

GEOPOLITICAL PRIORITIES – TURKEY AND THE BALKANS

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Turkey had already played a decisive role in the region after its establishment. Its active international role fed not only historical traditions, but its geopolitical situation made Turkish foreign policy more important during the cold war. After the establishment of the one-polar world order it relatively lost something from its previous importance temporarily, but the „Arabic Spring” put the country into the foreground of foreign policy again. Turkey is tied to the Balkans through several cultural, historical and economic ties. Its active role is extended in several directions: the image about Turkey can be decisive in the shaping of relationships in the processes of the establishment of the nation, identity policy and the support of the Balkan Muslims. Turkish capital investments play an important role in the Balkan states which fight with missing capital. Turkey is an important factor in the establishment of the Balkan stability, and in connection with it, it got several „strategic” partners, first of all in terms of Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia.

Keywords: Turkish foreign policy, Jihad, Balkan strategy, geopolitics, migration

INTERESTS – CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – TURKEY AND THE NEIGHBOURING REGION

The relationships between the Balkan peninsula and the Ottoman Empire-Turkey look back on a long historical past. The period of the imperial conquest can be divided into phases burdened with conflicts and peaceful phases and this changing form of coexistence – although among changed historical circumstances – has been valid up to this day.

So as to be able to understand the system of relationship of Turkey and the Balkan region, the question has to be examined embedded into a wider geopolitical context. The politics of the Balkans can be interpreted only with full knowledge of the wide scale analysis of the foreign policy of Turkey.

The Ottoman Empire disintegrated after World War I. The political map of the region was redrawn for the most part, and the role of the First Turkish Republic born out of the central core of the Empire changed essentially. But the stability of the region was not realized with the disintegration of the Empire, the power spheres of interests remained, the previous conflicts of interest survived in a latent, deep-frozen form.

The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, then the appearance of foreign powers became sources of further conflict in the region. The settlement after World War II. did not bring the stability of the region either, the latent contrasts turned up. In the bipolar world order after World War II. the geopolitical role of Turkey was overestimated, then its NATO membership strengthened it further. The disintegration of the bipolar world order, the expansion of NATO to the East

touched it and undervalued the geopolitical role of the country, although at the same time Turkey, in the new geopolitical situation got into a regional power position towards the direction of the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Near-East and Middle-Asia.

The several conflicts of the Near-East Islamic states which „developed” to be tragically dramatic makes the establishment of the united Islamic front, peaceful cohabitation impossible for the time being. Albeit Turkey, as a secularized state, is not touched by the division inside Islam directly to the extent as it touches the Arabic world.ⁱ

The main opposition and the source of conflict in the Arabic world is the fact that Muslim religion is not uniform, either. Their two main lines cannot be reduced to a common denominator. The Sunnite Muslims are in absolute majority, but the number of the inhabitants of the Siite group is significant as well.ⁱⁱ

All this did not change the fact that the region is hightened by several conflicts, and in fact the region is used to be one of the powder kegs of the world and at present we are witnesses of the explosion.

How can the role of Turkey be formed in this international political situation?

In a wider sense Turkey is embedded in the Near-East region, traditionally the region of the world which is burdened by conflicts most of all. The power relations of the territory are changing as a consequence of the War of Iraq and the strengthening of Iran, then the dramatic turn, the appearance of the „Islamic State”. But the roots of the conflicts look back on a long past.

With the exception of the Arab peninsula the politics of the Near-East region – except for Jemen and Lebanon – was – and is – under the influence of revolutionary Arab nationalism, the power was in the hands of nationalist military governments. The Palestinian-Israeli crisis was in the focus of the conflicts of the region for a long time. Significant changes have happened by today: we speak about „old” and „new”, static and dynamic Near-East countries. What is constant is the great number of conflicts, their seriousness and unpredictability.

The main centres of conflict are Iraq, Israel, Palestine and Lebanon, but after the War of Iraq the gravitational centre of power politics seem to be moving from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to the region of the Persian gulf. The outlines of the confrontation between Iran and Saudi-Arabia become more and more distinct, with the efforts to get regional hegemony behind them.¹

The military actions of the United States taken against Iraqⁱⁱⁱ destroyed the earlier status quo without offering any alternatives, and as a consequence of this five changes started in the region which are important from a *strategic* point of view as well.

