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THE FIRST DIPLOMATIC CRISIS THAT CAUSED HARM TO THE IMAGE OF THE USA IN THE EYES OF THE TURKISH PUBLIC: THE JOHNSON LETTER

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ABSTRACT

In the study, it was aimed to examine the events that started in Cyprus and led to the first great rupture in the alliance relations between Turkey and the United States of America, which was following a positive course in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the changed perception of the USA in Turkey following the correspondence recorded in history as "the Johnson Letter." Turkey, which attempted to be included in the Western bloc in order to eliminate the threat from the Soviet Union that emerged right after the end of World War II and needed the support of the USA in this regard, shaped its foreign policy on a single axis based on dependence in line with the wishes of its allies as stipulated by the conditions of the alliance after its joining the NATO. However, the events that started in Cyprus forced Turkey to face the reality. Turkey, which had to deal with Cyprus due to its strategic importance and the future of a considerable number of Turks living on the island, wanted to carry out military intervention in the island by using its legitimate right stemming from the international law in order to prevent the assimilation policies of the pro-Greece Greek administrators. The attempt to intervene led to a great rupture in Turco-American relations. The letter written by US President Lyndon B. Johnson in order to prevent a potential military intervention of Turkey in the island created a huge shocking effect in the administration of Turkey. Both the objection of its allies, which Turkey saw as friends, to the authority that Turkey wanted to use in a matter it was right about and given to it within the scope guarantor agreement in order to prevent the escalating violence on the island and the clear statement that its allies would not help Turkey and leave it on its own in case the Soviet Union initiated an attack on Turkey despite its being under the umbrella of the NATO are important in that these facts showed Turkey how wrong it was to shape its foreign policy on a single axis. The relations that were believed to be proceeding in a friendly and allied relationship between the governments until the Johnson letter was now going through a confidence crisis, and the letter irreversibly destroyed the sympathy for the USA in the eyes of the public as it was thought to prevent the intervention aimed at Cyprus. By screening the news published in the national press in addition to the written primary resources, the document analysis method was used in the study.

Keywords: Diplomacy, crisis, Cyprus, Turkish foreign policy, The United States of America.

TÜRK KAMUOYUNDA AMERİKA İMAJININ ZEDELLENMESİNE YOL AÇAN İLK DİPLOMATİK KRİZ: JOHNSON MEKTUBU

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası olumlu yönde ilerleyen Türk Amerikan müttefiklik ilişkilerinde ilk büyük kırılmayı ortaya çıkartan ve büyük zarar veren Kıbrıs'ta başlayan olayları ve tarihe "Johnson mektubu" olarak geçen mebtuplaşma olayı sonrası Türkiye'de değişen Amerikan algısının incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın bitmesinden hemen sonra baş gösteren Sovyetler Birliği tehlikesini bertaraf etmek için batı bloku safında yer almak için uğraşan ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin desteğine ihtiyaç duyan Türkiye, NATO'ya katıldıktan sonra müttefiklik şartları gereği ortaklarının istediği yönde dış politikasını bağımlılık esasına göre tek taraflı olarak şekillendirmişti. Ancak Kıbrıs'ta başlayan olaylar Türkiye için gerçekte yüzleşme mecburiyetini doğurur. Adanın stratejik önemi ve adada yaşayan azımsanamayacak sayıdaki Türk nüfusunun geleceği için Kıbrıs'la ilgilenmek zorunda kalan Türkiye, adadaki Yunanistan yanlı Rum yöneticilerin asimilasyon politikalarını engellemek için uluslararası hukuktan doğan meşru hakkını kullanarak adaya yönelik askeri müdahalede bulunmak ister. Müdahale girişimi Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinde büyük bir kırılmaya neden olur. Başkan Lyndon B. Johnson tarafından Türkiye'nin adaya yönelik olası bir askeri müdahalesini engellemek amacıyla kaleme aldığı mektup, Türk devlet yönetiminde büyük bir şok etkisi yaratır. Hem haklı olduğu bir konuda ve garantörlük anlaşması gereği adada artan şiddeti bitirmek için kullanmak istediği bir yetkinin dost telakki ettiği müttefiklerince karşı çıkılması hem de NATO şemsiyesi altında olmasına rağmen Sovyetler Birliği'nin herhangi bir saldırı girişiminde bulunması halinde müttefiklerinin yardım etmeyeceği ve yalnız kalacağına açıkça belirtilmesi, Türk dış politikasının tek bir eksen altında oluşturmanın hata olduğu gerçeğini Türkiye'ye göstermesi bakımından önemlidir. Johnson mektubuna kadar hükümetler nezdinde dostça ve müttefiklik ilişkisi içerisinde gittiği düşünülen ilişkiler artık büyük bir güven bunalımı yaşamakta, Kıbrıs'a yönelik müdahaleyi önlediği düşünüldüğü için de halk nezdinde ABD sempatisini geri döndürülemeyecek şekilde yok etmiştir. Bu çalışmada yazılı olan birincil kaynakların yanında ulusal basında yer alan haberler de taranarak döküman analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Diplomasi, kriz, Kıbrıs, Türk dış politikası, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri.

