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International Influences on the Turkish Transition to Democracy in 1983

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International Influences on the Turkish Transition to Democracy in 1983

Case Study Report First Draft

Senem Aydin-Düzgit & Yaprak Gürsoy

1. Introduction

On September 12, 1980 the Turkish Armed Forces overthrew their democratic government, claiming that anarchy, terror, separatism, and economic crises had crippled Turkish society. In a publicized speech, Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren accused the political parties for inciting domestic terror between leftist and rights groups and not taking on the responsibilities to prevent chaos. In the same speech, General Evren implied that the military would return to its barracks and lead a transition to democracy after law and order was restored and a new constitution was prepared.¹ In order to achieve these stated goals, the chief of the general staff and the military commanders of the army, navy, air-force, and gendarmerie assumed control of the country as the National Security Council (NSC). A cabinet was formed under the leadership of former Admiral Bülend Ulusu and including other military officers and civilians.

The NSC kept its promise, but to a limited degree. It ruled Turkey for approximately three years, until the November 6, 1983 elections. In October 1981, a Consultative Assembly with 160 members was established to draft the new democratic constitution. After the generals of the NSC consented to the draft, the constitution was ratified by more than 90 percent of the population in a referendum. The same referendum also approved the new position of General Evren as the President of the Turkish Republic for the subsequent seven years.

¹ For the full text of the speech, see the volume prepared during the military intervention by the National Security Council Undersecretary, Milli Güvenlik Konseyi Genel Sekreterliği, *12 Eylül Öncesi ve Sonrası* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1981), 196-203.

The ratification of the constitution was a clear signal that there would be a transition to democracy during the following year, as the NSC had declared in December 1981. However, it soon became clear that this democracy was going to be restricted since the NSC limited political participation to only three pre-approved parties. Most of the politicians before the 1980 coup and their parties were banned from politics, including the leaders of the two largest parties, Bülent Ecevit and Süleyman Demirel. Among three parties that were allowed to run in the November 1983 elections, the military clearly favored the center-right party headed by Turgut Sunalp, a former general of the Turkish army. Despite this preference of the military, it was another center-right party founded by Turgut Özal that won 45 percent of the votes and received the mandate to form the first civilian government after the 1980 intervention. Özal was a former bureaucrat and the minister of state responsible for the economy during the military-led interim government. Even though he had taken part in the junta cabinet, he was not favored by the generals partly because of his conservative background as a politician before the 1980 coup.² Yet shortly after the election results, the military generals relinquished their control in favor of Turgut Özal, marking Turkey's transition back to civilian rule.³

After the 1983 elections, General Kenan Evren continued to serve as the president and the former commanders of the NSC functioned as his advisors in the Presidential Council. The military also received important political prerogatives and reserve and tutelary powers in the 1982 constitution.⁴ The constitution itself was highly criticized for its restriction of basic

² Kenneth Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition: The West's Neglected Ally* (London: Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies, 1984), 9.

³ For details of this transition period, see C. H. Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, second edition (Beverly: The Eothen Press, 1990), 49-88, William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 256-71, Ilkay Sunar and Sabri Sayari, "Democracy in Turkey: Problems and Prospects," in Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 182-6, Frank Tachau and Metin Heper, "The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 16, 1 (October 1983): 27-32.

⁴ For the prerogatives of the military after the coup d'état, see Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics* 2, 1 (January 1997): 151-66.

political, social, and minority rights.⁵ Indeed, the 1983 transition did not establish a consolidated democracy in Turkey. But, formal military rule ended at the end of 1983, qualifying Turkey as a minimal electoral democracy. Especially significant in this regard was the victory of Özal's Motherland Party in 1983. If the November elections had been won by the party supported by the military, this would have raised doubts about the freedom of the elections. In addition, if Turgut Sunalp had been elected to become the new prime minister, this would have indicated the continuation of military rule since he was a former general himself. Thus, Turgut Özal's electoral success -combined with the opposition of the generals to his victory before the elections, his civilian leadership, and his subsequent non-military government- denotes a democratic breakthrough in Turkey after the September 1980 coup.⁶

This paper analyzes international influences on the transition to democracy in November 1983. We focus on the interaction of domestic and external factors on the decision of the NSC to hold elections and the victory of Turgut Özal. It is our contention that the Turkish military intervention did not face significant opposition from the United States and the European states and institutions. We support this argument with in-depth interviews of American, European, and Turkish officials, with available memoirs and books written by state officials and Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren, with foreign newspaper articles published on Turkey between 1980 and 1983, and with official government documents from the US and Europe. These resources show that there were no substantial international sanctions against the Turkish military regime, even though the European Community and some European countries suspended aid to Turkey. There were criticisms in the Council of Europe, the European Community, in the international press, and in the US Congress; however these never amounted to a major international intervention for democracy in Turkey.

⁵ See for instance, *Human Rights in Turkey's "Transition to Democracy": A Helsinki Watch Report* (New York and Washington, D.C.: U.S. Helsinki Watch Committee, 1983), 66-75.

⁶ Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition*, 9-11.

Yet, we argue that international actors still played important roles in the democratic transition despite the lack of sanctions against the Turkish military. Indeed, the Turkish case demonstrates that economic, political, and diplomatic sanctions are not the only necessary mechanisms for inducing a transition from military rule. Similarly, the Turkish case shows that democracy promotion by providing aid to opposition forces is not always beneficial. During the aftermath of the coup, the US continued to grant aid to the military while the Europeans cautiously expressed concern for the suspension of democracy. The international community did not attempt to empower domestic opposition forces that could have challenged military rule. Thus, it seemed that international actors supported authoritarianism, rather than democracy in Turkey.

However, continuing assistance to the Turkish Armed Forces produced a counterintuitive result, as the American and European actors actually anticipated. Turkey's Western allies in these Cold War years strongly believed that Turkey should not be isolated since it was feared that this alienation would lead Turkey to move further away from the Western camp of democratic nations. The underlying argument was that it would be more difficult to induce democratic transition if Turkey cut off its ties with the US and Europe. Thus, international actors (especially the US) did not provide assistance to domestic opposition forces and continued to support the military. As a result, the relative balance of power among domestic groups was kept in favor of the military. The Turkish military was successful in restoring order and repressing opposition forces. This, in turn, gave the military generals confidence that they achieved their initial goals when they first planned the intervention, and therefore, they can lead a transition to democracy. The military's own persuasion that it should return to its barracks and the fact that the international community believed they would do so were critical factors in determining the continuing support from external actors.

Second, economic accomplishments during military rule with considerable American, World Bank, and IMF assistance also contributed to the democratic transition. One of the initial goals of the military was to fix the economic crisis. Relatively good performance in this realm, similar to restoring order and repression, increased the confidence of the generals and contributed to their decision to lead a transition to democracy. Additionally, implementation of a successful adjustment program in coordination with the World Bank and IMF increased the popularity of Turgut Özal among the Turkish public as the architect of the economic plan that was implemented during the military regime. This facilitated his triumph in the 1983 elections. Özal's contacts with Western political actors made it difficult for the generals to keep Özal out of the race and ignore the electoral results once the ballot was cast.

Finally, the Europeans pressured the military to keep its word and return the country to democracy. The military generals had to frequently justify their actions in the international arena and assure that they do not want to stay in power for a long period of time. The military was pushed to declare a timetable for return to democracy approximately one year after the coup. These gestures that were taken to satisfy the international community increasingly bound the military rulers by their own words to eventually hold relatively free and fair elections and consent to its results. Without this European pressure, in all likelihood, the military would still have returned to its barracks since this was what they intended at the beginning and military rule was successful during the interim period. However, the gentle probing of the external actors fostered and encouraged the military to go ahead with the transition, let Özal run in the elections, and allow him to form the new civilian cabinet after November 1983.

2. Domestic Factors in Explaining the 1983 Transition to Democracy

There were three interrelated domestic factors that led to a transition to democracy in 1983. First, Turkish political regime had been democratic for several decades prior to the coup d'état in 1980. The Turkish Armed Forces intervened in democracy two times before; but these coups were short-lived and the military returned to its barracks each time. Second, the military intervention in September 1980 was highly supported by the Turkish public and significant numbers of the political and economic elites. The military's intervention was seen as a bitter pill that needed to be swallowed for stability. As a result, the NSC did not face major domestic opposition to its rule. Finally, the military was successful in restoring law and order by suppressing opposition groups and stabilizing the economy. The success of the military gave rise to a quick return to democracy guided by the armed forces.

The Role of the Armed Forces in Turkish Democracy prior to September 1980:

The Turkish Republic was established after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. The Turkish nationalist forces, under the leadership and command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, refused to accept the partition of Anatolian territories by Allied Forces. In 1923, the Lausanne Treaty internationally recognized the new republic. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Republican People's Party (RPP), as the party responsible from the military victory, carried out several political, social, and economic reforms that molded a secular republic in a predominantly Muslim country. The Kemalist ideology envisioned a modern Turkish society that would be part of the politically and sociologically more advanced Western countries. Until 1946, the RPP ruled the country as a single-party regime under the presidency of, first, Kemal Atatürk, and then after his death,

İsmet İnönü.⁷ Even though the Turkish Armed Forces were not directly involved in government during this period, they supported the policies and reforms of the RPP and served as the guardians of the Kemalist, secular, nationalist, and pro-Western revolution.⁸ Indeed, the RPP membership included significant numbers of retired military officers⁹ and both Atatürk and İnönü were previous commanders of the Turkish Armed Forces.

During the RPP rule, regular elections were held, but only candidates approved by the single party were allowed to run at the ballot box. Multi-party elections were held for the first time in Turkey in 1946 when a group of politicians, supported by Turkish landed elites and businessmen, split from the RPP to found the center-right Democratic Party (DP). Democracy in Turkey was established in 1950 when the RPP leadership conceded losing to DP in the national elections held that year.¹⁰ Even though several high ranking military officers opposed the Democratic Party, the Turkish Armed Forces on the whole supported the Democrats and the transition to democracy.¹¹ However, this support did not last long and in May 1960 junior officers staged a coup. The Democratic Party was closed down and three leaders of the party, including Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, were executed.¹² The junta prepared a new constitution and returned to its barracks approximately one year after the coup.

⁷ For more information on the founding of the Turkish Republic and the reforms, see Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 31-101, Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic," *World Politics* 11, 4 (1959): 513-51, Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Developments in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1978), Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Rejiminin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

⁸ George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics (Part I)," *Middle East Journal* 19, 1 (1965): 55-6, Ümit Özdağ, *Ordu-Siyaset İlişkisi (Atatürk ve İnönü Dönemleri)* (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1991), 43, 86-8.

⁹ See the table showing occupations of deputies in national assemblies in Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1965), 181.

¹⁰ For the causes of this transition, see Kemal Karpaz, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), Taner Timur, *Türkiye'de Çok Partili Hayata Geçiş* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2003).

¹¹ In fact, there were several secret organizations in the military that supported the Democratic Party. Abdi İpekçi and Ömer Sami Coşar, *İhtilalin İç Yüzü* (İstanbul: Uygun Yayınevi, 1965), 11-24, Özdağ, *Ordu-Siyaset İlişkisi*, 141-4, 164-8.

¹² Walter Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution 1960-1961: Aspects of Military Politics* (Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1980). For more information on the DP, see Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti: Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2003).

From 1961 until 1971, the center-right Justice Party (heir to the DP) dominated politics. The 1960s also witnessed the rise of leftist movements as a result of industrialization and influence of the Soviet Union. The military hierarchy believed that the JP government and Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel were unable to suppress the leftist threat originating from the intellectuals and spreading among junior officers. As a result, in March 1971, the military commanders issued a memorandum which obligated the formation of a caretaker government. The 1971 intervention did not close down the parliament; however, by threatening a full intervention, it forced governments to enact laws and change the constitution according to the wishes of the armed forces. In 1973, new elections were held and the military generals withdrew from active political intervention.¹³

The involvement of the military in Turkish politics prior to 1980 was characterized by two specific features. First, the Turkish Armed Forces appeared as non-greedy since they did not hold on to power for long periods of time despite the fact that they had the opportunity to do so. During the single-party era, military commanders who established the republic gave up their posts in the army to serve as parliament deputies, prime ministers, and even presidents. Similarly, after the transition to democracy, the military intervened with overt coups two times, but did not establish an authoritarian regime.