1. Iran is striving for hegemony in the region.
2. After the efforts aiming at democratization in Siite majority became stronger making the position of the similarly Siite Iran more emphatic. Besides, after the American intervention, the hostility which had been going on for several centuries, flared up between the Siite and Sunnite people in issues of immediate political reference. This hostility led to a bloody conflict and resulted in a war of incalculable outcome.^{iv}

¹ Burik Géza: A megosztott iszlám. HETEK, II. évfolyam, p. 31.

3. Saudi-Arabia can see a threat to its existence in the rise of Iran, as the North-Eastern part of the Arab peninsula is inhabited mainly by Siite people who before 1932, the establishment of Saudi-Arabia, were the followers of Iraqi Basra and Kebala.
4. As Iran really enters into possession of nuclear weapon, the power relations of the Near-East will be basically arranged. After all, the fight for the possession of hegemony developed into the central conflict of the whole region. The aim of Iran in it is to develop itself into a regional, or maybe a global Islamic power centre.^v
5. A vacuum was formed after the disintegration of Iraq, and a tragic turn happened with the sudden advance of the Jihadists and the establishment of the IS^{2,3}.

All these turns predict – and it has already partly happened – the redrawing of the political map of the region.

THE TURKISH–ARAB CONFLICT

The fact that the Turks survived the fall of the Ottoman Empire is enough itself to explain the hostile behaviour of the Arabs with the Turks. During the centuries the Ottoman Turks subjected the majority of the Islamic states, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia – today Iraq –, a part of Arabia and North-Africa, to their domination. They could establish an independent state on the ruins of the Empire, while the former states of the broken Emperium got under the influence of foreign powers. These are the historical roots, but the Arab Muslims have another reason why not to trust in Turkey. The Muslim radicals consider the modern, worldly-minded Turkey, which was established by Ataturk on the ruins of the Empire, to be a thorn in the side of the Muslim world.

The Turkish rule which had lasted for several centuries clearly left its mark on the societies, the Islamic religion remained the ruling religion up to the disintegration of the Empire. The Islamic religion remained the ruling religion after the establishment of modern Turkey, too but Kemal Ataturk's reforms also extended to the religion and he secularized Turkey and put the separation of the church and the state into force. At the same time the caliphate was abolished and actually the Islamic world today exists without a recognized church leader. Besides the enforcement of political interests it gave an opportunity among others for several states to aspire to a leading position in the Islamic world, but this only sowed the seeds of further conflicts.

² About the Islamic State see more details: Kollár Csaba (2015): A média veszélyes fegyver, és van, aki fegyvertelen: A médiaeszközök használata a terrorizmusban, különös tekintettel a modern kommunikációs eszközökre és technikákra. Gödöllő, Szent István Egyetem.

³ About the Balkan activity of the Islamic State see more details: Kollár Csaba (2015): Az Iszlám Állam hívószava a Balkánon: A terrorizmus kommunikációja a digitális korban. Kaposvár, Kaposvári Egyetem.

During the last decades several countries tried to gain a leading position for themselves in the Islamic world in the Near-East in a wider sense. As for the Persian nation, one of the main aims of Iran is to be the indisputable leader of the Islamic world. But the fact that its population is not of Arabic origin hinders this plan and the fact as well that 95% of its population belongs to the Siite branch of Islam.

But Egypt also endeavoured to get the same leading position because it is thought in Cairo that the geopolitical situation entitles it: it serves as a link between the North-Arabic states and the Arabs in the Near-East.

The Kurdish question is a powerful point in the Turkish-Syrian-Iraqi connections. Although the Kurds are the fourth biggest ethnic group in the Near-Eastern region, the lack of a common language, common religion has thrown an obstacle in the way of independence efforts so far. Almost 20 million Kurds live in the intersection point of Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Some Kurdish political-military alliances and parties started guerilla movements against the Turkish authorities. In Northern-Iran the rival Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Kurdish Patriotic Union (PUK) fight against each other. It is not a wonder that the hope for an independent Kurdistan is far away yet.

In this intricate system of relationship the Muslim neighbours of Turkey were induced to think, what is more to feel, serious antipathy, so the Turkish government signed a military agreement with Israel in February 1996. According to the pact, if Syria attacks Israel, Turkey gives military aid to Israel.

