkey entered a period of security crisis which lasted about one year (1946), as the Soviet Union abrogated the 1925 non-aggression treaty and asked to control the Straits. Turkey resisted alone until the crisis subsided at the end of the year, but the psychological atmosphere of Turkey was ready for the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and the Marshall Plan in 1948. Thus Turkey made a decisive entry to the Western bloc.

After this, Westernism and anti-revisionism continued to be the pillars of foreign policy, but Turkish diplomacy was no more active. Turkey had come to develop a variant of Westernism, a 'more Westernist than the West' attitude that identified its national interest with those of the West. Since the Cold War was in the final analysis a frozen equilibrium, a traditionally status quoist Turkish foreign policy dragged into inertia as it started to view world politics through the lenses of NATO and the USA.

Complete surrender to the West had, after a period of about fifteen years, its dialectical result. This inertia, the only exception of which was the Cyprus policy at the end of the 1950s, gradually gave way to new openings of the Turkish diplomacy after the second half of the 60s as the Turks felt very disappointed about the American policy in Cyprus. Also, in need of new

sources of credit and new markets, Turkey now had to contemplate relatively closer relations with the Soviet Union and the non-aligned countries. But its main policy line continued throughout the Cold War, the only exception being partial and imperative activation caused from time to time by relations with an ally, Greece.

The Change that Came with the 90s

Such was the state of the Turkish foreign policy at the beginning of the 90s when a general feeling of euphoria surrounded Turkey firstly because communism and the centuries-old Russian nightmare had died, and secondly, a set of co-religious and co-ethnic cousins were unexpectedly but pleasantly born in Transcaucasia and Central Asia.

In this exuberant atmosphere slogans like 'Turkish world from the Adriatic to the China Sea'³ were heard from such mouths as that of the President of the Republic. Demands started to rise especially from the ranks of racist and/or religious right-wing circles for military intervention to the Nagorno-Karabakh turmoil in Azerbaijan (or to Bosnia, to Mosul in Iraq, or to the Gulf War).

The authors of these demands (which were by no means restricted to the right-wing circles mentioned above) not only required an abandonment of the status quo policy on the basis of concrete and isolated cases, but also attacked the very philosophy of this policy. According to them, Turkey faced a great opportunity and it could no longer be content with what it had. In such a lucky period, the Misaki-Milli frontiers were squeezing Turkey's throat and should be overlapped.

These were no new ideas and they were heard from time to time among the circles mentioned above. But in this atmosphere they started to be widely used in the national public opinion and the media, and this in turn influenced politicians and statesmen.

But it did not influence the most influential establishment in Turkish foreign policy: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This Ministry carried on its habitual cautious approach. Another prominent actor of the foreign policy decision-making was to join this stand of the Ministry during the Gulf War against the interventionist tendencies of President Özal: The General Staff of the Armed Forces.⁴

This approach of the Ministry did not only stem from the conditioning of

3. This slogan was first used by a former American 'political security officer' in Turkey, Paul Henze of the Rand Corporation.

4. Chief of General Staff, Torumtay, resigned as a protest against Özal's Gulf War policies, the only action of its kind so far in Turkey.

so many years of status quo policy. This institution had always remained somewhat aloof from the agitations of public opinion either because of the social class origins of its diplomats, or because of their educational backgrounds. The Ministry while approaching this 'mined' new world with traditional caution, also came to realize that there was no possibility of following the traditional policy of status quo as such, because the old status quo existed no more. A new world was being set up and Turkey had to participate actively in its formation if it was to have a place at least equal to its previous one. These were the reasons why the Ministry, despite the lack of experience or tradition, and the non-existence of 'textbooks' on the matter, opened twelve embassies in the former Soviet republics over a short time, and started active relations especially with the new Turkic states.

Turkey's Approach

Turkey's approach to the Turkic states of Transcaucasia and Central Asia went through three stages.

1) *Establishment of official relations*

Even before the Soviet Union was officially dissolved in December 1991, the Ministry sent a fact-finding mission composed of three diplomats to these countries, and the mission members turned in reports about the pros and cons of officially recognizing the new states. The factors in favour of recognizing them could be summarized as follows:

- a) Five of the new states stemming from the Soviet Union are of Turkic origin. In these countries people psychologically expect a lot from Turkey. Turkey has a moral obligation to recognize them.
- b) These are raw material producing countries. By recognizing them Turkey will be able to set up direct economic relations and will enter these markets ahead of other countries.
- c) These countries will help Turkey in international relations.
- d) As all these countries will recognize each other, there shouldn't be a problem that could alienate Russia. What's more, they will set up some kind of loose union in which these Turkic states, enjoying equal status and veto rights, could in a way control a Russian threat to Turkey.