The second characteristic of the military in politics was that the Turkish Armed Forces had always justified their interventions and involvement in democracy by threats to the Kemalist reforms. The Democratic Party was accused of having dictatorial tendencies and infringing secularism. In the 1960s, political parties were blamed for not being able to cope with the leftist and communist activities. The military perceived itself as the guarantor of the Turkish Republic from internal threats with its self-declared commitment to nationalism, secularism, democracy, and the West. Even though “it is impossible to determine whether the

¹³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 288-326.

army returned to barracks out of love for democracy or because it found it difficult (and adverse to its own institutional interests) to rule for long periods,” one thing is for certain: most outside observers and a significant majority of the Turkish public has come to believe that it is not in the Turkish Armed Forces traditional character to establish a long-term military dictatorship and that they are the true guardians of the Kemalist republic.¹⁴

The Turbulence of the 1970s:

The seven years after the military’s withdrawal from active politics in 1973 and that led up to the 1980 intervention in Turkey were identified with increasing terrorism and street violence. In these years, leftist activities spread to the lower classes. At the same time, rightist movements came into existence fuelled by radical political parties. The leftist versus rightist clashes in the streets terrorized the population. This ideological conflict was combined with increasing religious fundamentalism and Kurdish separatist movements in the eastern regions.¹⁵ In 1978, more than 800 people died and thousands of people were wounded. The number of victims increased in the following years, reaching to 20 deaths per day during the weeks that preceded the military intervention.¹⁶

Mainstream political parties, especially the Justice Party (JP) and Republican People’s Party (RPP), were blamed for the escalation of violence. Because neither party held the majority in the parliament, their cooperation was essential to deal with terrorism. However, rather than cooperating with each other, both parties formed coalition governments with the radical parties, namely the Islamist National Salvation Party and the ultra-nationalist National Action Party. One major result of this type of cooperation was the paralysis of the parliament

¹⁴ Tanel Demirel, “Soldiers and Civilians: The Dilemma of Turkish Democracy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, 1 (January 2004): 132-45, quote from 132.

¹⁵ For the birth of these movements, see Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974).

¹⁶ Cüneyt Arcayürek, *Demokrasinin Sonbaharı: 1978-1979* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1985), 549-56, Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren’in Anıları*, Volume 1 (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1990), 285, 298, 300, 499, Frank Tachau and Metin Heper, “The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey,” *Comparative Politics* 16, 1 (1983): 25.

and the state. The national assembly could not select a president for several months despite multiple voting sessions, which completely disabled legislative work for six months prior to the coup. Similarly, with increased powers as government coalition partners, radical political parties infiltrated bureaucratic organizations and placed their own sympathizers in administrative positions.¹⁷ Dealing with terrorism became problematic because state institutions and even the police forces were not impartial anymore. Even when governments called in the military to help with violence, the RPP and JP could not agree on how much power the military commanders should have or enact the necessary laws that would increase the powers of the martial law commanders.¹⁸

Another issue the major political parties could not agree on was economic policy. During the last two years of democracy, the economic situation worsened as a result of the exhaustion of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). ISI strategy in Turkey was combined with strong anti-export bias thanks to an overvalued exchange rate, government financing of inefficient state economic enterprises, and expansionary policies funded by short-term external borrowing. Increases in the world oil prices at the beginning of the 1970s caused increases in prices and the drop in the volume of imports. The result was widespread scarcity of basic commodities, accumulation of foreign debt, and increasing inflation and unemployment.¹⁹ GNP growth rates declined from 10.7 percent in 1971 to -1.1 in 1980. Growth in the industrial sector decreased from an average of 9.3 percent in the first half of the 1970s to 1.9 percent in the second half. While the inflation rate was 6.7 percent in 1970, it increased to 107.2 percent in 1980. Unemployment, on the other hand, reached 14.8 percent.²⁰

¹⁷ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Beverly: The Eothen Press, 1985), 114-23.

¹⁸ For the political situation before the 1980 coup from the military's perspective see Milli Güvenlik Konseyi Genel Sekreterliği, *12 Eylül Öncesi ve Sonrası*, 17-183.

¹⁹ Jayanta Roy, "The Turkish Economy: Assessment of a Recovery under a Structural Adjustment Program," EDI Working Papers (Washington, D.C.: The Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, 1989), 3-11.

²⁰ These numbers are compiled *ibid.*, 8, 33. For an overall assesment of the crisis see Gülten Kazgan, *Türkiye Ekonomisinde Krizler (1929-2001): 'Ekonomi Politik' Açısından Bir İrdeleme* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005), 173-93

Scarcity, high inflation, and unemployment affected people from all walks of life, but especially the lower income groups. Strike activity increased considerably. The number of work days lost multiplied more than ten times between 1973 and September 1980.²¹ In addition, frustrated members of the lower classes started to engage in radical movements. Especially young urban residents whose parents had migrated from the rural areas to shantytowns gravitated to violence and began to engage in terrorist activities.²² The economic crisis and lower class activism also disrupted business for the economic elites, resulting in a rift between the business community and the political parties.²³ The leading business enterprises and associations blamed the politicians for not being able to manage the crisis, for refusing to readjust the economy, and giving in to the radical groups.

In January 1980, the last government formed by the Justice Party initiated a major economic program in accordance with the suggestions of the IMF. The program would in effect abolish ISI strategy in Turkey and start a new export-led growth period. The program envisioned open trade borders for imports, incentives for exports and foreign investment, devaluation of the Turkish lira, deregulation of prices, privatization, free and floating interest rates, tax reform, and rescheduling of external debt.²⁴ This program was welcomed by the business community. However, labor and inefficient enterprises were threatened by liberalization. As a result, the program was not fully implemented by the JP due to its unpopular effects.²⁵

²¹ Calculated from M. Şehmuz Güzel, *Türkiye’de İşçi Hareketleri: 1908-1984* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1996), 242.

²² Migration from rural areas to urban centers started simultaneously with industrialization during the Democratic Party governments in the 1950s. Çağlar Keyder, *State & Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and New York: Verso, 1987), 135-40, 159-63, A. Haluk Ülman and Frank Tachau, “Turkish Politics: The Attempt to Reconcile Rapid Modernization with Democracy,” *Middle East Journal* 19, 2 (Spring 1965): 155-6.

²³ For the relations of the business community with the political parties, see Henri J. Barkey, *The State and the Industrialization Crisis in Turkey* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 109-72. Also see, Ayşe Buğra, *State and Business in Turkey: A Comparative Study* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 130-40.

²⁴ For the structural adjustment program, see Roy, “The Turkish Economy,” 12-46.

²⁵ Kazgan, *Türkiye Ekonomisinde Krizler*, 192-3.

Thus, when the military took over on September 12, 1980, Turkey faced several challenges, the most important ones being terrorism, lack of personal safety, and economic crisis. The commanders believed that all of the political parties must be closed down and a new constitution must be enacted. Since the politicians and the constitution were seen responsible from the chaos, the generals believed that they could fix democracy by guiding it. In line with the Kemalist ideology and the previous involvement of the military in politics, it was announced that there would be a return to stability and democracy.²⁶ By appointing Turgut Özal to the minister of state responsible for the economy, the Turkish Armed Forces also quickly gave the sign that the export-led growth program of the Justice Party would be implemented. Özal was a former employee of the World Bank, a well-known figure in business circles, and the chief architect of the economic program announced in January. His presence gave confidence that the economy would be in good hands.

Support for the Military Intervention:

Until the transition to democracy in 1983, the military intervention was relatively successful in repressing what it perceived as threatening groups and in putting an end to violence and terrorism. A year after the intervention, there were only 282 political killings, which is a substantial achievement given that the death toll was ten times more during the year before the coup. Also, until September 1983, the military arrested 43,000 people suspected of being terrorists and caught 734,000 weapons and 3 million rounds of ammunition.²⁷ In the economic sphere, as well, the military was relatively successful.²⁸ After

²⁶ Four days after the intervention, Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren held a press conference and declared the main goals of the coup, which essentially relates to the reestablishment of a stable democracy in accordance with the Kemalist principles. Milli Güvenlik Konseyi Genel Sekreterliği, *12 Eylül Öncesi ve Sonrası*, 205-12.

²⁷ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 251-2.

²⁸ The economic and political successes of the military were reported in the USA in several newspaper articles. See for examples Kevin Michel Cape, "Turkey: Leftover Challenges for New Leaders," *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov 9, 1983, pg.20, Metin Demirsar, "Turkey Gets Capital Infusion by Coaxing Foreign Creditors to Invest Funds Owed," *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec 4, 1981, pg. 38, Paul Henze, "Turkey Pulling Itself Together," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Aug. 13, 1981, pg. 12, Barry Newman, "At the Crossroads: Turkey

the intervention, the economy grew on average close to 4 percent (thanks mainly to the growth in industry), exports boomed, Turkey's balance of payments enhanced, tax revenue doubled, and inflation declined to around 30 percent.²⁹ Compared with the previous democracy period, unpopular reforms were carried out by the military more successfully, since worker movements were forcefully repressed under martial law.

Throughout the interim government, the Turkish Armed Forces remained unified. Several months before the intervention, the military commanders unanimously agreed to stage a coup d'état. They consulted junior generals and received their approval as well. There was no opposition from the armed forces throughout the interim military rule.³⁰ The coup was supported also among some of the political elites. Kenan Evren met with several politicians before the military intervention took place and got (at least implicitly) their support for a coup.³¹ After the intervention, most politicians chose not to actively oppose the military.³² Major exceptions to this indifference were Bülent Ecevit and Süleyman Demirel, former prime ministers and the leaders of two major parties. Ecevit was imprisoned for several months for his criticisms and both leaders spent the first months of the coup under house arrest. Their suppression resulted in the absence of any significant anti-military movement.

The military also enjoyed support from Turkish society. This public endorsement was due to the instability of the 1970s, the success of the military in power, and the belief among

Seems to be on the Road to Democracy, But Its Route There Appears Very Undemocratic," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jun 15, 1982, pg. 56, "Turkey Chooses Democracy," *The Wall Street Journal*, Nov 8, 1983, pg. 34.

²⁹ Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, 58-61.

³⁰ Mehmet Ali Birand, Hikmet Bila, and Rıdvan Akar, *12 Eylül: Türkiye'nin Miladı* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 1999), 185. In his memoirs Kenan Evren explains the unity of the armed forces with concrete examples. See Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları* Vol. 1, 434, 437, 456-61, 505, 519, Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Volume 3 (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1991), 248. Also in our interview he stressed the coherence of the military. Kenan Evren, Personal Interview, Bodrum, July 18, 2005.

³¹ Ümit Cizre, *AP-Ordu İlişkileri: Bir İnkılabın Anatomisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), 240-4. For Evren's own account of these meetings, see Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Vol. 1, 285, 342, 345, 356-7, 411, 427, 437-8, 446.

³² See the appeals of the Turkish politicians to the Europeans and their belief that the military would make a transition to democracy in Marvine Howe, "Turkey's Junta Lobbies to Stay in European 'Club'," *New York Times*, Mar 9, 1981, pg. A9.

the Turks that the armed forces were democratic and guardians of the Kemalist republic.³³ Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren was seen at the time as a charismatic, “grandfatherly,” and “kind-hearted” figure.³⁴ Among the elite groups too the coup was welcomed. The economic program the military implemented under Özal was perceived positively “by the private sector, in general, and big business, in particular” and became one of the reasons why the business community supported the 1980 intervention.³⁵ The junta closed down radical labor unions and declared strikes illegal, which meant a return to normal economic activities for most factory owners. Reflecting the sentiments of the majority of the economic elites, the leader of the Confederation of Turkish Employer Associations (TİSK), Halit Narin, in an interview conducted several years after the coup argued that

During the 20 years prior to 1980 all laws were enacted against the employers. For some reason, during those times, our parliament was busy with matters that opposed the employers and benefited the workers. And after 1980, we, with the belief that the system would be more balanced from now on, said something that meant ‘for the 20 years they were at ease, from now on we will be at ease.’³⁶

Naturally, not all groups were satisfied with the military takeover despite the popularity it enjoyed among the general public. Radical political parties and some of the leftist and rightist groups that engaged in terrorist activities were the main targets of the junta. They opposed the intervention as expected. Especially leftist associations that were closed down, such as the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK), were critical of the military intervention. However, these groups and parties were weaker vis-à-vis the armed

³³ Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, 49, Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition*, 10. Several foreign newspapers reported the public support for the military intervention. Since the Turkish newspapers could not have been entirely impartial during this period, these foreign reports provide the best neutral account of public opinion during this period. For examples of such articles, see Don A. Schanche, “Most Turks Believe Military Rulers Will Keep Pledge to Cede Power,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 1982, pg. E1, Eric Morgenthau, “Conventional Coup: In Turkey, a Takeover by Military is Almost Normal Part of Politics,” *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 15, 1980, pg. 1, Edward Walsh, “Turkey Tests ‘Controlled Democracy’,” *The Washington Post*, Nov 6, 1983, pg. A17.

³⁴ Alvin Shuster, “Military Marks Time in Ruling Turkey,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 15, 1981, pg. D7.

³⁵ The Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TUSIAD), which represents big private business, openly declared its gratefulness to the 1980 coup. Yesim Arat, “Politics and Big Business: Janus-Faced Link to the State,” in Metin Heper ed., *Strong State and Economic Interest Groups: the Post-1980 Turkish Experience* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 141-2. The Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TUSIAD) openly declared its gratefulness to the 1980 coup.