Syria has an argumjent with Turkey^{vi} because of the water supply of the Tiger and Euphrates rivers as well. Syria and Iraq claim that the putting of the Ataturk dam into operation endangers their water supply. And finally, the relationships of the two countries are made tense by the fact that Syria also supports the Kurdish guerillas in Turkey.

The Ottoman Empire was clearly the leading power of the region. But after its disintegration it kept its leading position deriving from its geopolitical situation, its role within the NATO in the future, too. Although it could not join in the fight for the religious leader's position because „officially” as a secularized country it was not an equal competitor for the basically Islamic states. The reinforcement of its regional leading position wanted to strengthen with military power its subimperialist efforts, with the increase of its role as a weapon producer and transporter. In reality, according to its plans, it wanted to develop to be the weapon supplier of the whole region.⁴

A further very important fact influences the foreign policy of Turkey and raises several questions, the question of joining the Union. As the rapprochement toward Europe is not successful, the Union postpones the permanent position of joining further, Turkey will inevitably drift towards not only the geographical, but the political East as well. And it would entail the strengthening of Islam almost lawfully. It could start a further process which would not be predictable in advance in the complicated points of contact in a region which is burdened by inner conflicts.

In this medium burdened by serious problems we have to examine the relationship of Turkey and the Balkans all the more, because due to the Near-East

⁴ See more details: Balázs Judit: *Az Oszmán Birodalomtól a modern Törökországig* c. könyvének Egy különleges iparág c. fejezete.

events of the recent past Turkey and Turkish foreign policy got into the centre of interest even more, what is more it plays or can play a key position in the shaping of the events of the region.

TURKEY AND THE BALKANS

The expansion of Islam to the Balkans can be regarded as one of the greatest precedents of the common past. At present on the territory which is inhabited by 54 million people the number of Muslims is nearly 7,5 million (14 percent) and in several countries they comprise more than half of the population (Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina). In addition to this, besides millions of Albanians and Bosnians, Turks also remained on the peninsula after the change of the Empire, so 8-9 percent of the population of Bulgaria is comprised by them.⁵

Between the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire-Turkey there was population movement in both directions during history. The direction of the movement was determined by the given historic circumstances. As the result of the immigration stimulating policy of the Ottoman Empire a huge „migration started towards the Empire.”^{viii6}

After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire Bosnians, Pomaks, Torbes, Albanians and Balkanian Turks settled down in large numbers in the remaining parts of the Empire – or after 1923 in the Turkish Republic; only between 1878 and 1913 the number of those who got to Istanbul and Anatolia amounted to several hundred thousands.

After the birth of modern Turkey further large scale settlement happened. The common religion and the interest of Ankara to compensate for the loss suffered during the war evidently played a role in it.

The number of those who arrived from the Balkans reached four hundred thousand between the two world wars. The practice of the reception of Muslim minorities did not change after World War II, although the authorities wanted to open less and less the gates of Turkey, which was struggling with more and more unemployment because of the accelerating growth of population. In 1950–51 one hundred and fifty thousand Turks settled down or during the 1970ies there was a family reuniting program. But these could not prevent the ethnic conflicts, the utmost importance of which happened at the end of the cold war. In the second half of the 1980ies in Bulgaria the Turkish population was forced to take Bulgarian names during the campagne to change names, which contributed to the „great excursion” in 1989, during which three hundred and fifty thousand Turks fled to Turkey. Another immigration wave started in 2000. Their role could be seen especially at votings, because most of them usually vote for left-wing parties.⁷

⁵ See: Egeresi Zoltán, Törökország és a Balkán. In: *Külügyi Szemle* XII. évf. 2013/1

⁶ See more details: Balázs Judit, *Gazdaság az Oszmán Birodalomban*, Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetemi Kiadó, 2007. *Migráció és Gazdaság* chapter

⁷ See more details: Egeresi op.cit

The new wave of the Balkan immigrants was brought by the wars of the 1990ies, when ten thousands of Albanians and Bosnians got to Turkey which was supplemented by a serious economic migration, mainly from Bulgaria.