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkey wanted to be in the Western bloc by joining NATO in September 1951. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a great power in the bipolar world system that started to form after the war, and its desires regarding some territories belonging to Turkey somehow forced Turkey to take part in the Western bloc (Kopar, 2018: 306). In this period when there were great efforts to solve economic and social problems, the greatest problem the country was faced with was the Cyprus issue. Until the events started in Cyprus, Turkey had followed policies in harmony with its allies as much as it could. In the Turco-American relations, which had generally proceeded in a friendly course based on mutual interests until the outbreak of events in Cyprus, Turkey experienced a great disappointment due to the pro-Greek stance and policies of its ally although it was not directly involved in the developments in Cyprus. The loss of confidence on the part of Turkey caused by the adverse policies of its allies against it had repercussions in the Turkish foreign policy for long years.

The Source of The Problem: Events in Cyprus

The Cyprus island, which had been dominated by the Ottoman State for years, was captured by England on 29 October 1919 with the onset of World War I (Kurtulgan, 2019: 203). Although the country achieved full independence with the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923 as a result of the successful National Struggle against the invasion of its lands on the grounds that it lost the war, all rights on the island were forfeited, and the island was officially left to the sovereignty of England (Meray, 1993: 7). However, although Turkey left the island to the dominance of England as stipulated by the Treaty of Lausanne, its interest in the island increased due to a considerable number of Turkish population on the island and its historical connections, and the strategic importance of the island for its security, especially after World War II (Kesiktaş, 2005: 64). The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, who attended the London Conference that convened in order to conclude the debates regarding the status of the island, stated (Koç, 2005: 147):

"Cyprus is geographically an extension of the Anatolian Peninsula; therefore, it should belong to Turkey or a state which is as closely interested as Turkey in the fate of the countries around Turkey. In case of a war, the supply to Turkey would only be possible through its western and southern ports, but all these ports are overshadowed by Cyprus. If the country dominating the island was also the country that possessed the islands to the west of Turkey, then it would effectively surround Turkey. No country can bind its entire security to another state, no matter how friendly and allied it is," thus emphasizing the indispensable aspect of the island for Turkey.

In Cyprus under the domination of England, the Greeks, who outnumbered the Turks on the island, soon started to attempt to change the status quo in their favor. The first rebellion attempt by the Greeks on the island, who gathered around the idea of Enosis, which aimed to annex Cyprus to Greece, against the English domination was experienced in 1931 (Mordoğan, 2010: 98). The friendly atmosphere in the bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey, which joined the NATO at around the same date as Greece and secured the southwest wing which was very important for the security of the alliance, started to dissipate due to the events on the island starting as of 1951 and the efforts of Greece aimed at the island (Armaoğlu, 1997: 745;

Bostanoğlu, 1999: 433). The Soviet Union, which did not desire British domination over a strategic island in the middle of the Mediterranean and saw this situation as a great barrier to its access to the Middle East, had a provoking effect in the start of the events and the spread of the idea of Enosis (Gazioğlu, 2002: 927-929).

EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston: National Struggle Organization of Cypriots*), which was a terrorist organization established under the leadership of General Georgios Grivas which aimed to end the British domination over the island, which they saw as the greatest barrier to the realization of the idea of Enosis, through acts of violence, firstly started attacks on the British island administration. As a result of the escalating events, Greece applied to the UN with the demand for Self-Determination in 1954 (Gönlübol & Bilge, 1996: 338). When the issue came to the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly, as a result of England's diplomatic initiatives here, the UN made the resolution that the whole of Cyprus could not be attached to Greece due to the presence of a Turkish population on the island, upon which EOKA militia started to target the Turkish population as well. When their lives and properties were under a threat from the Greek attacks, in order to resist violence and defend themselves, the Turks living on the island started to organize under the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT) (Cumalıoğlu, 2001: 16-21).

The increasing tension between the Turks and Greeks due to the terrorist activities of the Greeks aimed at the realization of their Enosis ideals began to turn into an international problem. As a result of the pressures from the USA and England, which did not want a big problem among the NATO allies and wanted to eliminate the threat from the Soviet Union, which was trying to increase its influence in the region by provoking the events, the independent Republic of Cyprus was established in August 1959 (Bağcı, 1990: 117). With the Zurich and London Agreements signed between the Turkish and Greek governments under the leadership of England, the Turks undertook to give up the idea of the division of the new and united state that was newly established on the island, while the Greeks committed to relinquish their idea of Enosis (Eroğlu, 2002: 743).