³⁶ Birand, Bila, and Akar, *12 Eylül: Türkiye’nin Miladı*, 225.

forces. First, in terms of numbers, they represented a minority of Turkish society and lacked the necessary budget, weapons, and intelligence skills to sustain a conflict against the armed forces. Second, these groups were in conflict with each other and were unable to come together under one roof. The leftists and rightists were in armed conflict before the intervention and there was no unification even within the same camp. For instance, the activists of the National Action Party and the National Salvation Party, although belonged to the right wing broadly defined, had completely different ideologies and were not organized to resist the intervention together. Similarly, the Turkish socialist movement was internally split in the 1970s: there were at least six political parties representing the left and advocating different ideologies and tactics for a revolution. Political party differences were reflected within leftist organizations, such as in the DİSK and Turkish Teachers' Society (TOB-DER), further immobilizing the civil society against the military.³⁷

The main domestic reasons in explaining the transition to democracy in Turkey are the limited opposition the military faced during its rule and its success in achieving its goals in accordance with the Kemalist ideology. The commanders of the armed forces were confident that democracy would not produce the same results as it did in the 1970s since the new constitution was more restrictive and the former political forces were repressed. The military also secured for itself important prerogatives during the transition process that allowed the armed forces to intervene again in case there was such need after 1983. As explained above, the generals of the 1980 intervention did not completely abandon their powers for six more years. In addition, according to the new constitution, the government was obligated to “give priority considerations” to the decisions of the National Security Council, which had the power to determine the internal and external security threats against the Turkish Republic. The new NSC was made up of commanders and cabinet members, but numerically favored

³⁷ Murat Belge, “Sol” in Irvin Cemil Schick and Ertuğrul Ahmet Tonak eds., *Geçiş Sürecinde Türkiye* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1990), 160, 178-82, Igor P. Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 131-7, 152, 155.

the military more than the pre-1980 period.³⁸ Thus, the armed forces were given powers to interfere in political matters after 1983, further increasing the self-assurance of the commanders in a democratic transition.

3. External Factors in Explaining the Democratic Transition in 1983

The most crucial foreign actors for Turkey at the beginning of the 1980s were the US and several Western European countries, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Council of Europe, and the European Community. Several human rights organizations, such as the Helsinki Human Rights Watch based in the USA and Amnesty International, also played vital roles in bringing up issues of torture, cases against freedom of speech, and unjust imprisonment during military rule.

Even though bilateral relations were important during this period, there were no overt, tangible, and coercive forms of international intervention in Turkey. Even the economic, political, and diplomatic sanctions that the Turkish military faced were not substantial and significant taken as a whole. For instance, while the Scandinavian countries cut aid to Turkey after the 1980 coup, the US continued to provide military, economic, and political support, which outweighed the minimal loss that was encountered from European reaction. During these years, most international organizations did not tie their aid to democratic reform (such as NATO, UN, and even the European Community) apart from membership to the Council of Europe. At best, during these Cold War years, Turkey was geographically, politically, economically, and culturally linked to the democratic nations of Western Europe and the US. However, Turkey was also linked to its Middle Eastern neighbors. Indeed, the beginning of

³⁸ Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," 157-158.

the 1980s witnessed Turkey's attempt to resume good political and economic relations with the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East.³⁹ Thus, the Turkish military between 1980 and 1983 did not face any major external influences and pressures for democratic transition.

The Support of the US, American Based Institutions, and NATO:

Turkey's alliance with the US goes back to the end of the Second World War, when the Truman Doctrine in 1947 designated Turkey as a military and economic aid recipient against a possible USSR aggression. Turkey became a NATO member in 1952. Even though Turkish-US relations had been strained at times before the 1970s, the shared security concerns of the two countries resulted in sustained cooperation.⁴⁰ The same security concerns continued during the military intervention in Turkey. The US, NATO, and American based organizations militarily, economically, and politically supported Turkey during the military intervention.

American officials believed that the situation in Turkey before the coup d'état was chaotic and potentially dangerous for US interests, especially if the leftist or Islamic terrorist organizations gained the upper hand.⁴¹ In the beginning of the 1980s, the US could not afford

³⁹ Sam Cohen, "Turkey –a Key NATO Member- Looks to the Middle East for New Economic Ties," *Christian Science Monitor*, Mar 24, 1982, pg. 3, Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, 65-66, Richard F. Grimmert and Ellen B. Laipson, *Turkey's Problems and Prospects: Implications for US Interests*, Report Prepared for the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs US House of Representatives (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1980), 45-50. For more information on Turkey's Middle Eastern relations at the beginning of the 1980s, see the articles in the part II of the volume edited by George S. Harris, *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1985), 37-67.

⁴⁰ For an overview of US-Turkish relations until the 1980s, see George Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1972), George McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine and Turkey's NATO Entry Contained the Soviets* (Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1990). For a more contemporary overview, see the volume edited by Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) and Nasuh Uslu, *The Turkish-American Relationship between 1947 and 2003: The History of a Distinctive Alliance* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Publishers, 2003).

⁴¹ This was the conclusion of a report prepared for the US Congress in March 1980, which stated that "U.S. interests in the eastern Mediterranean clearly would be served by strong and friendly ties with [Greece and Turkey]. But the most immediate threat to US interests would appear to be the current political and economic problems facing Turkey." Grimmert and Laipson, *Turkey's Problems and Prospects: Implications for US Interests*, 57.

to alienate the Turkish generals that were supported domestically, appeared democratic, and committed to Turkey's role in the Western alliance against the USSR. The revolution against the Shah in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the rise of anti-American socialist party of Andreas Papandreu in neighboring Greece increased the value of Turkey's strategic location in the region for NATO and American interests.⁴² A strong and stable Turkey was in the strategic interests of the US and NATO⁴³ and Western officials were relieved when the Turkish military, which was pro-Western and pro-NATO seized power in September 1980.

Initial Reactions to Military Takeover in Turkey:

During the first few days of the military intervention, the American government was understanding of Turkey's situation and did not publicly criticize the generals. In its first official declaration about the military coup in Turkey, the Carter administration declared that "The United States must be concerned about seizure of power from any democratically elected government" and that the US "look[s] forward to the early restoration of democracy in Turkey." However, the State Department announcement also stressed that "for the last several years, Turkey has been beset by increasing politically motivated terrorism and severe economic difficulties." In the statement, the US pledged to continue its assistance to Turkey and declared its hope that Turkey will have economic and political stability.⁴⁴ The initial "low-key"⁴⁵ response to Turkey contrasted with the US reaction to other military

⁴² Sabri Sayari, "Regional Security Issues and U.S.-Turkish Relations in the 1980s," paper prepared for presentation at the Conference on "The History of American-Turkish Relations, 1833-1989," Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, June 5-6, 2006. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, *United States-Turkey Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement, 1980* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1980), 5, Marvine Howe, "Effusive Talk with Turkey: Closer U.S. Toes Have Advantages and Risks," *The New York Times*, Dec 8 1981, pg. A9, Gerald F. Seib, "U.S. Plans to Bolster Turkey's Army," *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec 7, 1981, pg. 35.

⁴³ Richard Perle, "Turkey and U.S. Military Assistance," in *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*, 25. Richard Perle was the Assistance Secretary of Defense during the military regime in Turkey.

⁴⁴ The full text of the declaration is available in Fahir Armaoğlu, *Belgelerle Türk-Amerikan Münasebetleri (Açıklamalı)* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Türk Tarih Vakfı Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), 364.

⁴⁵ John M. Goshko, "From the Allies: Patience," *The Washington Post*, Sept 13, 1980, pg. A1.

interventions in the world at around the same time. In his daily report to President Jimmy Carter on September 12, Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, commented that “the press will rightly note the clear difference in tone between this statement and those we have made about situations in Korea and Bolivia... [T]here is no junta mentality in Turkey.”⁴⁶

Indeed, American newspapers *did* pick up on this difference and argued that “US officials seemed almost relieved that the interruption of democracy came not from such extremist forces as Turkey’s communists or fundamentalist Moslems, but from the armed forces.”⁴⁷ It was noted that the administration perceived the Turkish military as “moderate, pro-Western and committed to Turkey’s role as NATO’s strategically important southern anchor in the Mediterranean.”⁴⁸ In addition, the administration strongly believed that the Turkish military would return to its barracks after restoring order, as it did before.

The positive assessments of the State Department officials were shared by the US National Security Council. In a memorandum sent to National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Turkey specialist argued that

[P]roposals [are being made by] people with little judgment on Turkey... for gestures of disapproval for the military takeover. Most of this simply adds up to the petty sanctimoniousness which would needlessly irritate the military leadership in Turkey which has shown every sign of responsibility and good judgment and hardly needs nattering from us in schoolmarmish fashion. We should not boycott meetings or other scheduled international undertakings in which Turkey is playing a role nor should we encourage NATO allies to do this sort of thing. Other gestures that serve no concrete purpose should be avoided...

....

If our own politics and Administration were in perfect order, we might have some entertainment (though it would serve no better purpose) to be preaching uxoriously at the Turks. We need to let things go on quietly and see how they shape up. The basic posture of the [US government] has taken so far is exactly right. Let’s not muddy our record by unnecessary self-righteousness! The Turkish generals are not Greek colonels or African master-sergeants. Let’s make it clear to them that we understand that!⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “Memorandum for the President,” The Secretary of State, Washington, September 12, 1980, from Edmund S. Muskie. Date Declassified: Aug 3, 2002.

⁴⁷ Goshko, “From the Allies: Patience.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ “Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul Henze, Subject: Turkey –Things to Keep in Mind at Next MBB,” National Security Council, Sep 17, 1980, Date Declassified: Feb 25, 1999.

Cordial exchanges took place between the military rulers, American embassy, high diplomats and even President Jimmy Carter in the early days. The armed forces informed US officials one hour before they announced their coup in Turkish radio and assured the Americans that Turkey will keep its international obligations.⁵⁰ The same commitment was repeated in Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren's first publicized speech. In early October, President Carter sent a message to General Evren through the US Ambassador in Ankara and appeared "understanding" of the military coup. Evren replied to this message and reiterated that "the Turkish Armed Forces have always been committed to democratic rule" and that they "are determined... to remove all obstacles which have, in the past, hindered the healthy functioning of the democratic order."⁵¹

The military rulers in Turkey paid special attention to keep their alliance in NATO stable. General Haydar Saltık, a well-known figure in NATO circles, became the general secretary of the Turkish NSC. This provided further assurance that Turkey would not abandon its Western alliance.⁵² On the issue of Greece's return to NATO's military wing, General Evren wrote to President Carter that "I should like to underscore that Turkey has never failed to support the return of Greece to the integrated military structure of NATO."⁵³

⁵⁰ Some Turks believe that American officials knew about the intervention and even planned the coup. In an interview with a Turkish journalist in 1997, Paul Henze, a US National Security Council country specialist, argued that an official of the Council said on the day of the coup "The boys in Ankara did it." Henze's words were interpreted by some as the Americans in Ankara staged the coup. However, no concrete evidence has yet come to light that supports overt involvement of the US in the coup. In fact, even though an intervention was expected in the US, it still came as a surprise. State Department reports and Congressional hearings show that the probability of a military takeover was seen as low only a few months before September 1980. For the controversy over Henze's statement, see İbrahim Balta, "Birand'dan Paul Henze'ye Sesli Görüntülü Yalanlama," *Zaman*, Jun 14, 2003, available at <http://arsiv.zaman.com.tr/2003/06/14/haberler/h2.htm>. See also Henze's own arguments about American involvement in the coup, Paul Henze, *Türkiye ve Atatürk'ün Mirası*, translated by Orhan Azizoğlu (Haarlem, Netherlands & Ankara: Kömen-SOTA Yayınları, 2003), 101-2. For assessments on the possibility of a coup before September 1980, see Hans Binnendijk and Alfred Friendly, Jr., *Turkey, Greece, and NATO: The Strained Alliance*, Staff Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, (Washington: US Government Printing Office, March 1980), 2, 30, Hearing Before the House of Representatives, *United States-Turkey Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement*, 27-8.

⁵¹ "Letter to President Jimmy Carter from General Kenan Evren," White House, Oct 10, 1980, Date Declassified: Feb 25, 1999.

⁵² Bernard Gwertzman, "Military in Turkey Ousts Government of Premier Demirel," *The New York Times*, Sep 12, 1980, pg. A1.

⁵³ "Letter to President Jimmy Carter from General Kenan Evren." After Turkish intervention in Cyprus, Greece withdrew from the military wing of NATO claiming that the allies stood passively by when Turkey attacked

In return for these gestures, NATO officials took a controlled stance in their initial reaction to the Turkish coup, similar to the US administration. A NATO spokesman argued that the intervention was “‘strictly an internal matter,’ but said a strong, stable and violence-free Turkey [was] vital to the Western alliance.” The official stated that NATO hoped Turkey would return to democracy, similar to the 1960 and 1971 military interventions.⁵⁴ Despite NATO’s democratic credentials and the agitation of some European members to Turkish military rule, there were no discussions of expelling Turkey from NATO or any substantial pressure for democratization as a result of the military takeover.