The exact number of Balkan Muslims who settled down in Turkey during the past 90 years cannot be said, normally it can be estimated between one and two million. But they, or the descendants living mainly in the region of the Sea of Marmora and Izmir, comprise a significant group of the Turkish population. It has several consequences at a time, which Turkish internal and foreign policy have to take into consideration as well. Mainly the fact that this layer is much more secularized, western compared to the religious mid-Anatolian population. According to the preference of this layer, they usually vote consequently for the left-wing, secularized parties.⁸

At the same time, they have given the formation called Movement for the Rights and Freedom (Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi) for more than twenty years to Bulgarian legislation.

The process that Turkish foreign policy turned away from the Balkans for decades after 1995 is reflected in the two-way migration as well. The interest in the region came to life in Ankara when a great number of immigrants arrived from Zhivkov's Bulgaria in the second half of the eighties. Zhivkov's policy took a peculiar turn towards the Turkish minority. They introduced a „Name reform”, so the Turks were forced to take Bulgarian names and they were practically deprived of their original national identity.

The Yugoslavian wars at the end of the 90ies turned the attention of Turkey to the Balkans again. But the start of the really active Turkish policy was in 2008, by that time Turkish economy had become strong enough to increase the international authority of the country as well.

Foreign policy was made one of the bases of national pride by the media as well, the news programmes continuously hammer how successful we are abroad, so they make the country attractive by all means.^{viii}

THE TURKISH–GREEK CONNECTIONS 9

The key of the stability and peace of the Balkans is the Turkish-Greek balance of powers. The fact that both countries became members of the NATO in 1952 at the same time left its mark on the relationship of the two countries, Greece had already joined the European Union in 1981, while Turkey could start the negotiations to join only in 2005.

The relationship between them was peaceful, what is more friendly from the end of World War I. up to the middle of the 1950ies, but the events in Cyprus alienated them from each other. Although their agreement was or would have been necessary during the phase of the South-Slav crisis developed in the Balkans. The

⁸ op.cit

⁹ See more details: Balázs Judit, *Törökország Kelet és Nyugat között*. Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetemi Kiadó. 2009. Sopron

Turkish-Greek relations were characterized by considerable tension during the past decades. In spite of the fact that both countries are members of the NATO, the region struggles with instability problems, and that is why they should work together to decrease the tension developed in Southern Europe in their own interests. It would be desirable to stress their cooperation and contribution intents as NATO members to promote the safety and the peace of the region.

It is an important element of the historical consciousness in Turkey that it is the regional power that is responsible for the peace of the Balkans, because the whole territory belonged to the Ottoman Empire for long centuries, and the Turks backed out of the region gradually only during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, and – as it is well-known - modern Turkey was established after World War I. Those leaders who established the country were mostly born in the Balkans, including Kemal Pasha, the legendary Kemal Atatürk.

The ethnic diversity of the Balkans and the problems deriving from it were evident. It was well-known as well that the European powers inclined not to ease but to stir up tension by supporting nationalist movements pushing their own interests forward. According to their point of view the stability achieved must not be risked: the safety interest of Turkey is in the unalterability of the borders. They knew that a territorial division which would be suitable for everybody could not be realized because of the ethnic diversity of the Balkans and the change of the existing settlement could lead inevitably to civil war. They paid special attention to the delicate balance between Turkey and Greece.

The two countries devoted special attention to stability so as not to give a reason for the great powers to intervene in the home affairs of the Balkans. But they could realize it only up to World War II. The division of the world into two parts had an effect on this territory as well. The peace and the safety of the region depended on the relationship of the Eastern and the Western blocks after that. Greece and Turkey became members of the NATO in 1952, and the Soviet Union „let“ Yugoslavia go on a special path of socialism. By 1954 the region had been stabilized more or less, the balance was disrupted by the tension between Turkey and Greece.¹⁰

Earlier the two countries could cooperate in spite of the fact that neither of them were satisfied with the borders established in the peace treaty. But their leaders adapted the point of view that common interest required cooperation, so instead of behaving as rivals, they regarded the other one as a partner.^{ix}

But the problem of Cyprus created tension between the two countries. The division into two was preserved. The most eloquent proof of the Turkish-Greek opposition is the conflict arising in connection with Cyprus; the question of the border of the Aegean Sea; or the diplomatic conflict in connection with the capture of Öcalan Kurdish leader. Besides these the position of the Greek minority in Istanbul, the handling of the refugee question and the s. It seemed at that time that the conflict of interests might lead to a war, but they managed to avert it on EU and American mediation, and a slow rapprochement started after that.

