BRIDGE ACROSS THE BOSPHORUS
The Foreign Policy of Turkey

By Ferenc A. VALI

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, the Turkish Empire found itself on a process of prolonged and dramatic state-saving efforts. It was a decisive turning point in the balance of power between the two conflicting elements of the heterogeneous European-Ottoman system. After the French Revolution, the Empire was disrupted by the powerful impact of European civilization, particularly by that of the ideology of nationalism which Arnold Toynbee has called "The Western Question". Following the unsuccesful Greek expedition in Asia Minor at the end of the First World War, a new Turkish State was founded on the principles of secular nationalism. As soon as the international status of Turkey was settled, the Republican regime began its Westernization reforms. This marked the end of heterogeneity. In the Preface, Professor Ferenc A. Vali (University of Massachussetts) notes that "Turkey, for five centuries a Hegelian antithesis to the European cultural and political thesis, may be about to achieve a unique synthesis. Her foreign and domestic policies are principally dedicated to the attaiment of this ambitious goal." But it is difficult for the reader to find, in the following chapters of the book, the same insight and the same originality of approach. This interesting theme is often blurred by traditional foreign policy analysis.

Although one can find a considerable literature on the foreign policy of Turkey, Professor Vali's study is one of the rare comprehensive works on this topic. The Author is to be congratulated on having accomplished a remarkable project of research, compilation and exposition.

In the first two chapters of *Bridge Across the Bosphorus*, the author examines the historical background and the geopolitical, ethnic and ideological foundations of Turkey's foreign policy. It is emphasized that among the constant factors of external politics, those imposed by

Turkey's geopolitical setting remain outstanding. "The history of the Ottoman Empire and Atatürk's Turkey demonstrates the delicate interplay of political variables and geographical constants" (p. 44). Ideological principles of modern Turkey related to her foreign policy are nationalism, secularism, democracy, and social justice.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the study of the political parties and their stand on foreign affairs. Professor Vali argues that "although there is a clear polarization of opinion between the extreme left and other parties regarding the basic foreign policy line, the differences in the views of the other parties are much less pronounced" (p. 78). He concludes that the oscillations of domestic politics may "intoduce a change in methods and style without changing the general direction of policy" (p. 358).

The author is at his best when he takes us through the introductory chapters. He skillfully delineates the historical, political, social and ideological context of Turkey's foreign policy. One wishes, however, that he had treated them more extensively and without so much neglecting the economic factor.

The next five Chapters discuss Turkey's relations with the United States, NATO and other allies, and with the Soviet Union and other socialist states, her approach to the Cyprus affair, and her development policy. In his conclusion, Professor Vali traces broadly the evolution of Turkish foreign policy, makes a recapitulation of motives and ambitions behind it, as well as the difficulties that this country is encountering in the realization of her objectives.

Although the book does not attempt at fundamentally novel interpretations, nor does it bring to light any new evidence, nevertheless it is well organized and lucidly written. It deserve to be read by all who are concerned about the Middle East. Its primary value, however, will doubtless be as a reference source for the students of Turkish foreign policy.

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