Military and Economic Aid to Turkey:

After the first warm response of the American government and NATO to the military coup, good relations between allies continued. Turkish-American relations had faced a serious blow in the mid-1970s due to Turkey’s intervention in Cyprus, which resulted in an arms embargo in early 1975.⁵⁵ Turkey retaliated by terminating American use of military bases on its territory.⁵⁶ This important strain in US-Turkish relations was resolved before the coup. The embargo was lifted in Fall 1978 and the Turkish-US Defense and Cooperation Agreement (DECA) was renewed in March 1980.

The DECA was a bilateral implementation of NATO related commitments. The US pledged to provide general economic assistance⁵⁷ and military aid to renovate Turkey’s armed

another member. Several years later, when Greece wanted to reenter, Turkish and Greek officials conflicted with each other on how the Aegean command structure should be rearranged. This important issue was settled during military rule in Turkey.

⁵⁴ “NATO Designated Turkey Coup as Internal Matter,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sep 12, 1980, pg. A2.

⁵⁵ Theodore Coulombis, *The U.S., Greece and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle* (New York: Praeger, 1983), Monteagle Stearns, *Entangled Allies: US Policy toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 1992).

⁵⁶ Richard C. Campany, *Turkey and the United States: The Arms Embargo Period* (New York: Praeger, 1986). For an overview of the debates in the USA during the embargo, see Ellen B. Laipson, *Congressional-Executive Relations and the Turkish Arms Embargo*, Congress and Foreign Policy Series (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1981).

⁵⁷ Turkey was disqualified from project assistance under USAID criteria because of its relatively developed status.

forces, which were adversely affected by the embargo. Turkey, on the other hand, agreed to US military activities on its territories by allowing the Americans to use military installations, defense communications facilities, early-warning radars in NATO's Air Defense Ground Environment (NADGE) networks, air bases, and storage facilities.⁵⁸ The DECA envisioned a Turkish-US Commission in order to organize the relations between the Turkish military and the US Military Assistance Advisory Group. The allies also agreed on the joint production of defense supplies.⁵⁹

Even though the DECA was signed before the military coup in Turkey, it was not ratified by the Turkish parliament because the national assembly was preoccupied with the election of the president for several months. The agreement was ratified only after the military took over in Turkey.⁶⁰ This became a concrete signal that the military generals would continue to work closely with the Americans and be even more efficient than parliamentary democracy in protecting mutual interests. As a result, it did not come as a surprise when similar types of cooperation continued during military rule. In 1982, the allies agreed on the modernization and construction of more than ten airfields on Turkish territory.⁶¹ In the last months of military rule, the DECA was renewed with the intention to update earlier arrangements.⁶²

As promised in the DECA, Turkey received substantial amounts of economic and military aid during the junta years. Before the coup, US military aid to Turkey was on average

⁵⁸ Grimmett and Laipson, *Turkey's Problems and Prospects: Implications for US Interests*, 15-20, James W. Spain, *American Diplomacy in Turkey: Memoirs of an Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), 34-44. In 1976, the US had a total of 61 military bases in Turkey. Nasuh Uslu, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri* (Ankara: 21. Yüzyıl Yayınları, 2000), 205-8.

⁵⁹ For a summary of the DECA, see Hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives, *United States-Turkey Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement*, 1-4, Uslu, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri*, 260-61. For the full text of the agreement, see Armaoğlu, *Belgelerle Türk-Amerikan Münasebetleri*, 301-63. Ambassador Spain's memoirs detail the difficulties faced during the agreement. Spain, *American Diplomacy in Turkey*, 31-4.

⁶⁰ Armaoğlu, *Belgelerle Türk-Amerikan Münasebetleri*, 300, Hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives, *United States-Turkey Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement*, 24.

⁶¹ Metin Demirsar, "U.S. Upgrades Military Links to Turkey with Eye to Soviet Union and Mideast," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan 12, 1983, pg. 32.

⁶² Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition*, 17.

approximately \$165 million each year from 1950 until 1974. During the embargo years, the amount of military assistance decreased to around \$130 million.⁶³ In economic aid, the US provided to Turkey on average \$128 million annually between 1953 and 1974.⁶⁴ The embargo affected economic assistance substantially since it was reduced to \$2.5 million annually and Turkey did not receive any economic assistance in fiscal year 1976.

Table 1

Total Assistance to Turkey (in millions, current \$US)									
	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Economic Assistance	0.2	1.1	69.6	198.1	201.0	301.1	286.0	139.5	175.9
Military Assistance	125.0	175.4	180.3	208.2	252.8	403.0	402.8	718.3	703.6
TOTAL	125.2	176.6	250.0	406.3	453.8	704.1	688.8	857.8	879.5

Source: *US Agency for International Development (USAID) Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations (Greenbook)*⁶⁵

Both in economic and military aid, there was gradual increase after the lift of the arms embargo (see Table 1 above). During military rule, Turkey received a total of \$2.253 billion in economic and military assistance. This amount was the third largest American aid to a foreign country after Israel and Egypt.⁶⁶ Even though aid to Turkey increased after military rule ended in 1984, this increase was not directly related to the democratic transition, given the upward trend that started after 1978. The biggest jump in aid was actually in 1982, during the height of military rule, when assistance was increased by \$250.3 million.

The nature and amount of American assistance clearly show that US policy toward Turkey did not change much due to the military intervention and subversion of democracy. Military assistance was mostly covered under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) financing program in loans. Most economic assistance, on the other hand, was in the form of Economic Support Fund loans until 1980 and grants after that. During the coup years, the assistance

⁶³ Binnendijk and Friendly, *Turkey, Greece, and NATO*, 17.

⁶⁴ Grimmett and Laipson, *Turkey's Problems and Prospects: Implications for US Interests*, 38.

⁶⁵ The online version is available at <http://quesdb.usaid.gov/gbk/>, last accessed April 17, 2008.

⁶⁶ Demirsar, "U.S. Upgrades Military Links to Turkey with Eye to Soviet Union and Mideast," pg. 32.

went directly to the Turkish armed forces, especially since the military in Turkey was in control of the executive and legislative decision-making.

Turkey did not receive aid only from the United States government. Both the World Bank and IMF had already committed to Turkey's economic readjustment before the military coup. International donors aided Turkey before 1980 by rescheduling its external debt. After the declaration of the January 1980 readjustment plan by the democratically elected Demirel government, the World Bank provided a \$200 million structural adjustment loan. In June 1980, Turkey and the IMF signed a three-year standby agreement which provided approximately \$1.6 billion worth of assistance.⁶⁷

Support continued after the military took over. Özal's presence in the military's cabinet persuaded the IMF and World Bank that the Turkish Armed Forces were dedicated to the implementation of the liberalization program. The suppression of worker activities during the military regime was also a positive sign that the reform program could be carried out.⁶⁸ In October 1980, the World Bank approved a supplement of \$75 million to the first structural adjustment loan (SAL).⁶⁹ In April 1981 the second SAL for \$300 million was sanctioned. The third structural adjustment loan, worth \$304.5 million, was also endorsed during the military regime.⁷⁰ The World Bank also gave other types of assistance, such as "project loans, economic, and sector work leading to policy recommendations, and technical assistance."⁷¹ The Bank collaborated closely with the IMF, which in 1983 signed another one-year standby agreement with Turkey, supplying around \$75 million. Both institutions guided and monitored the economic liberalization reforms, and aided the military government in continuing to restructure the economy by providing monetary assistance.

⁶⁷ Roy, *The Turkish Economy*, 13-4, 48.

⁶⁸ Sina Pamukcu, former Vice-Secretary General of DİSK, has even argued that the coup was supported by the IMF and the World Bank due to its potential to suppress worker movements. Sina Pamukcu, Personal Interview, Brussels, April 23, 2008.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁰ Operations Evaluation Department, *Program Performance Audit Report, Turkey –Second and Third Adjustment Loans (Loans 1987-TU and 2158-TU)* Report No: 5763 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1985), i-iii.

⁷¹ Roy, *The Turkish Economy*, 47.

Political Support:

American support to Turkey between 1980 and 1983 was not always in monetary terms. In their speeches and visits to Turkey, US officials also approved the actions of the military leaders. In December 1981, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger visited Turkey and met with Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren. Two leaders agreed that a “high-level joint defense group” would be established to “‘enlarge and improve defense cooperation’ between two nations.”⁷² Perhaps more importantly than this agreement, Weinberger openly praised General Evren, providing support to the military regime. Weinberger stated to Evren “We admire greatly the way in which order and law have been restored in Turkey under your very able direction, and we admire the way in which you have put together and directed the effort to form a new constitution for the country.”⁷³

In May 1982, Secretary of State Alexander Haig made a similar visit to Turkey and met with General Evren, Prime Minister Bülend Ulusu, Foreign Minister İlder Türkmen, and the chairman of the Consultative Assembly responsible from drafting the new constitution. Haig brought with him a letter from President Ronald Reagan, which “stressed the importance that the United States attache[d] to good relations with Turkey.” General Evren, in return, thanked Haig and Reagan for their continued understanding and support.⁷⁴ While congratulating the junta for restoring law and order, Haig also “encouraged the military leaders to move ahead with their timetable for a return to democracy.”⁷⁵ However, such calls for democratization by US officials did not go further than “encouragement” since, even

⁷² Marvin Howe, “U.S. and the Turks Agree to Create Joint Defense Unit,” *The New York Times*, Dec 6, 1981, pg. 1.

⁷³ David Wood, “Weinberger Tightly Guarded in Turkey,” *Los Angeles Times*, Dec 6, 1981, pg. 23.

⁷⁴ Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Vol. 3, 168.

⁷⁵ Bernard Gwertzman, “Haig Ends ‘Warm’ Talks in Turkey,” *The New York Times*, May 13, 1982, pg. 3.

behind close doors in these meetings, Turkish military leaders were not pressured to make a transition.⁷⁶

American officials sometimes found themselves in positions where they needed to defend the Turkish generals against the Europeans, human rights activists, and the press.⁷⁷ For instance, during his visit to Turkey, when asked by a representative of the press about European reactions against Turkey's human rights record, Weinberger replied that "We feel that human rights can flourish in the atmosphere in which law and order prevail." The Secretary of Defense applauded the success of the junta in "eliminate[ing]... a state of anarchy and the very widespread degree of terrorism." Weinberger's response implied an agreement with the statements of the Turkish generals that military rule and repression was a necessary precondition for democracy.⁷⁸ Similarly, Secretary of State Alexander Haig angrily responded to a British reporter in Brussels, who asked if "the United States was using a 'double standard' in condemning martial law in Poland... while increasing aid to Turkey." Haig argued that "the question itself 'reflects a double standard' by Europeans equating Poland and Turkey." The Secretary of State reminded the reporter that Turkey was in chaos before the military intervention.⁷⁹ In his visit to Ankara, Haig also discussed the attitudes of the Europeans with General Evren, who extensively complained about Europe's negativity toward Turkish domestic politics.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ İlter Türkmen, Personal Interview, İstanbul, September 19, 2007.

⁷⁷ As military rule continued in Turkey, anti-junta reports against human rights violations and often times criticizing the US policy toward Turkey started to appear in American newspapers. Jeri Laber, the executive director of Helsinki Watch, wrote several articles for this purpose. See for examples, Jeri Laber, "Our Blind Spot in Turkey Alienates European Allies," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 11, 1982, pg. C9 and "Turkey's Electoral Farce," *The New York Times*, Oct 19, 1983, pg. A1. For other examples written by others, see Stuart Schaar (human rights activist), "Turkey: Democracy Deferred," *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec 24, 1981, Pierre Schori (international secretary of the Swedish Social Democratic Party), "U.S. Policy Toward Turkey," *The New York Times*, Dec 13, 1981, pg. E29, Colman McCarthy, "Rights Group Claims Turkey Makes 'Parody' of Democracy," *The Washington Post*, Nov 5, 1983, pg. A10 and by the same author "Whitewashing the Terror in Turkey," *The Washington Post*, Nov 13, 1983, pg. A1.

⁷⁸ Howe, "U.S. and the Turks Agree to Create Joint Defense Unit," pg. 21.

⁷⁹ Leonard Downie Jr., "Council of Europe Votes for Probe of Rights in Turkey," *The Washington Post*, Jan 30, 1982, pg. A24.