¹⁰ Turan, İlter – Barlas, Dilek: Turkish–Greek balance: A key to peace and cooperation in the Balkans. *East European Quarterly*, 1999, 33. vol. 4. no., pp. 469–488.

Although both countries are NATO members, their soldiers cannot be put under the same command. At the same time they do not take part in the same troop movements, and this results in division inside the alliance. The problem in connection with Cyprus induced several other conflict situations as well. It induced for example the re-militarization of the Greek islands opposite the Turkish coast, which was of course evaluated by Turkey as a threat. There was a debate in connection with the question of territorial waters in the Aegean Sea, then the same happened in the cases of the continental base and airspace.

The Turkish-Greek connections were characterized by tension even at the end of the cold war. But the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar world order created a new situation even in the Balkans. After the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact the NATO wanted to renew itself and looked for a task for itself. And it found it in the preservation of the safety of the Eastern Mediterranean territory and the Near-East!!? And the two local NATO members, Turkey and Greece have got roles in it, so its interest is to reconcile the two countries with each other. In addition, the European Union also urges it. Turkey would like to become a member of the Union, but Greece has already been a member, so the start of the negotiations can only happen if Greece agrees.

The joint action of the two countries would be needed a lot in the Balkans, the tension between them only increases the division of the region. The countries of the Balkans are divided on the basis of having an alliance either with Turkey or Greece. Albania and Macedonia stand by Turkey, while Serbia and Russia as external powers stand by Greece. The connections of Albania and Turkey are strong besides the historical relations because quite a big ethnic group of Albanian origin live in Turkey who are attached to the native country. Albania was drawn into this camp because it does not really have a good connection with Greece because of the significant number of Greek people living in the country and the significant Albanian minority living in Greece, which is spiced with territorial claims as well. Macedonia stands by Turkey besides historical connections as well because it has a lot of problems with Greece first of all because of its name, which is disapproved by the Greeks.

The connection of Greece with Serbia strengthened because of orthodoxy in the first place. Russia supports the country for the same reason, and because its relationship with Turkey became overcast because of the increase in the influence upon the Caucasus and the former Soviet Middle-Asia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

There was an improvement in the relationship of Greece and Turkey, but it is still characterized by opposition and cooperation at the same time. There are serious economic, strategic interests in both cases, which are mainly of historical origin and can be traced back to religious roots. The relationship of the two countries could be characterized earlier mainly by „controlled tension” policy.⁸

The spectacular sign of the positive change of the relationships was the mutual help given during the earthquakes in Greece and Turkey alike. This was the point when the relationships which had already reached their deepest point by then started to gain impetus again and the first on the level of foreign ministers (for the

first time after 40 years in 2000), then on the highest level of diplomatic relationships, which had been rather frosty before, were restored again.¹¹

The main motivation of Turkey in this question was the joining of the European Union, which made it inescapable to reconcile with the only EU member neighbour then. Greece reacted in a positive way to the Turkish international change because it realized that its interest was the successful integration of Turkey into the European Union. It did it in spite of the fact that with the joining of Turkey, Greece would be only one of the member states of several ones and not the gaet of the Union towards the Arabic world and the Balkans. Realizing this, Greece also changed its former refusing viewpoint in connection with the Turkish joining and a kind of gesture policy started. Thanks to it, we can say that the relationships between the two countries have never been so friendly.¹²

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The 21st century Turkey relying on the traditions of the leading principle „peace in the world, peace at home” announced by Kemal Ataturk continued the foreign policy „zero problem with the neighbours” announced by foreign minister Davutioglu. It is possible that several conflicts, territorial debates aggravate the cohabitation in the region, in spite of this Turkey has appeared as a stabilizing power in the region. It has utilized almost all safety increasing possibilities in a creative way, it helped the settlement of disputed questions actively. It has acted supportively concerning the questions of the identity of Muslim minorities where religion plays a decisive part. The capital investments applied in the Balkans had a stimulating effect on the easing of unemployment, on the stabilization of the economies. Analysing the events of the last month, or the days of the recent past it is just possible that Turkey will be forced to change its former international political direction. The murderous warfare going on by its borders will force (?) the country to open a double front. It has already interfered in the bloody events in Syria and Iraq with war equipment on outer (?) pressure against the Jihadists and at the same time it launched an attack against the Kurds whom it branded terrorists. What will the future bring?