As for the factors against, they could be summarized as follows:

- a) Russia has not renounced its aims to control these states. Russia will not be happy to see Turkey having good relations with them.
- b) The Western world recognized the Baltic states right away, but not the Turkic states. Turkey could well be the only one recognizing them.
- c) These countries are poor. They could be a burden on Turkey.
- d) These recognitions could well be interpreted as Turkey's redeployment of old Panturanian policies and as such could accentuate the isolated position that Turkey faces in international forums because of the Cyprus problem.
- e) Turkey's future lies in the West. It should not waste its energy in the East.

The report concluded that those states that officially called for recognition should be recognized, and that this should include (without discrimination) not only the Turkic states, but also all the states of the former Soviet Union. Russia was busy with internal problems. Turkish-Russian economic relations were based on mutual interests and if damaged, Russia's interests would be injured as well. What's more, these states having large populations and important natural resources would be recognized in due time by the Western states for economic interests and by the Arab world and Iran for counterbalancing the Turkish influence.

After this, a diplomat was sent to find suitable embassy buildings, and Turkey became the first country to recognize the Turkic states.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations, framework agreements were made under the name of the 'Friendship and Cooperation Agreement'. After these instruments, which consisted of short and general provisions about the establishment of various relations, more specific agreements were forthcoming. These instruments (the number of which is around 300 now) dealt with economic (promotion of investments, prevention of double taxation, etc.) and political, military, and also cultural (educational cooperation, scholarships, etc.) matters.

2) Establishment of the infrastructural ties

Turkey made efforts to establish ties in four categories:

- a) *Transportation.* Air links between these states were established though Moscow. In the beginning, Turkish Airways (THY) organized two flights a week among their capitals and between Ankara and these countries. As of the end of 1996, THY has regular flights to Baku, Ashkhabad, Almati, Bishkek and Tashkent. Airway companies of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan have regular flights to Istanbul. These airlines

made the region attractive for Turkish and foreign businessmen and also put Istanbul among the world's important crossroads.

- b) *Energy pipelines.* Turkey strived hard for pipe-lines to be built so that Azeri oil would discharge to Ceyhan, a Turkish port on the Mediterranean. This matter was most important for Turkey for obvious economic and political reasons. But these agreements signed at the very beginning between Turkey and Azerbaijan for oil, and between Turkey and Turkmenistan for natural gas, have not yet been realized as a result of Russian interference.
- c) *Telecommunications.* Turkey was very successful in this field. In October 1992 the first digital telephone network of the old Soviet Union was set up in Azerbaijan. Turkish PTT gave as a gift to Kazakstan extendible digital telephone networks (3,500 lines), and other Turkic states (2,500 lines each) and also earth stations. Thus these countries were opened to global communication through Turkey's communication satellite.
- d) *Human investments.* To create an alternative to Russia and to Russian culture, and also to set up cultural ties between Turkey and these states, about 11,000 education scholarships were given to students of these countries to come and study in Turkey. As of the end of 1996, a total of 1,819 secondary school students and 8,472 university students came to Turkey on these scholarships. Of the secondary school students 587 graduated, and 755 lost their scholarships for various reasons. Of the university students, 164 graduated and 2,280 lost their scholarships for various reasons. As of the end of 1996 again, 477 secondary school students and 6,028 university students were studying in Turkey.

The Turkish Ministry of National Education opened five learning centres in the Turkic states to teach the Turkish language as spoken in Turkey, twelve high schools and two professional education centres. Private persons and institutions (most of which are religious foundations) opened some ninety-three schools including two universities and three faculties.

Work on a common Turkish alphabet was started. In December 1991, the Azeri Parliament decided to adopt the Latin alphabet, and it was adopted in 1992. The Turkmenistan Parliament adopted it as of January 1996. The administrations in Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan took the same decision but implementation is pending.

The Turkish TV channel 'Avrasya' (Eurasia) started broadcasting in May 1992 for seven hours on weekdays, and thirteen hours during weekends. How-

ever, this initiative was not very successful because Turkic countries found it expensive to distribute this broadcasting by cable and also hesitated because of Russia. Now 'Avrasya' broadcasts through a rented private Russian channel.