⁸⁰ Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Vol. 3, 166-167. On February 16, 1983, similar discussions took place between General Evren and Ambassador to Turkey Vernon Walters, who brought a letter from President

When the issue of expelling Turkey from the Council of Europe (see below) came up, American officials were worried that Turkey would be isolated from Europe.⁸¹ On this issue, the Reagan administration “pressed the Europeans to relax their stand on Turkey and resume economic aid.”⁸² When in July 1982 several European countries applied to the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg against the Turkish junta, the United States officially defended Turkey once again. A State Department announcement said that “While there are human rights problems in Turkey, it would be shortsighted to forget that the current government has nearly eliminated the human rights violations due to terrorism that were rapidly eroding the viability of democracy in Turkey.”⁸³

The official policy of the US administration in dealing with the rift between Europe and military rule is reflected in the Secretary of State Haig’s message to West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher in December 5, 1981. Haig responded to a letter written by Genscher after the minister’s visit to Turkey and shortly before Haig’s own visit to Ankara as follows:

Geography, history, and shared values make Turkey a major partner for Europe and the United States. We fully support efforts to overcome the current estrangement between Turkey and certain sectors of Western Europe, in the interest of a stronger alliance, a stronger Europe, and a stronger Turkey....

The supreme goal which all friends of Turkey share is that the current regime return the country to stable democracy in a reasonable timeframe. General Evren and his colleagues are determined to achieve that goal... The United States of America, the Federal Republic of Germany, and other allied and friendly states must assure that Turkey continues to receive sufficient support to achieve its objective. It is noteworthy in this regard that the former politicians whom you met agreed that the Evren regime must not be isolated. That is our view as well.

Reagan. Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Volume 4 (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1991), 94-6. General Evren had similar meetings in Ankara with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in June 1983 and with former President Nixon in 1985. Both leaders discussed the negative attitudes of the Europeans toward military rule in Turkey with contempt. Kenan Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Volume 5 (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1991), 238-40, 285-6.

⁸¹ Metin Demirsar, “Europe’s Tiff with Turkey Worsens,” *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec 29, 1981, pg. 25.

⁸² Downie, “Council of Europe Votes for Probe of Rights in Turkey,” pg. A24.

⁸³ “U.S. Defends Turkey on Human Rights,” *The New York Times*, Jul 10, 1982, pg. 5, “U.S. Defends Turkey on Rights Criticism,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 10, 1982, pg. A21.

.... Continued frank exchanges between friends offer the best means to achieve the results we all seek. Your visit to Ankara served that purpose, as will mine.⁸⁴

The US administration did not defend Turkey only against the Europeans, but also against some American critiques. On April 14, 1983, a congressional hearing on human rights in Turkey was held before the US Congress.⁸⁵ Several human rights activists criticized the restrictive manner in which democracy was being reestablished and argued that torture was widespread in Turkey. Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams and former Ambassador to Turkey James Spain were witnesses that defended the Turkish military government and American policy. In their testimony, these State Department officials argued that Islamist and leftist terrorist organizations in Turkey before the military intervention challenged strategic interests. They noted that generals would eventually return to full democracy because of their Western, Kemalist orientation and because they had never intended to stay in power for a long period of time.⁸⁶ The results of the staff report written by the US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was also presented in the hearing. The report highlighted that non-Muslim minorities in Turkey felt more secure after the military intervention, implying that repression was not widespread as claimed by the other witnesses.⁸⁷ In addition, electoral monitoring by the CSCE was pointed out to demonstrate that the 1982 constitutional referendum was “a fair one, fairly counted, and the results reflect[ed] the views of the people of Turkey.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ “Message from Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Jr. to West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Subject: Reply to Genscher on Turkey,” White House Situation Room, Dec 07, 1981, Date Declassified: Apr 26, 2001.

⁸⁵ At the beginning of the 1980s, discussions against the Turkish government in the Congress focused mostly on Turkey’s relations with Greece and on the Cyprus issue. Criticisms of the military takeover and human rights violations were not as frequent. For an overall assessment of the attitudes of the US Congress toward Turkey, see Ellen Laipson, “Turkey and the U.S. Congress,” in *The Middle East in Turkish-American Relations*, 27-33.

⁸⁶ Hearing before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, *Human Rights in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 2-18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

Even though in the hearing human rights activists pleaded for the aid to Turkey to be cut, Assistant Secretary of State Abrams and Ambassador Spain advocated a different strategy:

In the case of Turkey, circumstance and unwise policy among those outside... could put the essential allegiance to the West in doubt. Many decades ago, Turks chose the West, but they have sometimes felt the West rejected their very choice of the West... If, in properly emphasizing human rights concerns, we isolated Turkey from the Western human rights tradition, the result would be tragedy.

Instead, the United States has sought to protect human rights in Turkey by frequent dialogue with the Government of Turkey, by seeking to protect Turkey's place as a valued Western ally and by keeping Turkey closer to the West rather than pushing it further away.⁸⁹

Thus, the US administration believed that support for Turkey should continue even if the transition to democracy was restrictive. It was argued that sensitivities on human rights should be raised gently only on private meetings. The overall US policy on Turkey during the military intervention suggests that these views of the State Department officials were implemented.

From the initial days of the military intervention in September 1980 to the November 1983 elections, the US, NATO and American based financial institutions supported Turkey militarily, economically, and politically. Criticisms in the US increased toward the end of military junta. The transition to democracy was restricted, which resulted in assessments that it was a fake return to civilian rule. However, the Reagan administration did not oppose the manner of the transition. Turgut Özal's victory was welcomed by the Americans because of his previous commitment to liberal reforms and experience in the US as a World Bank employee. However, it seems that the administration would have been satisfied with the results of the election either way, even if the military's favorite Turgut Sunalp had won. Support for Turkey would have continued as long as (and to guarantee that) Turkey stayed committed to the Western alliance against the Soviets, was stable without the risk of an Islamic or leftist takeover (like in Iran), and to a lesser extent, maintained a healthy liberal

⁸⁹ Testimony of Elliott Abrams, Ibid., 6. See also the testimony of James Spain on this point., Ibid., 17-8.

economy. American foreign policy toward Turkey during the military intervention was the result of its strategic calculations. In addition, the Turkish Armed Forces were popular and successful at home and they had a reputation of returning to their barracks. From the perspective of American officials, there was no need to pressure Turkey to democratize. Such pressure might even push away a valuable ally. The counterintuitive US policy was that supporting the Turkish generals and defending them against European and other critiques would hasten the return to a stable democracy.

Reactions of European Community, Council of Europe and the West European Governments:

Turkey has traditionally accorded high primacy to its relations with Europe within the scope of its historical mission of Westernization. It became a founding member of the Council of Europe in 1949 and signed an Association Agreement with the European Economic Community in 1963. It enjoyed close political relations with prominent West European governments, most notably Germany, which also involved significant amounts of economic aid. In contrast to the US, European governments and institutions were highly critical of the military coup and the policies of the military regime. The pressure for a rapid transition to democracy intensified in time with the exacerbation of human rights conditions in the country, although the extent of the vocal criticism and the ensuing policies aimed to promote transition to democracy in Turkey were not uniform among different Western European states and in the different configurations of the West European institutional settings.

Various reasons can be cited in explaining European pressure for transition to democracy in Turkey. Europe's experience with Southern European countries, particularly Greece, was crucial as a precedent in guiding its reactions to the military intervention.⁹⁰ Upon colonels' coup in Greece in 1967, the country was forced to withdraw from membership of

⁹⁰Interviews with Alain Servantie (European Commission Official), Manfred Michel (former Secretary General of the Socialist Group, European Parliament), Richard Balfe (former MEP), Personal Interviews, Brussels, September 2007.

the Council of Europe and its Association Agreement with the European Economic Community was frozen. Similar to the Greek case, for many European officials, Turkey's membership of the Council of Europe, the Association Agreement with Turkey and the – albeit remote – possibility of Turkey's future membership to the European Community bestowed a right on European leaders and institutions to apply pressure on the country.⁹¹

Public opinion in Europe was also becoming increasingly aware of the deteriorating human rights conditions in the country, particularly through the influx of Turkish political asylum seekers to Europe. This was most evident in the case of Germany where in 1979, there were approximately 80,000 Turkish citizens applying for political asylum in this country alone.⁹² Those who managed to settle in Germany established close links with the leftist faction of the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) and primarily through this connection, launched systematic campaigns against the military regime in Turkey.⁹³

Besides these factors that pushed for intensifying pressure, “normative arguments” on the need to promote democratization in Turkey were also being increasingly put forward by European politicians. This was particularly the case when European officials contrasted their policies toward Turkey with those of the US on the grounds that US was shaping its stance toward the military regime in Turkey on the sole basis of defense and security concerns, hence risking a credible foreign policy that upholds values of democracy and human rights.⁹⁴

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Statement by Desmond Carragher, Chairman of the Churches Committee on Migrant Workers in Europe delivered at the Hearing on the “Human Rights in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey” in April 1983 before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Committee in Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, April 1983.

⁹³Sam Cohen, “Turkey Wants its Exiles Back but They Won’t Go” *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 27, 1981, pg. 7.

⁹⁴See, for example, the Statement by Ludwig Fellermaier, Socialist Member of the European Parliament, delivered at the at the Hearing on the “Human Rights in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey” in April 1983 before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Committee in Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, April 1983.

Despite these concerns, the economic and political sanctions applied by Europe can be considered as “mild” at large and with little substantial impact on the transition to democracy in Turkey.

Initial European Reactions to Military Takeover in Turkey:

The initial reactions from Europe to the military intervention can in general be regarded as cautious, yet critical, where the intensity of the criticism ranged between and even within European institutions.

On September 16, 1980, the Foreign Ministers of the European Community⁹⁵ issued a statement on the military coup in Turkey. It was expressed in the statement that

They (*the Foreign Ministers*) noted with concern the development of the situation in that country. They took note of the assurances given by the military authorities regarding a swift return to democratic institutions, respect for human rights and guarantees as to the treatment of political figures. They sincerely hope that these undertakings will be met in full in the very near future.⁹⁶

Such a “soft” statement devoid of any economic or political sanctions was justified by the President in Office of the Council in a speech he delivered at the European Parliament on three main grounds. One was the chaotic political and economic situation in the period preceding the coup, which was considered as “reasons for the intervention of the General.” The second was the assurances given by the military authorities regarding the rapid restoration of democratic institutions. European states at the time expressed that they “must be willing to hope that these assurances...will be fully and rapidly respected.” The third one was the firm belief that continued cooperation between Turkey and the European Community was

⁹⁵Also known as the “Foreign Ministers of the Nine,” since there were nine member states of the European Community at the time.

⁹⁶Speech by Lord Carrington, President-in-Office of the Council, delivered at the European Parliament, July 8, 1981.

essential to promote any democratic change in the country. It was assumed that tough sanctions would only accentuate the crisis in Turkey even further.⁹⁷

The European Commission also delivered a mild response to the intervention by issuing a statement, indicating that “it is following with grave concern the course of events in Turkey.”⁹⁸ In justifying this statement to the European Parliament, the Vice-President of the Commission, Lorenzo Natali, expressed that in following the development of events in Turkey, they were “bearing in mind the growing economic difficulties, the social tensions which accompanied them, the widespread terrorism and all the other problems.” Hence, as in the stance of the Council, the Commission was contributing to the justification of the grounds on which the intervention had taken place. A further parallel with the Council was to be found with respect to the Commission’s conviction that the Turkish military would abide by its assurances. In the same speech, Natali reminded the Parliament that the “armed forces have intervened a number of times and have always kept their promises to restore the democratic institutions of the country.” The Commission also shared the Council’s view that the Community could only apply democratic conditionality on Turkey via maintaining political and economic links envisaged by the Association Agreement.⁹⁹

The European Parliament’s initial resolution of September 1980, delivered in response to the military intervention, asked the country to return to democracy and highlighted its concern over political and civil rights in the country. The Parliament adopted a less justificatory approach than the Council and the Commission, where its resolution dated September 18, 1980 made no reference to the domestic conditions that led to the military

⁹⁷Speech by Gaston Thorn, President-in-Office of the Council, delivered at the European Parliament, September 17, 1980.

⁹⁸Cited in Ihsan Dagı, “Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83: The Impact of European Diplomacy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 32 (April 1996): 124-141.

⁹⁹Speech by Lorenzo Natali, Vice-President of the European Commission, delivered at the European Parliament, September 17, 1980. The Commission’s conviction that European pressure would only be effective if political and economic relations with Turkey were unhampered was also expressed in a personal interview with Richard Cox (retired European Commission Official), Brussels, March 28, 2008.

intervention or to the assurances given by the military.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, members speaking on behalf of the two biggest political groups in the Parliament, namely the Socialists and the Christian Democrats, made references to both in the urgent parliamentary debate held on the situation in Turkey in the immediate aftermath of the coup. In the same debate, the Christian Democrat representative as well as some of the other parliamentarians from the centre-right also emphasized Turkey's strategic importance to the Western alliance and the significance of not alienating it.¹⁰¹

The Council of Europe responded to the military intervention with a recommendation that expressed that the Parliamentary Assembly was "gravely concerned at the military intervention in Turkey." It also highlighted its awareness of the "profound crisis" that the Turkish military had been undergoing prior to the coup and emphasized the military leaders' declared intention to permit a rapid return to normal democratic life. What set the Council of Europe recommendation apart from its counterparts in the European Community was its explicit threat of political sanctions on Turkey. In the document, the Parliamentary Assembly recommended to the Committee of Ministers to "remind the Turkish government that the Committee of Ministers has to take action in conformity with Article 8 of the Statute of the Council of Europe if the Turkish government does not take prompt steps as mentioned in paragraph 10." This implied that Turkey could be expelled from the Council of Europe if it did not respect the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, release all elected politicians who had not gravely violated any law prior to the coup and take rapid steps for transition to democracy.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰See European Parliament, "Resolution on the Events in Turkey", Brussels, September 18, 1980, published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, No C 265/55, on 13 October 1980.

