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NATIONAL INTEREST IN POST-COLD WAR TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRIME MINISTERIAL PROPOSALS

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Abstract

National interest is one of the concepts that states commonly use when expressing their foreign policy objectives. The main reason why the concept can be used so commonly and still stimulate the social response is that the concept is formed by two of the most popular concepts in the discipline of international relations: “Nation” and “interest”. Per contra, the relevant concepts are among the most controversial concepts of international relations and cause the concept to become very ambiguous. The study is based on the assumption that the concept of national interest as a means of justifying their behavior in foreign policy. From this point of view, the Prime Ministerial Proposals submitted to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in order to obtain the authorization to carry out cross-border military operations in the post-Cold War period were preferred as a sample of the study. As a matter of fact, one of the arguments frequently used in the meetings held in the Assembly is again the concept of national interest. How the concept of national interest in Turkish foreign policy in the near term is interpreted by the method of comparing and analyzing the discourses used during the discussion of the Prime Ministerial Proposals will be evaluated in the final part of the study. It is aimed to contribute to international relations literature in order to make the concept of national

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interest more suitable for use in foreign policy analysis by embodying the concept in the framework of the foreign and regional policies of Turkey in the post-Cold War period.

Keywords: National Interest, Turkish Foreign Policy, Prime Ministerial Proposal, Post-Cold War.

Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türk Dış Politikasında Ulusal Çıkar: Başbakanlık Tezkereleri Çerçevesinde Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz

Öz

Ulusal çıkar devletlerin dış politika amaçlarını ifade ederken yaygın şekilde kullandıkları kavramlar arasında yer almaktadır. Kavramın bu kadar yaygın olarak kullanılmasının ve hala toplumlar nezdinde karşılık bulmasının başlıca nedeni, kavramın uluslararası ilişkiler disiplinindeki en popüler kavramlardan ikisinin bir araya getirilerek oluşturulmasıdır: “Ulus” ve “çıkar”. Öte yandan, mevzubahis kavramlar uluslararası ilişkilerin en tartışmalı kavramları arasında da yer almakta ve kavramın muğlaklaşmasına neden olmaktadır. Okuyacağımız çalışma hem ulaşacakları, ulaştıkları noktada ise gözetecekleri, bir dış politika amacı hem de dış politikadaki davranışlarını meşru kılmada bir araç olarak ulusal çıkar kavramının devletlerin dış politika davranışlarında merkezi bir yere sahip olduğu varsayımına dayanmaktadır. Bu noktadan hareketle Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türkiye’de görev yapmış hükümetlerin sınır ötesi askeri operasyon gerçekleştirebilme yetkisi alabilmek için Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi’ne sunmuş oldukları başbakanlık tezkereleri çalışmanın örnekleme olarak tercih edilmiştir. Nitekim Başbakanlık tezkereleri hakkındaki görüşmeler sırasında Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi’nde gerçekleştirilen görüşmelerde sıklıkla başvuru argümanlarından birinin yine ulusal çıkar kavramı olduğu görülmektedir. Başbakanlık tezkerelerinin görüşülmesi sırasında kullanılan söylemlerin karşılaştırılarak analiz edilmesi yöntemi ile yakın dönem Türk dış politikasında ulusal çıkar kavramının nasıl anlamlandırıldığı çalışmanın sonuç kısmında değerlendirilecektir. Ulusal çıkar kavramının Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönem Türkiye’nin dış ve bölgesel politikaları çerçevesinde somutlaştırılarak kavramın dış politika çözümlerinde kullanılmaya daha elverişli bir hale getirmek yönünde uluslararası ilişkiler literatürüne katkıda bulunulması amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ulusal Çıkar, Türk Dış Politikası, Başbakanlık Tezkeresi, Soğuk Savaş Sonrası.

INTRODUCTION

One of the sources of legitimacy of social administration is the written or hypothetical social contract in which the policy makers transfers power from individuals in order to achieve objectives for the benefit of society. Both as a requirement of this social convention and to make their administration

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sustainable, one of the concepts most frequently referenced by governments in their behavior is the national interest. As a matter of fact, when then-US President George Bush refused to enact the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (Office of the Press Secretary, 2001), or when then-UK Prime Minister David Cameron was reforming the National Health System (Cameron, 2011), they again presented the decisions they had taken as a requirement of the national interest.

The concept of national interest is so often used in political practice that the two words that make up the concept, “nation” and “interest”, have a general acceptance of legitimacy in the eyes of the peoples since the 19th century. However, the excessive usage of the concept in both foreign and domestic policy areas also makes the national interest concept ambiguous. In this context, first of all, the problem of ambiguity regarding the concept of "national interest" will be addressed by explaining how the concept is handled within the framework of international relations literature.

The Concept of “National Interest” within the Framework of International Relations

Joseph Frankel defines the concept of the national interest as the general and continuous aims that a country is headed for (Frankel, 1964, p. 47). On the other hand, Faruk Sönmezoğlu mentions that it is not possible to define the concept so clearly and that the national interest has turned into something mysterious that determines the foreign policies of all states but cannot be determined (Sönmezoğlu, 2014, p. 348). In order to solve the “mystery” mentioned by Sönmezoğlu, it would be useful to look at the first meanings of the words “nation” and “interest” used in everyday language, in other words the meanings in the dictionary.