3) *Credit and financing*

The Turkish Eximbank provided credits to over 300 Turkish firms working in the Turkic states. The Turkish private sector was especially interested in Azerbaijan because it was geographically and linguistically close and also the most developed of them all. Consequently some US\$500 million was invested there. A credit of US\$100 million was opened and electricity was given on credit to Georgia. To Armenia earthquake aid amounting to US\$240,000 in March 1992, humanitarian aid in February 1992, and 52,000 tons of wheat was given until the Azeri pressure prevented it in 1994.

Turkey opened a total credit of US\$916 million to the Turkic states. As of 1996, US\$569 million of this (62.1 percent) was used.

Turkey gave these states US\$143.39 million in humanitarian aid. 65 million of this was given to Azerbaijan and Nakhitcevan. As of the end of 1996, Turkey had transferred to these countries US\$860 million in Eximbank credits, credit sales and humanitarian aid.

The Turkish Eximbank planned to exercise its activity in three stages. In the first stage data was gathered for economic analysis. Units and measures in these countries were different than those in the West. To overcome this, the Turkish State Institute of Statistics and the Turkish Standards Institute was invited to help. In the second stage, the Turkish Economic Development Agency was entrusted with technical aid and coordination. In the third stage, a Trading Bank was planned to finance trade between the two sides.

Eximbank's resources leave a lot to be desired, but it has nevertheless helped private Turkish firms to make considerable progress in investments in 1995 and 1996. Important building contracts and industrial projects already completed, in progress, or newly signed, reach a total sum of over US\$5 billion (1.8 billion in Kazakstan, 279 million in Kirghizstan, 1.6 billion in Turkmenistan, 928.4 million in Uzbekistan, 500 million in Azerbaijan and 137.5 million in Tadjikistan). This sum, representing over 200 projects being carried out by almost 700 firms, make Turkey the second biggest investor in the Turkic countries after Russia (6 billion dollars).

Turkey's trade with these countries was US\$283.5 million in 1992, it reached US\$844.7 million in 1995. To make a comparison, in 1995 Turkey's trade with Rumania amounted to US\$669 million, with Bulgaria US\$585 million.

The Reasons for Turkey's Active Concern

This can be studied under two main headings:

1) *External Dynamics*

- a) At the very beginning, it was the United States who actually pushed Turkey towards these new countries,⁵ because she feared an Iranian influence in Transcaucasia and Central Asia. Turkey who has had a liberal economy since 1980, was considered by the US to be a model for these new states. But Western countries have started to enter these countries directly, either because they were disappointed over Turkey's economic capacity and/or because they have been able to organize themselves in the meantime.
- b) Turkey misinterpreted the great change of the early 90s. As it had no more common frontiers with the Soviet Union, it thought that Russia had disappeared along with communism. Therefore, it entered Transcaucasia like entering an empty space. It was soon to discover that this was only an illusion.
- c) Actually, what we had here was a 'demand' from the new Turkic states bewildered by an unexpected independence, rather than an 'offer' from Turkey. Turkey was not accustomed to such demands and was in a way 'sucked' into it.
- d) Turkey also wanted to regain its former strategic importance in the eyes of the West especially by filling the 'gap' in Transcaucasia.

2) *Internal dynamics*

- a) Economically, Turkey needed to hang onto something when the changes of the 90s took place. Firstly, after 1980 Turkey had opened up for the world economy and this necessitated finding new markets for its exports. Secondly, it had already lost some of its markets by then. Libya asked no more for workers and investment, and did not even pay its debts, and Iraq destroyed itself with the Gulf War. The European Union 'freezed' Turkey's demand for full membership in 1987. What's more, Turkey's losses as a result of the Gulf War were US\$9.5 billion even at the beginning (they now amount to some 20 billions). Thirdly, the world economy was also going through a process of restructuralization because of globalization.

5. See footnote 3.

Apart from these facts, Transcaucasia was economically and geographically very important because it was the road leading to Russia, an important economic partner, and Central Asia was rich especially in oil and natural gas. Turkmenistan's natural gas would reduce Turkey's dependence on Russia.

- b) Politically, the Turkic states were an important opening for Turkey. Firstly, Turkey had finally understood that helplessly waiting at the door of the European Union was hardly the solution. Being some kind of leader or spokesman for these countries would strengthen Turkey in the eyes of the Europeans. Secondly, this would also save Turkey's foreign policy from being 'indexed' to that of Greece, and thirdly, this would lessen Turkey's isolated position in the international arena.