¹⁰¹See the speeches by Mrs. Gredal on behalf of the Socialist Group and Mr. Lemmer on behalf of the Christian Democrat Group, delivered at the European Parliament, September 17, 1980. For other parliamentarians from centre-right political groups emphasizing Turkey's strategic importance to the West, see (in the same debate) the speeches by Mr. Scott-Hopkins (European Democratic Group) and Mr. Beyer de Ryke (Liberal and Democratic Group).

¹⁰²Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, "Recommendation on the Situation in Turkey", No 904, 1 October 1980.

Aside from these institutional reactions, most West European governments said very little on the intervention in Turkey.¹⁰³ Those that expressed their views were sympathetic, justifying the coup on grounds of deteriorated domestic conditions and highlighting the assurance of the Turkish generals to return to democracy as a genuine will expressed and acted out in previous interventions.¹⁰⁴ Turkey's NATO membership was also influential in their responses where the country's strategic location was of crucial importance to European leaders.¹⁰⁵ Some were even reported to have indicated that they were "encouraged that the coup leaders are well-known in NATO circles and are highly respected for their pro-Western attitude."¹⁰⁶

Hence, it can be argued that the domestic conditions preceding the coup, the (perceived) commitment of military leaders to transition to democracy, Turkey's strategic role in the Western bloc as a member of NATO and the wish to promote democracy through engagement constituted the main factors behind the initial mild "wait and see" attitudes in European circles. In the case of the European Community, an additional factor can be sought in the dominant perception that Turkish membership was not only untenable, but also undesirable in the medium run due to the element of instability that it could introduce by importing the bilateral problems with Greece, a country set to join in 1981, into the Community.¹⁰⁷ It can be argued that this also rendered a strong condemnation unnecessary. Thus, aside from the looming threat of expulsion from the Council of Europe, which was not

¹⁰³Goshko, "From the Allies: Patience."

¹⁰⁴Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition*, 22. Alain Servantie, a Commission official who was serving at the European Commission Representation in Ankara at the time of the military intervention explains that in a confidential meeting held after the coup, the permanent representatives of the nine member states unanimously expressed their satisfaction with the intervention. Alain Servantie (European Commission Official), Personal Interview, Brussels, September 11, 2007.

¹⁰⁵Robert Cox (retired European Commission Official), Personal Interview, Brussels, March 28, 2008

¹⁰⁶Goshko, "From the Allies: Patience."

¹⁰⁷Personal Interview with Alain Servantie. The main problematic issues in Turkey-Greece relations in this period were Turkey's intervention in Cyprus, the Greek claim to a twelve-mile territorial zone around the Aegean islands and the related claims of extended airspace in the Aegean. See Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, 64-65.

pronounced as a high possibility at the time,¹⁰⁸ economic and political sanctions were not even considered by European governments and the European Community in the immediate aftermath of the coup. This situation, however, started to change from mid-1981 onwards mainly in reaction to the domestic developments in the country.

Economic Aid to Turkey:

The Association Agreement between Turkey and the European Community provided the main framework of relations between the two while acknowledging the possibility of Turkey's future membership of the Community. Thus, Community aid to Turkey, pledged and dispatched as "financial protocols," was regulated under the Association Agreement. The Third EC-Turkey Financial protocol that envisaged an economic aid package of \$400 million was signed in May 1977 and entered into force in April 1979. A Special Aid Package for Turkey of \$100 million, intending to cover any gap between the Third and Fourth Financial Protocols had also been incorporated into the Community budget in 1980.¹⁰⁹

In response to the intervention, the Commission officially adopted the position that contractual commitments to Turkey, namely the Third Financial Protocol and the Special Aid Package, would be honored.¹¹⁰ In fact, in November 1980, the European Commission Director Duchetau made a visit to Ankara to discuss the projects that would be financed by the Special Aid Package and in July 1981, the Council signed agreements to finance three major projects of the mining industry within the scope of this package.¹¹¹ Regarding the Third Financial Protocol, all aid including money that helped finance major infrastructural projects

¹⁰⁸See the Parliamentary Assembly debate in the Council of Europe on September 30 and October 1, 1980.

¹⁰⁹For details on EC aid to Turkey under the Association Agreement, see the "Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group Regarding the Human Rights Situation in Turkey and Turkey's Relations with Western Europe," Appendix 11, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, *Human Rights in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 116-117.

¹¹⁰See the Speech by Lorenzo Natali.

¹¹¹"Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group", 116.

such as a thermal energy project at a hydroelectric power station and a project in the forestry industry sector, was spent by October 1981.¹¹²

The policy of continued economic aid to Turkey was, however, becoming more and more difficult to sustain in the political climate of 1981. The European Council and the European Commission were under constant attack from the European Parliament for not freezing EC aid to Turkey in the face of massive human rights violations and rising concerns over a speedy return to democracy in the country.¹¹³ In addition to Turkey's worsening human rights record, the accession of Greece in 1981 and the efforts of Greek MEPs to freeze relations with Turkey were also influential in the rising criticisms by the Parliament.¹¹⁴ In fact, in the debates of the Parliament, increasing parallels were being drawn between the Greek junta of 1967 and the coup in Turkey. It was argued that the Community had to freeze the Association Agreement with Turkey, just like it did with Greece in May 1967.¹¹⁵ Thus, throughout 1981, the European Parliament -particularly upon the initiatives of the socialist, communist and liberal parliamentary groups- delivered tough warnings to the military regime through its resolutions. The most significant of those was the one delivered on April 10, 1981 where the Parliament called on the Commission, Council and the member states to

- (a) urge... the Turkish military regime to present without delay a list of measures to introduce democratic liberties, giving specific deadlines for implementation,
- (b) draw... the attention of the Turkish military regime to the fact that the association between Turkey and the European Community will be suspended with immediate effect unless democratic institutions and practices are reinstated within two months.¹¹⁶

¹¹²For more on the Third Financial Protocol, see Responses of the Commission to Question No. 43 by Mr. Radoux (H-456/79) on "Measures to Aid Turkey" and Question No. 44 by Mr. Seeler (H-457/79) on "EC-Turkey Financial Protocols" in the European Parliament Sitting, Brussels, February 11, 1980.

¹¹³See in particular the Debates of the European Parliament dated April 10, 1981, July 6, 1981, July 8, 1981 and November 18, 1981.

¹¹⁴Personal Interviews with Manfred Michel and Richard Balfe.

¹¹⁵See in particular the speeches in the Debate of the European Parliament, April 10, 1981.

¹¹⁶European Parliament, "Resolution on the Military Junta in Turkey," Brussels, April 10, 1981, published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, No C 101/110, on May 4, 1981.

In other words, this resolution was the official call of the Parliament to the Council and the Commission to suspend economic aid to Turkey under the prevailing domestic conditions. The Council and the Commission, however, paid little attention to Parliament's requests. In fact, in the four debates held at the European Parliament between January and August 1981, both the Council and the Commission preserved their mild attitude to the deeds of the military government and reiterated the importance of continuing cooperation with Turkey, with the hope of aiding the transition to democracy.¹¹⁷ In line with this, the Council of Ministers approved the terms of the Commission negotiating mandate in May 1981 for the Fourth Financial Protocol of \$625 million and the Commission completed the formal negotiations with the Turkish representatives within the framework of the Association Committee in June 1981.¹¹⁸

This attitude of the Council and the Commission began to change in the second half of 1981. The Fourth Financial Protocol was scheduled to come into force on November 1, 1981. However, the Commission refused to pass the file concerning the protocol to the Council for final conclusion and the Council never formally insisted on receiving the file from the Commission, which in effect led to the freezing of EC economic aid to Turkey. The freezing of aid was reinforced further by an initiative of the Socialist members of the European Parliament Budgets Committee which ensured that the Council could no longer approve any expenditure under the heading of the Protocol without the consent of the Parliament which shares budgetary authority. In December 1981, the Council also suspended approval of the project for financing electric cables planned as part of the Special Aid Package and then eventually decided that it was legally impossible to revoke agreements which had been formally signed.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷See the Debates of the European Parliament dated January 14, 1981, April 10, 1981, July 6, 1981, and July 8, 1981.

¹¹⁸"Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group", 116.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

It was in fact the case that in most of 1981, the military government had not taken any substantial steps toward transition to democracy with the exception of a Consultative Assembly that was established in October 1981 to prepare a new constitution. Yet, the Commission and the Council, until November 1981, made no attempt at applying sanctions toward Turkey. In addition to the pressure of the European Parliament and the widespread reports of deteriorating human rights conditions in the country, two major developments can be argued to have triggered the attitudinal change on the part of the Commission and the Council. One was the military government's November 1981 decision to abolish all political parties that existed prior to the coup. The other, and arguably the more effective one, was the imprisonment of former Prime Minister Ecevit for publicly criticizing the military regime.¹²⁰

Turkey's economic relations with individual West European countries were also hampered in 1981. Germany, as the second biggest supplier of military and economic assistance to Turkey after the US, was the West European country with which Turkey had enjoyed closest economic links. In March 1981, German parliamentarians declared at a news conference that continued economic and military aid to Turkey "would speed up the period of a return to democracy."¹²¹ Nevertheless, mainly due to pressure from public opinion fuelled by the worsening of human rights conditions, the ban on former political parties and the persecution of the former Social Democratic leader in Turkey, Germany delayed bilateral aid to the country in both 1981 and 1982.¹²² In 1981, under the Social Democrat/Liberal coalition government, the Social Democratic parliamentary group delayed the budgetary approval of economic aid to Turkey from June to September. Aid was renewed on the condition that the government would present an annual report on the developments in Turkey to the German Bundestag. In 1982, it was the Christian Democrat/Liberal coalition government that delayed

¹²⁰Personal Interview with Richard Cox. See also Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition*, 24 and Wood, "Weinberger Tightly Guarded in Turkey".

¹²¹Howe, "Turkey's Junta Lobbies to Stay in European 'Club'", pg. A9.

¹²²See the "Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group".

the approval of aid until December, only after the German Foreign Minister Genscher had made a special visit to Turkey and reported to the Bundestag in its immediate aftermath. What is significant here is that despite these setbacks, bilateral aid was eventually renewed in both years. In fact, Germany was even reported to undertake the residual financing of some selected national projects that were to be funded under the Fourth Financial Protocol.¹²³ Germany also continued to be the primary foreign investor in Turkey with 25 companies, ranking above the US, Switzerland and France.¹²⁴

The Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg and Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) were more adamant in applying economic sanctions on Turkey. They all ended program and project aid under the OECD consortium for Special Assistance to Turkey in 1982¹²⁵. In 1980 and 1981, the total contribution of these countries to the consortium was \$65.5 million and \$56 million respectively.¹²⁶ Since these states were among the smallest contributors to the consortium, where the highest contributors were Germany and France, the economic sanctions imposed were not of high significance for the country.

Table 2

Economic Assistance to Turkey (Official Development Assistance-ODA) (in millions, current \$US)					
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Germany	326.7	293.85	79.63	42.9	17.68
France	33.2	17.85	21.74	16.38	4.55

Source: *OECD Statistics* available at <http://stats.oecd.org>, last accessed on April 30, 2008

¹²³The projects included the construction of a large part of the building work for a drainage system for Ankara, generators for a completed dam and the completion of a large open-cast lignite mine. See the Speech by Mr. von Hassel, MEP from the German Christian Democrat Party (CDU), delivered at the European Parliament, October 13, 1983.

¹²⁴Metin Demirsar, "Turkey Gets Capital Infusion by Coaxing Foreign Creditors to Invest Funds Owed", pg. 38

¹²⁵In 1979, the OECD had set up a consortium for Special Assistance to Turkey, to help the country recover from the economic crisis of the late 1970s. It consisted of a package of program and project aid as well as export credits.

¹²⁶See "Chart on Organization on Economic Cooperation, and Development, and Special Aid to Turkey, 1979-82" Submitted by Ludwig Fellermaier (Socialist MEP) to the Hearing on the "Human Rights in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey" in April 1983 before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the Committee in Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, April 1983.

The table above demonstrates that Germany's economic assistance to Turkey in 1982 (\$79.63 million) exceeded the total aid dispersed by all seven European states in both 1980 and 1981. While German aid declined significantly in 1982, the table above suggests that this was part of a general downward trend in the dispersal of aid to Turkey rather than a response to the military intervention. If that had not been the case, one could expect a rise in the numbers for 1984, when the transition to democracy had taken place. The French data with progressively decreasing levels of economic assistance (with the exception aid distributed in 1982) also seems to confirm this point.