The word “nation” is described in the general dictionary as a community of people living on the same land, with a unity of language, history, feeling, ideal, custom and tradition among them (Türk Dil Kurumu, 1998, p. 1563). In a dictionary specific to the field of politics, the concept of nation is defined as follows:

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“A nation is a body of people who possess some sense of a single communal identity, with a shared historical tradition, with major elements of common culture, and with a substantial proportion of them inhabiting an identifiable geographical unit.” (Robertson, 2004, p. 329).

On the other hand, the word “interest” is defined in general dictionaries as “a matter that one considers only for his own benefit” (Meydan Larousse, 1990, p. 211) or “gain, benefit or advantage obtained in an indirect manner” (Türk Dil Kurumu, 1998, p. 470). In this context, the concept of national interest can only be defined in the meaning of the dictionary as a matter of consideration for the benefit of a community of people who are largely involved in a material and moral union.

In light of various developments in the first half of the twentieth century, from the early 1980s researchers such as Benedict Anderson, Anthony D. Smith, John Breuilly or Eric Hobsbawm were able to hold deeper discussions on the concept of nation. The common denominator of all these academic studies is that they are more divided than agreed on which common traits can be sufficient to define a human community as a “nation”. On the other hand, even if the concept of nation is clarified, many different questions about who determines the nation's interests or who will defend the determined national interests make it more difficult to achieve conceptual clarity. Indeed, Peter Lamb and Fiona Robertson-Snape have argued that the concept of “national interest”, which is often used in relation to states, is semantically problematic, since the concepts of “nation” and “state” are not synonymous. Despite the problems it contained, Lamb and Robertson-Snape agreed that the concept of national interest was used to ensure the territorial integrity of a state, to protect its political culture, institutions sovereignty, economic well-being and to express long-term and sustained

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interests, such as the development of prestige, reputation or effectiveness (Lamb & Robertson-Snape, 2017, p. 211).

In addition to all these ambiguities, the possible much difficulties in solving ambiguities cause international relations and foreign policy theorists who adopt an analytical approach in international relations studies to be skeptical of the concept of national interest. The widespread use of the national interest, however, is not limited only to subject prevalence. As a matter of fact, not only political makers who have the power to govern over societies, or nations as used in this study, but also all other units that are candidates for government, present the national interest as an irrefutable part of their approach to politics. Since foreign policies implemented or attempted to be implemented by different units of analysis of international relations can provide an explanation, academic studies aimed at defining the concept of national interest offer a rich literature.

For example, Faruk Sönmezoğlu et al. defined the concept of national interest as “the basic elements that states say they base their foreign policies on” (Sönmezoğlu, Arıboğan, Ayman, & Dedeoğlu, 2010, p. 659) in a dictionary prepared within the framework of the discipline of international relations. According to this approach, the national interest is not an independent objective situation, but rather a fiction used by policy makers in their foreign policy actions.

Suat Bilge also states in his work that the national interest usually refers to the sum of the national values. By describing the concept as “the popular vote reflecting the opinion of a country” and “the rights and interests that statesmen consider vital in terms of the independence of a country, the integrity of the country, the security, the way in which material and spiritual life is lived” (Bilge, 1966, p. 314), Bilge also seems to have given weight to the fictional aspect of the concept.

In another dictionary of international relations, Plano and Olton listed the foreign policy components as “elements of national power”, “national interest”, “aims” and “situational factors”, and defined the concept as “the main objective and final determining component that drives the decision makers of a state in foreign policy making” (Plano & Olton, 1988) . In this definition, it is accepted that the national interest is an objective phenomenon independent of its practitioners and guides decision makers in the process of foreign policy making.

Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi take a more moderate approach to whether the national interest is a fiction or an objective phenomenon. Thus, they describe the concept of the national interest as the primary security interests and values of a state, while they mention that some fundamental national interests

may be more primary, independent of any (democrat, dictator, demagogue) political leader (Viotti & Kauppi, 2014, p. 187). The alleged consensus of policymakers that national survivorship and sovereignty are the minimum objective gives an objective position to the concept of national interest. On the other hand, when talking about armed intervention as a practice that can be applied to the realization of this minimum goal, the idea of determining which objective is vital or which is primary and which is of secondary importance by the decision makers (Viotti & Kauppi, 2014, p. 327) again creates the impression that the concept of national interest is a fiction that can be constructed.

Hans Morgenthau attaches special importance to the concept of interest in the establishment of political theory, whether at national or international level. As a matter of fact, Morgenthau, who focuses largely on facts because of the political realism he has adopted, states that the basis of separating the political from the non-political lies the concept of interest, which he refers to as power. Stating that the national interest treats politics as a subject and field of action and understanding separate from the concept of interest, which is described as wealth or fortune, or issues such as morality, aesthetics or religion (Morgenthau, 1970, p. 4), Morgenthau seems to be trying to gain a literally objective position, rather than defining the concept as an action constructed by decision makers.

Thomas Robinson divided the terms used by Morgenthau regarding the concept of national interest into two main groups: Those relating to the national interest of one state and those relating to the national interest of more than one state. In this context, the national interest of a state can be defined as “primary” or “secondary”, “permanent” or “variable”, “general” or “specific”. On the other hand, the international interests of more than one state can be classified as “identical”, “complementary” or “conflicting” interests (Robinson, 1967, pp. 140-141).

According to Stephen D. Krasner, there are two basic methods of defining a statement or behavior as a national interest: Logical-deductive and empirical-inductive. Those who prefer the logical-deductive method objectively define the national interest by assuming that states have certain fundamental objectives, especially the provision of territorial and political integrity. Krasner notes that while this method is very powerful, it is limited to providing clear insight into the conduct of a hegemonic state whose territorial and political integrity is completely secure, or many foreign policy issues not directly related to its core objectives. On the other hand, those who adopt the empirical-inductive method describe the concept of national interest as a fiction based on the statements and behavior of the central decision makers (Krasner, 1978, p. 35).