In due time, Turkey's internal politics became one of the motors of this country's concern in Transcaucasia. One of these internal factors was the religious and especially Panturanian right-wing political parties and groups already mentioned. Under their influence, Turkish public opinion and the media felt obliged to strongly take sides in the Azeri-Armenian conflict. Especially under Abulfeiz Elcibey, the Panturanian-inclined President of Azerbaijan before Aliyev, the racist National Action Party (MHP) greatly increased its activity in Azerbaijan and consequently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was constantly pressurized by politicians.

A second factor of internal politics was an unexpected one: The lobbies of the Transcaucasian diaspora in Turkey. This diaspora, composed of Azeris, Georgians, Abkhaz, Circassians etc. totalling some 8 million, managed to keep alive the concern of the public and that of the politicians.

- c) Psychologically, Turkey, who felt internationally isolated, was also quite happy to discover some 'cousins' looking to her with hopeful eyes.

The Pros and Cons of Turkey's Transcaucasian and Central Asian Policy

Turkey's policy towards the Turkic states had certain benefits for both sides. The Turkic states profited from Turkey's experience in such fields as representation in international organizations, state-building, nation-building, institutionalization and entry to world markets. They also found much-needed psychological relief at the beginning.

It is also very probable that because of the Turkish factor, Russia and Iran paid more attention to the Turkic states than they otherwise might have done. Turkey profited from these relations by lessening its isolation, increasing its prestige and also by opening new markets. But, on the other hand, these relations bore certain drawbacks for Turkey which could be classified under three broad categories:

1) *Economically*. Turkey is a country with a vision, but not enough money. Making a lot of economic promises that it can't keep could be detrimental to Turkey's prestige, vis-à-vis these countries.

What's more, the credits given to the Turkic states are credits that Turkey obtained from Western countries, and this is the main reason why Eximbank credits are somewhat expensive for the Turkic states. Turkey is sure it will pay these credits back to the West in due time but it's not so sure that the Turkic states will be able to do the same. As a matter of fact, a donation of US\$78 million in total was made in 1992-93 to those countries with payment difficulties. This could be troublesome for a country like Turkey with a foreign debt of US\$80 billion and who spends 10 billion a year on the internecine war in the Southeast.

On the other hand, according to the Ministry reports, Eximbank credits are being paid back regularly, and private investors have already regained their money.

2) From the angle of *foreign policy*, Turkey's pursuits in Central Asia and especially in Transcaucasia have attracted the animosity of Russia and Iran. Firstly, the slogan that Turkey used in approaching these countries was 'an independent, democratic and secular regime with a free market economy'. The first word 'independent' drew the ire of Russia, the second word 'democratic' created a strong reaction from the old communist leaders of these countries, while the third word 'secular' generated the animosity of Iran.

Secondly, taken from a more practical angle, Russia was alarmed by certain happenings in Turkey. For instance, at the beginning, slogans like 'a Turkish world from the Adriatic to the China Sea' gave the impression that Turkey considers Russia as nonexistent. Moreover, certain groups in Turkey approached the Turkic states with a 'Turco-Islamic Synthesis' which had Panturkist and Panislamist overtones; some groups of Caucasian diaspora were voluntary fighters in the Chechen war, and the Islamist Mayor of Istanbul opened a park named 'Park Dudayev'.

3) From the angle of Turkey's *domestic politics*, the emergence of Turkic states

strengthened significantly right-wing political parties. Young militants of the racist MHP mentioned above were trained to use arms in paramilitary camps during Elcibey's presidency in Azerbaijan; in cases like this, Azerbaijan served as a 'rented womb' for the MHP. Turkish racist circles went so far as to stage a military coup in Baku in 1995 to put down President Aliyev and reinstall Panturanist Elcibey. The coup was aborted when the Turkish administration in Ankara warned Aliyev just in time. Another adventure like this could be fatal for Turkish foreign policy.

Taken together with the Turkish reaction against Kurdish nationalism, this strengthening of the racist tendency is bound to be detrimental to Turkish politics. Speaking of the Kurdish question in Turkey, one could as well touch upon the fact that some Turkish citizens of Kurdish descent find it unfair that Turkey spends so much money and energy in Turkic states when, in Turkey, they live in miserable conditions.

Finally, there is also the danger, to say the least, that ethnic conflicts in Transcaucasia may be reflected back to Turkey where ethnic balance is rather delicate. As a matter of fact, the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict echoes even on TV panel discussions in Turkey. The conflict between these two ethnic elements which was totally unheard of before the 1990s is taking such a position that they start to 'separate their coffee houses', a political expression dating from the political practices of the 1950s and meaning to hate each other.