The table above also displays the major role that Germany played in Europe in terms of economic assistance to Turkey where the annual differences with French assistance, the second biggest contributor, are exceedingly large. Given also the continued US economic assistance to Turkey, reaching high proportions as discussed above, it can be argued that the amount of economic sanctions applied by European governments and the European Commission was considered negligible by Turkish officials who could rely on their main beneficiaries of economic aid, namely US and Germany.¹²⁷ This was expressed succinctly by a Commission official when he highlighted that these economic sanctions were merely "pocket money" for the Turkish government.¹²⁸

Political Sanctions on Turkey:

Although the Commission and the Council in the EC did not suspend political relations with Turkey after the coup, Europe downgraded Turkey's participation from ministerial to ambassadorial level, despite the Turkish pressure for the former.¹²⁹

¹²⁷Personal Interview with Ilter Turkmen.

¹²⁸Personal Interview with Alain Servantie.

¹²⁹"Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group", 117. The Association Agreement had not been denounced and the Association Council still convened to discuss matters relating to the Association Agreement such as import duties, safeguard clauses in trade and social security of Turkish workers working in the EC..

The Commission and the Council were using political relations to mount pressure on the military government for transition to democracy. In December 1980, Commission President Thorn expressed his concerns over a rapid transition to democracy in Turkey in a meeting with Foreign Minister Türkmen. Two years later, in January 1982, Foreign Minister Türkmen met Thorn to present the timetable for transition to democracy and ask for the Fourth Financial Protocol to be resumed where he was refused on grounds of human rights violations.¹³⁰ As for the Council, Leo Tindemans, the President of the European Council, visited Turkey in April 1982. On this visit, General Evren presented Tindemans the timetable for transition to democracy and Tindemans expressed the Council's concern for the human rights situation in the country.¹³¹ No EC member state suspended bilateral political relations with Turkey (although tensions were incurred under the Council of Europe – see below). In fact EC states, especially Germany, made use of its political links to promote democratic change in Turkey. As early as March 1981, German Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee visited Turkey to encourage the Turkish military in achieving a rapid transition to democracy.¹³² German Foreign Minister Genscher first visited Ankara in November 1981 to discuss the delay of German financial assistance to Turkey where he was assured by General Evren on the holding of elections in a reasonable time. Genscher also met Evren in November 1982 to discuss the delay of economic aid and express his concerns at the slow steps toward transition.¹³³

As opposed to the Council, Commission and the individual member states, the European Parliament froze political relations with Turkey. Under the EC-Turkey Association Agreement, a Joint Parliamentary Committee was established to meet twice a year with representatives from the European Parliament and the Turkish Grand National Assembly to

¹³⁰See COM (82) PV 632, 13/1/1982

¹³¹Report to European Council 29-30 /4/1982 (see conclusions of the 22^o European Council)

¹³²Howe, "Turkey's Junta Lobbies to Stay in European 'Club'", pg. A9.

¹³³See Report of the Federal Government of Germany on the Situation in Turkey, DOC. SG (83) A/132/2

discuss issues that arose in Turkey-EC relations. Since the Turkish Parliament had been suspended and a number of Turkish members of the Joint Committee had been placed under detention, the continuation of interparliamentary relations became formally and politically objectionable in the aftermath of the military intervention. Thus the European Parliament adopted a resolution on January 22, 1982, which formally suspended its participation in the Joint Committee and in effect froze political relations between the European Parliament and the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Nevertheless, the Parliament continued to adopt resolutions on the developments in Turkey. In the July 1982 resolution adopted after the freezing of political relations, the European Parliament displayed a milder attitude toward the country. While still being critical of human rights violations, trials of former unionists and politicians and the restricted freedom of press, it also welcomed the timetable of transition declared by the Turkish authorities, noted improved internal security and economic conditions and stated that “Turkey, in this extremely critical period of history, should receive understanding from its Western partners, particularly the Member States of the Community.”¹³⁴ October 1983 resolution, albeit critical of the restrictions imposed on the parties participating in elections and of human rights abuses, also took a slightly softer line by “recognising the special situation of Turkey, due to her strategic position and her role in the world balance of power, and, above all, in Europe.”¹³⁵

Another European institution which demonstrated opposition to the military regime, even more so than particular European governments or the EC to the extent of considering severe political sanctions, was the Council of Europe. At the May 1981 session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, it was decided that the credentials of the Turkish

¹³⁴European Parliament, “Resolution on the Political Situation in Turkey,” Brussels, July 8, 1982, published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, No C 238/55, on September 13, 1982.

¹³⁵European Parliament, “Resolution on Elections in Turkey,” Brussels, October 13, 1983, published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, No C 307/79, on November 14, 1983.

delegates to the Assembly were not to be renewed for the 1981/1982 session and that there could be no Turkish delegation in the Assembly until it was “elected and properly constituted.”¹³⁶ A joint sub-committee of the Political and Legal Committees was also established to monitor developments in Turkey and to deliver regular reports on the political situation in the country.

What was most notable, however, was the debate over the suspension of Turkey’s membership to the Council of Europe which had been on the agenda of the Council since the immediate aftermath of the intervention (as discussed above). The possibility of expulsion had been consistently brought up in almost every COE order, resolution and recommendation on the situation in Turkey between 1980 and 1983.¹³⁷ Thus delegations were sent to Turkey to undertake “fact finding missions” and then report their findings to the Assembly in relation to Turkey’s membership. The delegations were also forcing the military regime to explain and justify itself under mounting pressure. The most well-known delegation visit, which was also widely covered by the international press, took place in January 1982, following rising criticisms in Europe over the imprisonment of Ecevit, the trial of former leftist trade union leaders and restricted freedom of press. The delegation was first rejected by the Turkish authorities who expressed their discomfort for the frequency of these visits, but accepted in the end due to diplomatic pressures from West European States.¹³⁸ The delegation was then received at the highest level by General Evren and Foreign Minister Türkmen who highlighted that “Turkey places importance on its relations with the Council of Europe and wants these relations to continue.”¹³⁹ A member of the delegation –Ludwig Steiner,

¹³⁶Council of Europe, Order No. 398 (1981) on the Term of Office of the Turkish Parliamentary Delegation, Strasbourg, May 14, 1981.

¹³⁷See in particular Council of Europe, “Recommendation 904 (1980) on the Situation in Turkey”, 1 October 1980; “Order No. 395 (1981) on the Situation in Turkey”, January 29, 1981; “Resolution 765 (1982) on the Situation in Turkey”, January 28, 1982; “Resolution 786 (1982) on the Situation in Turkey”, October 6, 1982; “Resolution 794 (1983) on the Situation in Turkey”, January 27, 1983; “Resolution 803 (1983) on the Situation in Turkey”, September 30, 1983.

¹³⁸Dagi, “Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83”, 124-141.

¹³⁹Martin Howe, “Group Said to Seek Changes in Turkey,” *New York Times*, Jan 14, 1982, pg. A9

conservative member of Parliament from Austria– stated afterwards that the delegation had left the talks with a “positive impression,” but this would not come to mean that the COE would vote in favor of sustaining Turkish membership.¹⁴⁰

However, despite all the criticism, the Council did not vote for Turkey’s expulsion, neither after the January 1982 delegation visit nor on any other occasion. This did not come to mean that relations were improving. In fact, just the opposite was the case. In the course of 1982 and 1983, political groups from the left (socialists, communists) and the Greeks were pushing strongly for Turkey’s expulsion.¹⁴¹ On top of that, in the immediate aftermath of the January 1982 visit of the COE delegation, the COE adopted a resolution on Turkey calling member states to invoke Article 24 of the European Convention of Human Rights. The article permits any contracting state to seize the Commission of Human Rights of any infringement of the provisions of the Convention.¹⁴² This resolution caused a major uproar in Turkey and even led to considerations among the generals to withdraw Turkey from the Council.¹⁴³ This was an idea which they did not act upon due to their commitment to Westernization as a key element of Kemalist ideology¹⁴⁴ and the fear of being left out for an indeterminate period, primarily by a Greek veto.¹⁴⁵

In line with this resolution, in July 1982, five Member States of the COE -namely Norway, Sweden, Denmark, France and the Netherlands- filed a case against Turkey at the European Commission of Human Rights on grounds of continuing political repression, violation of human rights and trade union rights and the torture of prisoners.¹⁴⁶ Although a friendly settlement was eventually reached in December 1985 between these states and

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Klaus Schumann (retired Council of Europe Official), Personal Interview, Strasbourg, March 31, 2008.

¹⁴² Council of Europe, “Resolution 765 (1982) on the Situation in Turkey”, Strasbourg, January 28, 1982.

¹⁴³ Sam Cohen, “Though Angry, Turkey Sticks with Council of Europe,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 4, 1982, pg.7.

¹⁴⁴ Dagi, “Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-1983”, 124-141.

¹⁴⁵ Kenan Evren, *Unutulan Gerçekler*, (Ankara: Tisamat, 1995), 16.

¹⁴⁶ “Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group”, 114.

Turkey, the case contributed to increasing resentment of Europe by the Turkish authorities¹⁴⁷. The threat of expulsion from the Council reached its peak in January 1983, when the Parliamentary Assembly published a resolution highlighting that it “decides to give serious consideration to making a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers aiming at application of Article 8 of the Statute of the Council of Europe,” which regulates the expulsion of member states.¹⁴⁸ The resolution was particularly critical of the undemocratic provisions of the recently adopted Constitution in November 1982, continuing human rights abuses, restrictions on participation in political activity and mass trial of union members. Nevertheless, in the Assembly vote, the proposal to expel Turkey was turned down with 35 votes in favor and 75 votes against. However, in the same voting session, it was also decided that Turkey loses its voting rights in the Committee of Ministers.¹⁴⁹

In order to understand why the COE did not expel Turkey from membership, despite all its criticisms and threats, the two main approaches in the Assembly need to be considered. One, taken up mostly by socialists, communists and the Greeks, pressed for expulsion, often in reference to the suspension of Greek membership after the Colonels’ coup in 1967.¹⁵⁰ The second approach emphasized the need to keep Turkey in the Council in order to be able to exert leverage and thus aid the process of transition in the country.¹⁵¹ It was believed that the importance of belonging to “Europe” was far too important for the Turkish government to ignore COE pressure.¹⁵²

In the end, the second approach prevailed. Despite the accompanying threat of expulsion, the concern held by the second approach was also officially expressed in the January 1982 and January 1983 resolutions on Turkey. January 1982 resolution declared that

¹⁴⁷Kenan Evren, *Zorlu Yıllarım*, Volume 2 (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1994), 15.

¹⁴⁸Council of Europe, “Resolution 794 (1983) on the Situation in Turkey”, Strasbourg, January 27, 1983.

¹⁴⁹Evren, *Zorlu Yıllarım*, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰Dagi, “Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83”, 124-141.

¹⁵¹Personal Interview with Klaus Schumann.

¹⁵²See Council of Europe, “Steiner Report on the Situation in Turkey”, No. 4841, 1982.

“Turkey’s continued membership of the Council of Europe gives the latter the opportunity as well as the obligation to watch over the restoration of democratic institutions and the respect of human rights in that country.”¹⁵³ Similarly, January 1983 resolution stated that the Assembly is “conscious that the Council of Europe’s influence will be more effective so long as Turkey’s links with the Council of Europe are maintained.”¹⁵⁴

Another factor which contributed to the decision of not expelling Turkey from COE was the role played by the opponents of the coup in Turkey. As expressed above, there was no strong and unified resistance to the military rule in Turkey. Nevertheless, individual democrats, most notably former social democrat delegates to the Parliamentary Assembly kept in close contact with the COE and expressed the necessity of sustained membership for the transition to democracy in Turkey.¹⁵⁵ The same arguments were also put forward by former political leaders like Demirel and Ecevit.¹⁵⁶ Thus, in a similar logic with the European Community, “neither the total severing of relations, nor the unquestioning and uncritical continuance of relations as before” was perceived as a helpful option in guiding the Council’s relations with Turkey.¹⁵⁷

4. Conclusions from the Turkish Case: Interaction between Domestic and External Factors in Explaining the Democratic Transition in 1983

The Turkish military declared from the start and reiterated on various occasions that their main goal was to achieve transition to democracy in the shortest time possible. The Turkish military perceived itself as the guardians, not the rulers, of the Kemalist regime. At the time, both domestic and international actors believed that the Turkish military would

¹⁵³Council of Europe, “Resolution 765 (1982) on the Situation in Turkey”, Strasbourg, January 28, 1982.

¹⁵⁴Council of Europe, “Resolution 794 (1983) on the Situation in Turkey”, Strasbourg, January 27, 1983.

¹⁵⁵Interview with a Council of Europe Official, Strasbourg, April 4, 2008.