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İlhan Uzgel claims that the national interest is the main driving force underlying all foreign policy decisions. According to this claim, no foreign policy decision or action can be presented by its practitioners as contrary to the national interest (Uzgel, 2004, p. 53). Highlighting the fictional aspect of the concept, Uzgel mentions the need to mention not one but more national interests when evaluating a sovereign nation state. Uzgel emphasized that both political power and military-civilian bureaucracy, as well as business circles may have different interests or perceptions of interests, and he stated that the interests or understandings of interests of these segments do not necessarily have to conflict with each other, but they may not always overlap. Which interest or understanding of interest will turn into foreign policy is determined by the internal power balances of the sovereign nation state (Uzgel, 2004, p. 65).

When academic studies on the concept of national interest in the literature are examined, the debates on whether the concept is an objective phenomenon or a fiction formed by decision-makers is observed as the differences in approaches to the objectivity of states' foreign policy. Aware of the richness that conceptual discussions have contributed to the literature of international relations, this work will take a closer position to the approach that the national interest is a fiction shaped by decision-makers. The reason for making such a choice is that the Prime Ministerial Proposals, which are required to be realized in line with the objective national interest of Turkey, are decided under the roof of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (after this point only “the Assembly”) instead of having automatic acceptance among the political representatives of the Turkish nation, but in some cases after long discussions.

Legal Framework of Prime Ministerial Proposals

In order to observe the transformation of the concept of national interest in Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period, there is a sample that would be preferred. This sample will be the proposals submitted by the Prime Ministries that served during the period to the Assembly for the carrying out of cross-border military operations and what discussed during the voting process. Before presenting the proposal processes in the sample, it is necessary to give information about the legal framework related to the functioning of Turkish foreign policy, at least in the period.

The second article of the law No. 4009 on the establishment and duties of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, adopted on June 24, 1994, gives the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the task of preparing for the determination of Turkish Foreign

Policy and conducting relations with international organizations (T.C. Resmi Gazete, 1994, p. 13). The second article of the law No. 6004 on the establishment and duties of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was adopted in place of the law No. 4009 on July 7, 2010, states that the ministry acts within the framework of the principles set out in the law while performing this duty, while Paragraph B of the same article states that one of these principles is the “defense and protection of national rights and interests” (T.C. Resmi Gazete, 2010). Both laws, on the other hand, emphasize that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must act according to the objectives and principles appointed and determined by the government when implementing and coordinating foreign policy.

States can use economic or military instruments as well as political instruments to achieve the objectives set out in foreign policy. Although Turkey has tried to achieve a peaceful end to the conflicts in its immediate region during the end of the Cold War, it is seen that military instruments have been put into operation as a result of the intensification of the conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon or the Sea of Aden.

Although many articles of the Turkish constitution adopted on October 18, 1982 have been revised for various reasons, Articles 92 and 117, which can be associated with the use of military instruments in foreign policy, have remained the same as the date of the first adoption of the constitution. The first of these two constitutional articles bear the title “Declaration of a state of war and authorizing the use of armed forces” of the 1982 constitution. The article states that the Assembly has the authority to permit the declaration of a state of war in cases deemed legitimate by international law and the sending of Turkish Armed Forces to foreign countries or the presence of foreign armed forces in Turkey, except as required by international treaties or international rules of courtesy to which Turkey is a party. Article 117 of the 1982 constitution, which has the title “National Defense” as the main, “commander-in-chief and Chief of General Staff” as the sub-title, states that “...the Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for national security and for the preparation of the Armed Forces for the defense of the country” (The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 2006).

Considering all the above-mentioned legal regulations, it is possible to draw a framework about the Prime Ministerial Proposals as follows. The basic principles to be adopted in Turkish foreign policy are determined by law No. 6004 approved by the Assembly. Within the framework of these principles, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been given executive and coordinating responsibility for achieving the foreign policy objectives determined by the

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governments. However, the powers and responsibilities of the Foreign Office were shaped in the axis of political instruments that could be used in foreign policy, while the Assembly was given the authority to use military instruments. The task of preparing a proposal regarding the legal regulation on the terms and conditions under which military instruments will be used in foreign policy has been given to the Prime Minister's Office which served between April 23, 1920 and June 24, 2018 in Turkish political life.

In order to discuss the proposals prepared by the Prime Minister's office in the Assembly for launching cross-border military operations on the basis of Articles 92 and 117 of the 1982 constitution, the “quorum of the meetings”, in other words, one third of all deputies in the Assembly, must have attended the session of the Assembly. The “quorum for the decision” on the adoption of the proposal was considered to be one-quarter of the total number of members in the Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, 2011, pp. 24-27). Considering the sample of the study, 150 members of the Assembly should be present until 1995 and 184 members of the Assembly after 1995 in order for a Prime Ministerial Proposal to be discussed in the Assembly. On the other hand, in order to accept a Prime Ministerial Proposal, at least 114 deputies had to vote for the proposal until 1995 and at least 138 deputies had to vote for it after 1995.