We have only presumptions, we can rely only on hypotheses because the Western world has no strategic concept to handle the situation and even the „aims” of the Jihadists are inscrutable for the time being. All this will probably influence the Balkan policy of Turkey and it is doubtful how it will be able to fulfil the former stabilizing role plotted against the changed strategic priorities.

¹¹ <http://www.c3.hu/~mester/T365/tux02049.htm>

¹² It would go beyond the framework of the article to analyse the crisis of Greek economy. It can be hoped that these facts might not influence the Turkish-Greek connections in a negative way.

END NOTES

- i. One of the facts that made the survival and even the growth of the Jewish state possible in the obviously hostile environment of the Near-East is that the Arabic world is split up both from an ethnic and religious points of view. All these are sources of further conflicts.
- ii. But the Siite or the Sunnite religions are also split up, only a few examples are the Alavites (Siite) Wahabites (Sunnite) etc.
- iii. It was the problem of Iraq to keep its territorial unity among the ethnic-religious (Kurdish-Arabic and Sunnite-Siite) confrontation. After the disintegration of Iraq the relationships became totally impossible to supervise. The terror organizations belong to the uncontrollable factors, with al-Kaida in the leading position. A conspiracy theory is developing in the Near-East region now, according to which the aim of the American conservative powers and of Israel is to cut up the Arabic states.
- iv. The Sunnite Muslims profess the legitimation of the first three caliphs, who were Muhammad's heirs. Their life is determined by the Koran, and the Hadis (Muhammad's collected teachings, his life story) and the Saria, the legislation system of the Islamic state. The imams', the priests' words are decisive in all spheres of life. The name „Sunni” comes from the Arabic word „Sunna”, which means collection of behaviour laws. The Siite Muslims did not accept the legitimacy of the first three caliphs, but they profess the legitimacy of Muhammad's nephew, and originally they called them Ali's party. They are much more ritual than the Sunnites. They believe that Muhammad and some of his descendants had divine characteristic features – which is refused by the Sunnites. The influence of the priests is much more dominant among the Siites than the influence of the Sunnite imams among them.
- v. Fischer, Joschka: Régi válságok – új konfrontációk a Közel-Keletről. In: Die Zeit, 2008.08.01.
- vi. The relationship of Syria and Turkey is determined by the fact that in 1939 Alexandra Szandschak became part of Turkey, it broke away from Syria which was under French authority and now is called Hatay province. It has never been accepted by Syria, in May 2007 the Syrian ambassador of Washington said: „After we have taken back the Golan Heights from Israel, it is high time to take back Hatay from Turkey.”
- vii. In 1857 it issued a declaration concerning migration and settlement within the framework of the Tanzimat, which was approved by the Saltan. According to the declaration, the Empire was open for everybody, who swears to be faithful to the Saltan and keeps the laws of the country. The declaration gave similar rights to the immigrants and to other subjects, including the freedom of worship.¹ The declaration containing the call for immigration was published in almost all the European newspapers, and it soon induced vivid responses. The

- most significant migration started from Bulgaria. A less significant number of immigrants came from Thrace, Macedonia, Bosnia, the present territory of Albania, the Bosnians, Pomaks, Skipetarens settled down on the European or Asian territories of Turkey. Smaller ethnic groups – 2 000 Swiss, 300 Irish families, French and German communities, Jewish families – asked for permission to reside from the High Porte.
- viii. Films promote the beauties of Turkish life, what is more they revive Suleyman's „glorious century”, the golden period of the Ottoman Empire.
 - ix. During World War II Turkey was occupied by the Germans. When the Germans left, the country got the supremacy over the Dodekanisos islands which had formerly belonged to Italy. The islands are close to Turkey and a significant Turkish minority live on them. Taking into consideration the fact that most of the islanders were Greek, Turkey did not raise objections. They hoped that because of the friendly relationship between the two countries, the debated questions would be settled through negotiations.
 - x. <http://index.hu/cikkek/0002/vtukor3/>

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