¹⁵⁶Howe, “Turkey’s Junta Lobbies to Stay in European ‘Club’”, pg. A9.

¹⁵⁷“Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group”, 114.

return to its barracks. Indeed, the transition to democracy in 1983 can partly be explained by the initial aims of the military intervention. The Turkish Armed Forces staged a coup d'état in order to restore order in democracy, end the political and economic crisis, and repress organizations (including political parties) that the military perceived as contributing to the terror. The military was relatively successful in achieving these aims. After three years of repression, it was safe to return to democracy with a new constitution and new political parties. The generals also received important prerogatives during the transition period, which increased their confidence that they can interfere in politics again using their constitutional rights if it became necessary. Indeed, the “costs of adapting” to democracy were low for the military, given that Turkey was democratic since 1950 and the military already had its own “roadmap” to transition, which also empowered the armed forces in the new democratic regime.

The domestic reasons and the motivation of the military from the very beginning to lead a transition to democracy (albeit a restricted one) make it rather difficult to assess the true impact of external factors on democratic transition in the Turkish case. A closer look at events suggests that external actors mattered. However, in all likelihood the Turkish military would have returned to democracy as it did in its previous interventions as long as it achieved its initial goals of restoring order and establishing new rules for democracy.

In fact, this was the assessment of the external actors and especially the US administration at the time as well. Imposing sanctions against Turkey or empowering domestic actors against the Turkish Armed Forces seemed counterproductive. As a result, the US and American based financial institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF, continued to provide assistance and aid to the Turkish government, and hence, the military. Strengthening the military helped the generals attain internal security and relative economic stability, the two major ills of the pre-coup period in Turkey. Successful domestic governance, in turn,

promoted public support for the military government, facilitating an easier transition. Hence, perceiving their goals as having mostly been achieved, the military proceeded with its initial goal of transition.

If, instead, in the name of promoting democratic forces, the external actors had attempted to revitalize the previous ideological groupings on the left and/or the right, this would have most likely provided a strong justification for the military to remain in power in order to prevent further domestic chaos and bloodshed in the country. Withholding economic support at a time of massive economic instability would have produced similar results. Domestic resistance and upheaval with foreign support would have also made it difficult to reach an agreement on the new constitution, especially on articles that ensured prerogatives for the armed forces and guaranteed personal security for the military generals responsible from the coup. Such failure of the military could have delayed transition for a few more years or more possibly, lead to its postponement for an indeterminate period. This could also go hand in hand with a potential reversal of Turkey's Western orientations, as often hinted by the military leaders through more frequent visits to Eastern Europe¹⁵⁸ or improved economic relations with Middle Eastern countries.¹⁵⁹ Thus, American support affected the military's success during the coup years, and thereby, facilitated the transition to democracy.

Another result of American support was Turgut Özal's rise to power as the civilian prime minister. Özal's victory in the November 1983 elections prevented the sustenance of military rule via blocking the election of the military's preferred candidate, Turgut Sunalp. This victory was partly a result of Özal's successful liberal economic policies -backed by the US, World Bank, and IMF- which significantly increased his popularity among the electorate and especially among the business community.¹⁶⁰ Only days before the elections, in a

¹⁵⁸Demirsar, "Europe's Tiff with Turkey Worsens," pg. 25.

¹⁵⁹Cohen, "Turkey –a Key NATO Member- Looks to the Middle East for New Economic Ties", pg. 3.

¹⁶⁰ Interviews conducted with 50 businessmen, who held significant positions in peak businessmen organizations during the 1970s and 1980s, show that a clear majority of the respondents supported the military intervention,

publicized speech, the leader of the junta, Kenan Evren, urged the Turkish electorate not to vote for Özal.¹⁶¹ Yet, despite this aversion, the military accepted his candidacy in the elections (while they put a ban on almost all of the former politicians) and agreed to transfer control over to him after the ballots were cast. Özal had strong ideological and political ties with the US both because of his previous experience as a World Bank employee and because of his preference for liberal policies.¹⁶² Rejecting his victory could have seriously undermined American, World Bank, and IMF financial support to Turkey, which the country needed after the economic crises of the 1970s.¹⁶³ Given that the military frequently declared in the international and domestic arena that they would eventually return to democracy, declaring the electoral results null and void would also bring about a significant loss of credibility and opposition at home and abroad, even in the US. Losing US support at a time when relations with Europe were already strained could have left the country in total isolation. Thus, the military was bound by its own pledges and by Özal's close ties with the West to follow through the transfer of power from the armed forces to the civilians.

While American military and financial support for the Turkish Armed Forces played important roles in democratic transition, the impact of the economic and political sanctions employed by Europe should be regarded with caution in the Turkish case. European economic sanctions were not substantial enough to exert serious pressure, thanks to sustained economic support by the two main creditors, namely US and Germany. Political sanctions on the part of the European Community were mostly limited to the European Parliament, which did not

the economic policies implemented during military rule, and voted for Turgut Özal in the November 1983 elections. Yaprak Gürsoy, *Military Rule and Democracy in Greece and Turkey*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Prepared for the Department of Politics University of Virginia, January 2008, pg. 366-8.

¹⁶¹ Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anıları*, Vol. 4, 392-9.

¹⁶² Several American officials in our interviews agreed that Turgut Özal was well-known and highly respected in the US. Personal Interviews with George Harris (Director of Analysis for Near East and South Asia, US Department of State in the 1980s), Anonymous National Security Council official, and Anonymous State Department Official, Washington, D.C., September 4-7, 2007.

¹⁶³ In our interview, Jayanta Roy (lead economist for Turkey in the World Bank between 1979 and 1986) stressed that the only implicit political conditionality for World Bank support to Turkey was to maintain Turgut Özal in charge of economic affairs. If Özal had been removed from power the World Bank officials would have been concerned. Personal Interview, Washington, D.C., September 3, 2007.

enjoy high decision-making power in the EC at the time. Besides, Turkish membership of the Community was a too distant possibility to be utilized for democratic conditionality.

Under these conditions, there was little incentive for the military government to comply with pressure from the European Community or its individual member states. The European Community could also do little in terms of fostering domestic opposition to the military coup, thanks to the divided nature of opposition groups and their harsh suppression by the military government. One exception to this was the leftist DİSK (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions) which lobbied effectively in European institutions, particularly in the European Community, through ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). Reports by ETUC on trade union rights in Turkey were often referred to by members of the European Parliament.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, concrete European assistance to DİSK through ETUC did not go further than providing financial support for the families of imprisoned DİSK leaders.¹⁶⁵

It still needs to be reminded, however, that the limited sanctions from the EC and some of the member states were pushing the government to justify itself in the international arena. Foreign Minister İlder Türkmen's visit to Europe only three days after the referendum on the new constitution, to explain the new state of affairs in Turkey and to ask for the suspension of the fourth protocol to be lifted provides a clear example in this respect.¹⁶⁶

The situation with the Council of Europe was more different. The military's historic commitment to Westernization and to its ties with Europe as part and parcel of the Kemalist legacy that it upholds, led them to bestow a highly symbolic importance for Council of Europe membership.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the threat of expulsion could be expected to have an impact on the transition to democracy. The evidence available suggests that the willingness to end military rule existed from the beginning, but it was slightly accelerated due to COE pressure.

¹⁶⁴See, for example, "Statement Submitted by the European Parliament Socialist Group", 110.

¹⁶⁵Personal Interview with Sina Pamukçu.

¹⁶⁶Dagi, "Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83", 124-141.

¹⁶⁷Personal Interview with İlder Turkmen. See also Mackenzie, *Turkey in Transition*, 22.

In his memoirs, General Evren highlights that he envisaged a three to four year military rule before achieving transition.¹⁶⁸ He also underlines the firm belief he held that COE would not expel Turkey, but would instead use conditionality through membership to exert pressure.¹⁶⁹ Thus, the dominant tendency in the COE was well understood by the military rulers.

However, the series of events in the country in 1981 changed the picture. In February 1981, the Council's parliamentary assembly convened to decide whether to impose any sanctions against Turkey or to expel it from the Council. On the eve of the Council's assembly meeting, the government announced that an inquiry into four cases of alleged torture had led to the arrest of the members of the security forces found responsible.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, pressure from the COE was found to be influential in the reduction of the detention period from 90 to 35 days.¹⁷¹ Although these can be considered as cosmetic gestures, they also demonstrate that the military rulers still cared about the country's European prospects and were willing to take some steps in that respect.

A more notable impact can be observed regarding the declaration of a timetable on transition to democracy. COE (along with the EC) had been demanding a timetable of transition from the early days of the military rule, with no concrete result.¹⁷² Dissolution of political parties and the imprisonment of Ecevit at the end of 1981 had led to severe responses from Europe. This was the period when the prospect of expulsion began to be discussed as a strong possibility. Just a week before the Council of Europe delegation responsible for drafting the report that would determine the state of Turkey's membership in the Council of Europe arrived in Turkey, Evren announced an approximate date for general elections. This announcement was made almost two years in advance of the scheduled general elections and

¹⁶⁸Evren, *Unutulan Gerçekler*, 8.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p.16.

¹⁷⁰Sam Cohen, "Turkey Upset over Western Critics," *Christian Science Monitor*, Feb 3, 1981, pg. 10.

¹⁷¹Schaar, "Turkey: Democracy Deferred", pg.27.

¹⁷²See, for example, Council of Europe, "Resolution 395 (1981) on the Situation in Turkey", Strasbourg, January 29, 1981.

a month after having dissolved all political parties.¹⁷³ Regarding the postponement of the decision on the expulsion of Turkey from the Council of Europe, Evren wrote in his memoirs that “now we have gained three more months.”¹⁷⁴

International organizations, most notably Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch also launched campaigns against the military regime. However, their impact on transition remained rather “contextual” in the sense that they were influential in shaping the agenda of the debates, particularly in Europe, instead of having “direct” impact on the country.¹⁷⁵ Amnesty International contributed to the Political Affairs and Legal Affairs Committees in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to the European Parliament. Their reports were frequently referred to in the debates and reports of these organizations¹⁷⁶ and were widely quoted in the international press¹⁷⁷. Even more importantly, the European Commission of Human Rights decision, accepting the applications of the five COE member countries against Turkey, made specific references to Amnesty International in its justifications.¹⁷⁸ However, their criticisms toward the military regime had no significant direct repercussions in Turkey. This was no surprise, given the perception of these organizations as “hostile forces” by the Turkish authorities who refused to respond to their demands.¹⁷⁹ There were, however, a few insignificant exceptions. On one occasion, the military took Turkish journalists into prisons and let them talk to some people who Amnesty International said had been tortured.¹⁸⁰ The military authorities also investigated some specific cases opened by Amnesty International, but declared in the end that some of those

¹⁷³Dagi, “Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-83”, 10.

¹⁷⁴Evren, *Kenan Evren'in Anilari*, Vol.2., 408.

¹⁷⁵ This distinction between ‘contextual’ and ‘direct’ impact in the case of international organizations was brought to our attention by Prof. İlder Turan in a personal meeting at İstanbul Bilgi University, October 3, 2007.

¹⁷⁶See, for example, Council of Europe, “Report on the Situation in Turkey,” Rap. L. Steiner, Documents: Working Papers, Doc.4965; Debates of the European Parliament dated February 7, 1983 and March 8, 1983.

¹⁷⁷See, for example, Laber, “Our Blind Spot in Turkey Alienates European Allies”, pg. C9 and McCarthy, “Rights Group Claims Turkey Makes ‘Parody’ of Democracy”, pg. A10.

¹⁷⁸Council of Europe, December 6, 1983.

¹⁷⁹McCarthy, “Rights Group Claims Turkey Makes ‘Parody’ of Democracy”, pg. A10

¹⁸⁰Marvine Howe, “Turkey Concedes Torture Deaths, Reports It Is Prosecuting Officials,” *The New York Times*, Mar 17, 82, pg. A4.

listed as dead by the organization were actually alive and that some listed as tortured had never been arrested.¹⁸¹

The discussion above displays a variety of external actors that were at work in attempting to aid the transition process in the country. The way in which these actors interacted with domestic conditions and developments suggest that the case of Turkey introduces new dimensions to the debate on external influence on transition to democracy. It demonstrates that external actors do not necessarily aid transition through the imposition of sanctions. It shows that economic and political support through constant, but cautious, expression of criticism and concern can also help a country to achieve a smooth transition to democracy. Military and economic support from the US and financial organizations, coupled with a “wait and see” attitude of Europe, can be emulated in cases where the military (or authoritarian rulers) pledge to return to democracy relatively quickly, provide credible evidence that this is their intention, and take concrete steps –like declaring a timetable and drafting a constitution- to make a transition. Especially if the domestic opposition to be fostered is weak and not necessarily democratic, imposing sanctions to the authoritarian rulers, while empowering other domestic actors, might produce counterintuitive results.

¹⁸¹Schanche, “Most Turks Believe Military Rulers Will Keep Pledge to Cede Power”, pg. E1.