The International Environment and Turkey in the Period of Preparation of the Prime Ministerial Proposals

The revolutionary developments in information communication and technologies such as the easing of the international capital flow since the 1970s, the acceleration of the information flow by gaining a greater dimension, and the development of transportation facilities have deeply affected the 1990s and brought a very dynamic nature to the period. These developments, which changed the social life with different dimensions, naturally affected the political life, and many states, both at national and international level, had to reconsider their policy making processes. Economic and political polarization between Liberal and socialist ideologies since the nineteenth century began to occur in the military dimension in the post-Second World War period. The structure of this wide-ranging polarization that dominated the international system throughout the Cold War began to change from the beginning of the 1990s. As the international capital flow reached a speed that could easily upset the balance of national economic structures, states began to show a tendency to regionalize or develop existing regional into further cooperation on the basis of economic cooperation with other states in their near abroad.

Beyond political, military, economic cooperation or regionalization, the most striking development of the period in the context of international relations was undoubtedly the dissolution of the USSR. The dissolution of the USSR in the context of the nation state and the difficulties faced by the newly established nation states in economic and military terms directly and deeply affected the international system. As a matter of fact, with the dissolution of the USSR, the idea of the collapse of communism became widespread, at least as it was practiced in this geography and as a global model. Thus, the adoption of a bipolar system has been replaced by a unipolar system under the leadership of the United States or a multipolar system in which the European Union, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and international organizations at various levels are active. In this context, it can be argued that the new international system offers States a wider field of action in the foreign policy making process compared to the Cold War period. The wide range of action taken by the states has not only laid the groundwork for the cooperation environment mentioned above, but also brought about a number of security problems.

During the Cold War, the threats to international peace were largely eliminated by supranational federative structures such as the USSR or Yugoslavia, the balance of nuclear power or intra-bloc discipline. However, with the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc, intra-bloc discipline and the expansion of nuclear power disrupted the balance of nuclear power, and with the dissolution of the USSR and Yugoslavia, new nation states, already strained by globalization, emerged. Especially during the establishment process, political, economic and military problems experienced by these nation states first among themselves and soon after by their neighbors created important security problems at the regional level in the beginning of the 1990s. The intervention of international organizations during the breakup of Yugoslavia and Russia's near abroad policy (The Kozyrev Doctrine) in the former Soviet geography were instrumental in reducing these regional conflicts.

Another change observed with the 1990s was that the communication devices, which had been mostly under the control of the states in the previous periods, could find themselves outside the state, with technology developing at an extraordinary pace in these areas. The expansion of a global and civil information network that allows individuals to access the information they want directly in line with their own desires has brought about some unpredictable/uncontrollable problems in the context of security, even though they are in line with the principles of transparency and openness of the liberal state understanding. As a matter of fact, while individuals or civilian organizations may benefit from these developments for their own peaceful

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purposes, transnational terrorist organizations have benefited from the same benefit in establishing an infrastructure capable of operating simultaneously in different parts of the world. The fact that transnational terrorist groups organized and spread under the axis of fundamentalism in the 1990s can be easily organized and taken into action in Europe and the United States after the Middle East and Africa can also be evaluated in this context.

The 1990s were years of significant changes both in Turkey's external and internal political environment. As a result of the general elections held on October 20 1991, the coalition government period was initiated, which would continue throughout the 1990s. On the outside, the end of the Cold War and the increasing impact of globalization have brought about significant changes both in Turkey's near abroad and in the structure of the international system. These changes have also affected Turkey's traditional tendency to use military instruments in foreign policy. As a matter of fact, the first Prime Ministerial Proposal was requested by the 19th Government on December 6, 1950 from the Assembly to provide military support to the UN forces in Korea. During the entire Cold War, Prime Ministers have only been asked for a proposal from the Assembly four times. The other three proposals were requested by the 28th Government on March 16, 1964, the 30th Government on November 17, 1967 and the 37th Government on July 20, 1974, and are all related to the island of Cyprus. However, during the decade following the end of the Cold War, eleven governments have requested nine proposals to allow cross-border military operations against Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine, Albania and Kosovo respectively.

In the first years after the Cold War, international conflicts gained a new dimension after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) in the United States. In this context, it is seen that the emphasis on preventing potential mass migration movements and global terrorist groups has come to the fore in the grounds of the Prime Ministerial Proposal requests. In this direction, the 57th Government requested the first proposal from the Assembly for military activities planned to be carried out in the context of "Operation Enduring Freedom" against Afghanistan on October 10, 2001. During the ongoing process, four Prime Ministerial Proposals regarding the U.S. operation against Iraq were submitted to the Assembly in 2003 by the 58th and 59th Governments. In addition to these, it is observed that a request was made to the Assembly to secure the elections held by the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006 and to provide support to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In order to assess the context in which the concept of the national interest is addressed in all these demands, both by the

powers requesting the proposal and by the opponents who voted against it, the voting processes of the proposals need to be subjected to a more detailed analysis.

Sessions of the Prime Ministerial Proposal

The end of the Cold War is often associated with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This kind of relationship is a product of the understanding that presents the Cold War as more of a US-USSR standoff. But the Cold War is not just a competition for two superpowers to exert influence in various areas. When we consider the competition of socialist and liberal ideologies, communist and free market preferences, authoritarian and democratic administrations, the Cold War marks a period of much more deep-rooted and widespread polarization. Therefore, rather than fixating the end of the Cold War on the date of the dissolution of the USSR, it would be more accurate to evaluate in a process where many cases have taken place such as Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Malta Summit or the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. In this context, instead of determining the year 1991 as a milestone in the Turkish foreign policy of the post-Cold War period, the analysis will start from a date that is more integrated with the 1990s.