What's more, the animosity between Abkhaz and Georgian diasporas is influencing the politicians and these politicians try to influence the Ministry and the Government, making difficult their rational functioning. When the Abkhaz diaspora got organized and sent humanitarian aid to ethnic Abkhaz fighting against the Georgian government, Turkey was unable to stop this and had to increase its humanitarian aid to Georgia by the same amount.

Turkey's Transcaucasian Policy: A Conclusion

1) Upon the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 a 'Caucasian Wall' arose between Turkey and its 'large neighbour to the north'. This was for the second time in history.

The first 'wall', set up by the three 'bourgeois governments' of Transcaucasia in 1918 and demolished by the communists in 1920, had scared the Turkish nationalists under Mustafa Kemal very much, because the absence of a common frontier would hinder Soviet aid — the only contributor to the nationalist cause.

In contrast to the first, the rising of the second 'wall' made Turkey very happy because this was the end of the common frontier with Russia, actually

a more dangerous neighbour than the USSR, given the fact that the West would not so readily support Turkey against 'capitalist' Russia as they might have done against the 'communist' Soviet Union.

Today all three Transcaucasian states are weak and unstable and this is not in Turkey's interests at all. Rather, Turkey's interests would be better served if they were as strong and stable as possible. Otherwise, Russia will be back.

But, as a matter of fact, Russia is back — at least with its military bases, thanks to destabilizing conflicts such as Azeri-Armenian and Abkhaz-Georgian. Without the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the chances of realizing the Azeri oil pipeline (Baku-Ceyhan line previously mentioned) so badly desired by Turkey, would have been considerably higher.

The Ministry has a realistic Transcaucasian policy. From this point of view, it is an uninterrupted continuation of the Republic's traditional status quo policy. But this policy is hindered by outside powers like Russia, Iran and also Azerbaijan, as well as domestic circles that block the way for normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. Yet, the keystone to Turkish policy in Transcaucasia is Armenia:

- a) Armenia is the shortest route for Azeri oil and the Turkmen natural gas pipelines.
- b) Armenia's continuing weakness is the reason why this country is militarily dependent on Russia and economically dependent on Iran, both rivals of Turkey in the region.
- c) The end of the Azeri-Armenian conflict would lessen the chances of the Turkish racist right-wing.
- d) Turkey will have no more troubles like the alleged 'Kurdish Republic of Lacin' in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- e) A Turkish-Armenian friendship would be a drastic blow to the 'Armenian Genocide' problem that badly harmed the Turkish image ever since 1910.

I am of the opinion that the Armenian President, Ter-Petrosian, is the most important promoter of such a rapprochement. As a matter of fact, he prohibited the camps set up by the Kurdish PKK organization in Armenia, saw that the Armenian nationalist Tashnaksutyun Party was closed, and its leaders jailed on drug charges, deleted the 'Genocide clause' in the Armenian Constitution and even made a declaration as to an eventual Armenian withdrawal from occupied Azeri lands should the relations with Turkey become normalized. A free seaport on the Black Sea for Armenia, now suffering severe economic

hardship, would probably bring a lot of advantages to both sides. But all this is incumbent on the Azeri-Armenian conflict stopping and this would be very much against Russian and Iranian interests.⁶

2) Russia is acting nowadays as if it would like to give the maximum discomfort possible to Turkey. It refuses to comply with the rules of the CFE agreement concerning disarmament in Caucasia, it has permitted the PKK to open a 'Kurdish House' in Moscow, obstinately sells missiles to Cyprus against Turkey, and wants to sell long range missiles to Iran.

All this is taking place not only because Turkey is a serious rival concerning the Azeri and Kazakh oil, and the Turkmen natural gas pipelines, but especially because some groups in Turkey are very much against Russia's manner of dealing with delicate ethnic problems, e.g., sending volunteers to fight in Chechenia.

An unhealthy relationship between Turkey and Russia cannot possibly help to establish lasting relations in Transcaucasia, historically and geostrategically the 'backyard' of Russia. Slogans and actions disturbing Russia should at all costs be stopped, because they are not in the interests of Turkey either.

After all, a secession of Chechenia from Russia is technically no different than the secession of the Southeast region from Turkey.

6. Postscript: After Ter-Petrossian had to resign in 1998, the old Armenian nationalism is back in Armenia. The Tashnaksutyun Party has reopened. These developments are welcome to the Russian Federation, but fatal to both Turkey and Armenia.