Prime Ministerial Proposals in the Context of Gulf Crisis and Wars

The International Crisis, which started with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2, 1990, was tried to be ended by the Resolutions 660 and 661 taken in the UN Security Council within a week through political and economic means. Turkey has also closely followed the war between Iraq, where it borders directly from the southeast region, and Kuwait, which is also in its near abroad. During the Gulf Crisis between Iraq and Kuwait and the First Gulf War between Iraq and the US led coalition against Iraq, there were three different Prime Ministerial Proposals in Turkey: August 12, 1990; September 5, 1990; and January 17, 1991 Prime Ministerial Proposals. However, while the First Gulf War ended Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, it did not bring about a "positive peace" that would lead to a long-term end to the animosity between Iraq and the United States. On March September 20, 2003, as part of the global counterterrorism operations that were launched after the 9/11, the United States launched a war on Iraq again on the grounds that it supported global terrorism. In this process, which is also referred to as the Second Gulf War, Turkey's Prime Ministerial Proposals came back on its agenda: March 1, March 20 and October 7, 2003 Prime Ministerial Proposals.

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At the end of the 3rd legislative year of the 18th term, the first of the proposals on Turkey's agenda regarding the events in the Gulf region, the proposal dated on 12 August 1990, was discussed in the Assembly with the motion of 133 members of the opposition to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly (T.B.M.M., 1990a, pp. 427-428). In an extraordinary session of the Assembly, then-Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut submitted the request to the Assembly for "for authorization of the declaration of a state of war, the use of armed forces, the sending of Turkish Armed Forces to foreign countries or the presence of foreign armed forces in Turkey" due to the events that occurred (T.B.M.M., 1990a, p. 475). The then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Bozer requested that the negotiations on the Prime Ministerial Proposal be held in a closed session in accordance with the 71st article of the internal order, and as a result of the vote, the session on the proposal was held in a closed manner. After a closed session lasting two hours and thirty-seven minutes, then-Assembly Speaker İsmet Kaya Erdem declared that 373 members of the Assembly participated in the open vote of the Prime Ministerial Proposal, and that the proposal was accepted with 216 votes against 151 rejections and 6 invalid votes (T.B.M.M., 1990a, pp. 476-477).

In his speech during the talks, SHP (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti-Social Democratic Populist Party) President Erdal İnönü claimed that Turkey's national interest can only be achieved by being a part of the international security system. İnönü stated that the foreign policy behavior that he associated with then President Özal, which included proactive decisions and actions aimed at personal or party advertising, should be avoided. İnönü emphasized that the national interest cannot be protected only by the steps taken by the executive, and that legislation is an indispensable part of the foreign policy process on such a critical issue (T.B.M.M., 1990a, pp. 445-446). The president of DYP (Doğru Yol Partisi-True Path Party), Süleyman Demirel, one of the opposition leaders of the period, stated that there was no situation that directly threatened Turkey's national interests as stated in the Prime Ministerial Proposal, but that Turkey could harm its own national interests as a party to an issue in favor of other countries (T.B.M.M., 1990a, pp. 450-451). On the other hand, in his speech after the acceptance of the Prime Ministerial Proposal, then-Prime Minister Akbulut stated that the permission for military operations with the proposal will never be propagated in favor of the ruling party and that the opposition parties should focus on the objective national interests of Turkey instead of the competition in domestic politics regarding the proposal (T.B.M.M., 1990a, pp. 460-461). Behind Akbulut's statement, there were ongoing differences of opinion between the ruling party and the opposition parties regarding Turkey's understanding of

domestic and foreign policy during the period. As a matter of fact, Akbulut's government, which served as prime minister under the shadow of Özal's presidency, favored a more proactive foreign policy in line with the changing international dynamics, and therefore deep-rooted reforms in domestic policy for this purpose. On the other hand, the opposition party seems to favor the continuation of the status quo by being more cautious in an environment where the dynamics of the Cold War have not yet completely disappeared.

The second Prime Ministerial Proposal for the Gulf crisis was presented to the Assembly by then-Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut again in the fourth legislative year of the eighteenth term of the Assembly. Akbulut presented the rationale for his request as “ensuring the restoration of peace and stability in the Middle East and maintaining Turkey’s security against possible dangers, as well as effectively protecting Turkey’s high interests in the direction of developments during and after the crisis” (T.B.M.M., 1990b, p. 99). The opposition party members objected to the procedure by stating that the proposal was contrary to the Article 6, 7 and 92 of the constitution, claiming that this proposal extended the wider authority over a vaguer period of time relative to the previous request (T.B.M.M., 1990b, pp. 106-114). However, the then-Deputy Speaker of the Assembly Yılmaz Hocaoğlu stated that there was no irregularities as a result of the negotiations and explained that the proposal would be discussed in a closed session (T.B.M.M., 1990b, p. 113). In a closed session lasting three hours and forty-one minutes, the Prime Ministerial Proposal was passed by 246 votes against 136 rejection votes (T.B.M.M., 1990b, p. 115).

Resolution 678 of the UNSC gave Iraq a final deadline of January 15, 1991 to end its occupation of Kuwait and return to its pre-occupation borders. However, Iraq continued its occupation of Kuwait at the end of this period. On January 16, 1991, the US-led coalition of 28 countries began its military intervention to end Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait and return it to its pre-crisis borders. A day after that date, a new prime ministerial proposal was put on the agenda of the Assembly. While trying to explain the justification of the Prime Ministerial Proposal, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Kurtcebe Alptemoçin demanded that the request for the motion be accepted in line with Turkey’s “high interests” (T.B.M.M., 1991, p. 294). The phrase “high interest” that then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Alptemocin used in his speech is noteworthy in that it was a phrase often expressed by realist theorists in “state-related” and “military security” issues, unlike other “interests” such as economic, social or environmental.

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One of the opposition leader's İnönü stated that Turkey should support the UN-backed operation in accordance with the UN resolutions as it considers "appropriate support" and claimed that it is against Turkey's national interest to be part of a military operation against Iraq (T.B.M.M., 1991, pp. 299-303). On the other hand, Demirel, another opposition leader, emphasized that the relevant Prime Ministerial Proposal would mean bringing Turkey directly into war with Iraq, and that this situation could not be reconciled with Turkey's national and regional interests (T.B.M.M., 1991, pp. 304-309). In response to opposition leaders' objections, Prime Minister Akbulut stated that both Iraq's aggressive attitude towards Kuwait and its plans to monopolize the regional energy resources were contrary to Turkey's national interests (T.B.M.M., 1991, p. 319). Unlike the other two proposals, the proposal was voted by open voting, and was accepted by 250 votes against 148 votes for rejection (T.B.M.M., 1991, p. 331).

The US-led Desert Shield and Desert Storm military operations to end Iraq's invasion of Kuwait have successfully achieved their objective as of February 28, 1991. As a result of the war, Iraq withdrew from its occupied territories, but a new animosity arose between Iraq and the United States, which led the military operations. This animosity turned into a direct military conflict a decade later as a result of the process that began after the 9/11 events in the United States. In March 20, 2003, the United States once again waged war on Iraq on the grounds that Iraq had provided support to terrorist groups that carried out the 9/11 events and had weapons of mass destruction to use against the United States and its allies. Following both the global developments after the 9/11 events and the developments in the region in this context, Turkey preferred to take legal measures for cross-border military operations before the conflict officially began in the Second Gulf War as it did in the First Gulf War. On March 1, 2003, a more comprehensive Prime Ministerial Proposal was put on the agenda of the Assembly, although the Assembly made the first legislative arrangements in a closed session on February 6, 2003 (T.B.M.M., 2003a, p. 115).

Prior to the debates in the Assembly during the Prime Ministerial Proposals dated March 1, 2003, it is necessary to give information about Turkey's internal political outlook in the period. In the general elections held in Turkey on November 3, 2002, the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-Justice and Development Party) was the sole ruling party with 34.3% of the vote and the CHP (Republican People's Party) was the main opposition party with 19.4% of the vote, as all other political parties fell below the 10% electoral threshold. The AKP was able to reach the number of deputies who could form a government alone for the first time after November 20, 1991, and was a relatively new party founded

on August 14, 2001. However, the majority of the party's founding members were politicians who had previously served at the top levels of the Turkish bureaucracy or had a career as a deputy, and were therefore highly experienced in Turkey's recent process of both domestic and foreign policy making. In such an environment, March 1, 2003 proposal, which came to the agenda of the first legislative year of the 22nd term of the Assembly in order to "protect the fundamental rights and interests of Turkey" (T.B.M.M., 2003a, p. 116), received 264 votes of acceptance after three closed sessions lasting four hours and seventeen minutes, but failed to provide the absolute majority of the Article 96 of the constitution (T.B.M.M., 2003a, pp. 132-133). However, in the immediate aftermath of this Prime Ministerial Proposal, developments both within Turkey and in the international arena brought a new proposal to the agenda.

Firstly, the renewal election was held on March 8, 2003 and the AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan became a deputy. Thus, Erdogan formed the Fifty-ninth government and became prime minister on March 14, 2003. On the other hand, on March 20, 2003, the US military operation against Iraq began. On the same day that the US action began, another Prime Ministerial Proposal on the same issue was put on the agenda of the Assembly. It was stated by the then-Prime Minister Erdoğan that the aim of this proposal was to intervene in the possible mass migration wave towards Turkey just in place and on time (T.B.M.M., 2003b, pp. 302-303). After a closed session lasting two hours and thirteen minutes, the relevant Prime Ministerial Proposal was adopted by 332 votes of acceptance (T.B.M.M., 2003b, p. 305).

In the first week of the second legislative year of the 22nd term of the parliament, on October 7, 2003, the last Prime Ministerial Proposal, which may be included in the sample of our study on Iraq, was brought to the agenda. The reason for this Prime Ministerial Proposal for a motion was the possible security threats that could be experienced until the restoration of the central government, the complete establishment of the territorial integrity and security of Iraq within this new structure (T.B.M.M., 2003c, pp. 285-288). This proposal, covering a period of one year, was adopted after a closed session lasting two hours and fifty-four minutes by a vote of 358 (T.B.M.M., 2003c, p. 290).

The Second Gulf War was soon completed as a war between the United States and Iraq. However, it has been difficult to maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq after the war and to maintain public order. These difficulties have created a power vacuum in Iraq, and one of the illegal organizations trying to make the most of this vacuum has been the PKK terrorist organization. On October 6, 2009 and October 5, 2011, the governments submitted to the Assembly two different

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Prime Ministerial Resolutions against the PKK terrorist threat coming from the borders of Iraq. The two Prime Ministerial Proposals were adopted by a much larger majority in the Assembly (T.B.M.M., 2009a, p. 73; T.B.M.M., 2011a).

Table 1

Prime Ministerial Proposals Directly Related to the Gulf Crisis and Wars

Date of Proposal	For	Against	Absent	Result
August 12, 1990	216	151	6	Passed
September 5, 1990	246	136	-	Passed
January 17, 1991	250	148	1	Passed
March 1, 2003	264	250	19	Failed to provide the absolute majority
March 20, 2003	332	202	1	Passed
October 7, 2003	358	183	2	Passed

Prime Ministerial Proposals to Contribute to Regional Conflicts and Multinational Task Forces

The post-Cold War international conflicts have not only been limited to the Middle East. While conflicts in the Middle East have intensified, many regional conflicts in Africa and the Balkans have reached a position where they will soon evolve into civil war. The Prime Ministerial Proposals concerning Somalia and Yugoslavia, which are regions where regional conflicts have turned into civil wars, were put on the agenda of the Assembly on December 8, 1992.

Of these two resolutions, the one associated with Somalia was prepared in support of UNSC Resolution 794. The second proposal was related to the ongoing conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was also heavily engaged in the public opinion of Turkey due to the shared historical and cultural ties. One of the highlights during the talks was the statement used by Kamuran İnan, a member of Parliament who spoke on behalf of the then opposition party ANAP (Motherland Party), when criticizing the Prime Minister's position on the basis of UN Resolutions, the contemporary structure of the UN, the selectivity of the intervening regions and the behavior of the UN Secretary General in particular. In his speech, İnan stated that his party would limit its criticism to a certain extent due to its decision not to distinguish between the state line and the national interest in foreign policy (T.B.M.M, 1992, p. 225). This statement reflects the idea that the national interest is not shaped by the powers, but has a Supra-party

and therefore objective structure. On the other hand, another opposition party RP (Welfare Party) member Oğuzhan Asiltürk, claimed that the operation against Somalia would be in the interest of the United States, which uses the UN as an instrument of legitimacy to determine the political order in the region rather than the national interests of Turkey or Somalia (T.B.M.M, 1992, p. 237). As a result of the negotiations, 266 of the 310 votes for Somalia proposal were accepted and 317 of the 320 votes for Bosnia and Herzegovina proposal were accepted (T.B.M.M, 1992, p. 276).

On 17 January 1997, Hebron (El-Halil) Agreement was signed between then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat under the supervision of then-US Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Under this agreement, which was signed in accordance with the Second Oslo Accords, 80% of the Hebron region was left to the Palestinian National Administration, while 20% of the region was allowed to redeploy Israeli troops. In this context, the Prime Minister of the period, Necmettin Erbakan, prepared a Prime Ministerial Proposal on “the establishment of a temporary international presence in Hebron by Turkey, together with Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway, to assume the role of international observer after the transfer of Hebron to the Palestinian National Administration” and “the sending of military personnel to Hebron”. The proposal was passed unanimously on February 20, 1997 after the speeches that it was in the best interest of both the region and the nation to support this presence, which is thought to serve peace in the Middle East (T.B.M.M., 1997a, p. 108).

One of the conflicts that occupied the international agenda in 1997 was in Albania. Albania, which adopted a communist economic structure for many years, experienced difficulties in the transition to a free-market economy after the Cold War, as did many former Eastern Bloc countries. In Albania, which has poor financial infrastructure during this transition process, many people, also referred to as “bankers”, staged a Ponzi scheme. With the collapse of the bankers' order, a deep economic crisis began to occur in Albania, and the ongoing economic crisis caused a political crisis and widespread security problems. On April 10, 1997 and July 23, 1998, two Prime Ministerial Proposals were prepared for Albania. The first of these proposals was prepared in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1101 of March 28, 1997 to address the crisis in Albania, to meet the urgent need for assistance of the Albanian people regularly, and to participate in the military mission planned to provide police service in Albania. Apart from the common cultural and historical heritage, the members of the Assembly who do not see the conflict in Turkey’s near abroad as appropriate for the national interests of the country have accepted the Prime

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Ministerial Proposal (T.B.M.M., 1997b, p. 137). A second Prime Ministerial Proposal prepared on July 23, 1998, which foresees the deployment of Turkish Armed Forces to Albania for the same purposes, was adopted by the unanimous vote of the members of Parliament (T.B.M.M., 1998a, p. 308).

Another negative case in the Balkans during the 1990s was the conflicts between the Yugoslav Federal Republic of Serbia and Montenegro and the Kosovo Albanians starting in February 1998. It was planned to establish a multi-national joint force under the umbrella of NATO to avoid tragic events similar to the massacres that occurred during the breakup of Yugoslavia. A Prime Ministerial Proposal was prepared on 8 October 1998 by the then Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz in order to enable Turkey to participate in this coalition if this possible “National Joint Power” was established. The relevant Prime Ministerial Proposal was adopted unanimously in the Assembly (T.B.M.M., 1998b, p. 380).

A total of 15 prime ministerial papers were put on the agenda of the Assembly between 2001 and 2012. Among these are 5 prime ministerial papers on Iraq mentioned earlier in the study under the heading of the Gulf War. On the other hand, a Prime Ministerial Proposal to support the “Operation Enduring Freedom” launched by the United States in conjunction with NATO to fight global terrorism before the Second Gulf War against Iraq was adopted in the Assembly on October 10, 2001 with 319 votes. (T.B.M.M., 2001, p. 272) .

In the 2000s, Turkey began to focus on regional problems in Africa after the Middle East and the Balkans. As a matter of fact, within the framework of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1671 of April 25, 2006, it is planned to cooperate with the European Union in order to contribute to security and security during the general elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to support UN forces (The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo/MONUC) in the region. In this context, a Prime Ministerial Proposal was adopted on June 27, 2006 to participate in the European Force Operation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to deploy troops in support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as in Gabon and other countries that would be needed (T.B.M.M., 2006a, p. 60).

Six of the other 10 prime ministerial resolutions on the agenda of the Assembly in the 2000s are related to providing support to the United Nations Interim Task Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. Finally, the Prime Ministerial Proposals for the deployment of Turkish Armed Forces naval elements in the Gulf of Aden, Somali territorial waters and clearances, Arabian Sea and contiguous zones to combat piracy,

banditry and armed robbery have been approved in the Assembly on February 2, 2010 and January 25, 2012.

Table 2
PM Proposals to Contribute to Regional Conflicts and Multinational Task Forces

Date of Proposal	Related Country/ Region/ Organization	For	Against	Absent	Result
December 8, 1992	Somalia	266	43	-	Passed
December 8, 1992	Bosnia and Herzegovina	317	-	1	Passed
June 12, 1996	Western European Union	-	-	-	Withdrawn by the Government
February 20, 1997	Hebron	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed unanimously
April 10, 1997	Albania	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
July 23, 1998	Albania	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed unanimously
October 8, 1998	Kosov	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed unanimously
October 10, 2001	Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)	319	100	2	Passed
June 27, 2006	European Union Force (Democratic Republic of the Congo)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
September 5, 2006	Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon- UNIFIL)	340	192	1	Passed
May 29, 2007	Lebanon (UNIFIL)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
June 23, 2009	Lebanon (UNIFIL)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed

PM Proposals to Contribute to Regional Conflicts and Multinational Task Forces

Date of Proposal	Related Country/ Region/ Organization	For	Against	Absent	Result
October 6, 2009	Northern Iraq	453	23	0	Passed

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February 2, 2010	Gulf of Aden, Somalia, Arabian Sea	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
June 24, 2010	Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
July 5, 2011	Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
October 5, 2011	Northern Iraq	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
January 25, 2012	Gulf of Aden, Somalia, Arabian Sea	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed
June 29, 2012	Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passed

CONCLUSION

The concept of national interest is one of the concepts commonly used in foreign policy. Whether the national interest can be treated free from the behavior of those trying to reach it has been one of the debates that has engaged the discipline of international relations. In academic studies that present the concept as an objective and attempt to define it objectively, it is understood that foreign policy makers are reduced to a passive position against the national interest. Nevertheless, foreign policy is a dynamic process and considering the circumstances of the Post-Cold War international system, it presents a very complex and multidimensional view. Therefore, the national interest also needs to be assessed in a more dynamic way. Within this framework, the hypothesis of the work is that the national interest is a fiction that foreign policy makers can rebuild and guide. In order to test the hypothesis, Prime Ministerial Proposals were brought to the agenda of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in the Post-Cold War era as a sample. The Prime Ministerial Proposals between 1990 and 2012 were analyzed on the basis of the Journal of Minutes of the Turkish Grand National Assembly as it is the primary archival source. As a result of the analysis, the following conclusions were reached.

First of all, the tight bipolar international system of the Cold War has influenced the aims, strategies and instruments of Turkish foreign policy. The end of such a period by changing the structure of the international system has forced

the reconsideration of many issues in Turkish foreign policy. The concept of the national interest has also been one of the issues subject to these reassessments.

Secondly, in Turkish foreign policy, it is seen that military instruments are less than the use of political instruments, both in the context of the core principle of Turkish foreign policy, “Peace at Home, Peace in the World”, and in the context of the dynamics of the Cold War period. As an instrument used in exceptional circumstances such as Korea and Cyprus, it was understood that military instruments could be used more often after the Cold War due to a requirement of the new international system, the termination of international conflicts or the elimination of regional security threats. As a matter of fact, the Prime Ministerial Proposals, which were brought to the agenda of the Assembly 4 times between 1923 and 1990, were brought to the agenda of the Assembly 24 times between 1990 and 2012.

Thirdly, Turkey has been known to be a state that attaches crucial importance to its relations with the West since its foundation and tries to protect its national security by taking part in the Western Bloc. In the new post-Cold War system, there have been differences of approach between the ruling and opposition parties in terms of how to define the national interest and the use of military instruments in foreign policy. If any Prime Ministerial Proposal is related to Turkey’s near abroad or to geographies with common historical and cultural heritage, this difference of approach appears to be evident in a domestic policy-oriented manner. On the other hand, since the second half of the 1990s, especially the central opposition parties have been much more critical of the military operations carried out by the United States alone, with an international coalition or under the umbrella of NATO than during the Cold War.

Finally, the last point that draws attention is the widespread understanding that the concept of national interest is constructed by the foreign policy-making power, especially in the rhetoric of the opposition deputies, who have spoken out against the Prime Ministerial Proposals. In the early 1990s, concerns were often expressed about the procedure and time limitation of cross-border military operations, with the national interest being treated as an objective goal agreed by all parties. On the other hand, the objectivity of the national interest has started to be questioned more clearly since the beginning of the 2000s, and these inquiries have become more evident with what happened during the March 1, 2003 proposal process. In light of all these results, it can be argued that the hypothesis that the concept of national interest is a dynamic fiction has been confirmed. As the structure and dynamics of the international relations system

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change, the reconsideration of its content will also guarantee its existence as a useful tool in foreign policy.

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