The Republic of Cyprus, which was established through the agreements made as a result of a general consensus in 1959, was built upon two equal communities and a constitution based on equal distribution of authority and responsibilities (Özarslan, 2007: 43-44). In line with the constitution, Archbishop Makarios III was chosen as the president representing the Greeks, and Dr. Fazıl Küçük was elected as the vice president representing the Turks on the island. However, the expected peaceful environment could not be achieved on the island. Particularly, The Greek leader Makarios III, who was not pleased with the new system of the state and the principles of the constitution, started to make attempts at changing the constitution which gave equal sovereignty rights to both communities on the island (Vatansever, 2010: 1512).

The suggestion he made to the Turkish government in order to change Article 13 of the constitution, which interested the Turkish community, was immediately refused as it would change the status quo built on equal sovereignty rights (Akkurt, 1998: 56). Makarios, who thought that Turkey would not be able to intervene in the island because of the presence of the UN Peace Corps that was situated on the island as per the agreements made, appointed EOKA supporters to the critical positions in the state bureaucracy and started armament

activities secretly (Keser & İlhan, 2013: 924). Greece, which wanted to benefit from the change in the status quo in its favor, secretly sent thousands of fully equipped soldiers to the island to be used against a potential military intervention of Turkey (Papandreou, 1988: 164).

The Greeks, who wanted to abolish the administrative form of the newly established Republic of Cyprus under the guarantee of the UN and the 1960 Constitution, which gave the Turks on the island equal rights, escalated the armed attacks against the Turkish population as well as the UN troops, and the murder of 3 Turks by the Greek police on 21 December 1963, which was later to be named as the "Bloody Christmas", brought the tension between the two communities to its highest level (Cumhuriyet, 22.12.1963). The Greeks, who ignored the calls of moderation made by the guarantor states, escalated the events even further and fired at the residence of the vice president Dr. Fazıl Küçük (Milliyet, 24.12.1963). In the face of continuous growth of events, Dr. Fazıl Küçük made a statement for the newspapers stating that the Turks on the island did not have the security of life anymore and that around 400 Turks were murdered as a result of the attacks by the Greek terrorists until that day (Cumhuriyet, 28.12.1963).

Upon the increase in the violent acts committed by the Greeks supported by the state despite the warnings of the guarantor state Turkey announced that it might intervene in the island in order to show its discomfort about the ongoing events, and one day later on the Christmas Day on 25 December 1963, Turkish jet fighters flew over Lefkoşa (Nicosia) for warning purposes, Turkish Navy sailed out from Mersin Port, and Turkish soldiers entered the Turkish zones in Nicosia (Milliyet, 26.12.1963). In the face of the events, Turkish President Cemal Gürsel announced that it was not possible for the two communities on the island to live in harmony, and that division of the island between the two communities would be more useful; in addition, he sent a letter to the then President of the USA Lyndon Johnson, asking him to apply pressure on the Greeks (Cumhuriyet, 28.12.1963; Oran, 2002: 685).

In the letter sent by President Johnson to Turkey as a response to Cemal Gürsel's letter asking the USA to be actively involved in the events in Cyprus, it was stated that the USA would continue to support the solutions to be found among the guarantor states, implying diplomatically that it would not want to be directly involved in the issue (Sander, 1979: 228). The Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, who did not see a positive step he expected from the USA, expressed in the CHP group meeting: "*If the Peace Corps is not successful on the island, we will use the right given to us by the agreements,*" and on the same day, upon the request of the government, TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly) authorized the government to carry out a military intervention in Cyprus whenever it deemed necessary and urgent (Milliyet, 17.03.1964).

Thus, by creating the impression that Turkey might intervene in the island, it was aimed to ensure that the USA would apply pressure on the Greeks to stop their violent activities. However, when it started to become clear that the USA did not want to get actively involved in the events on the island, the issue was taken to the UN with Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's proposal accepted by the guarantor states. Turkey experienced difficulties in

getting the other states to accept its rightful theses in spite of bringing the issue to the attention of the international platform, and its relations with the USA began to worsen further (Mordoğan, 2010: 104).

Turkey, which continued its good intentions for the maintenance of the current situation in Cyprus in this period, started to be disappointed at the continuation of the illegal activities of president Makarios despite the presence of the UN Peace Corps and the disinterested attitudes of the relevant states. In the interview he had with the Time Magazine on 16 April 1964, Prime Minister Ismet İnönü stated (Milliyet, 16.04.1964):

"...Our allies are in competition with the states who work for the alliance to be dissolved. We are at the limit of our patience so that the alliance would not dissolve. If our allies can be successful in their efforts to dissolve this alliance, a new world would be established under the new circumstances, and Turkey would find its own place in this new world."

Thus, he harshly criticized the unfair attitudes of the western states towards the events, and later directly addressing the USA, he expressed his disappointment: **"I used to believe in the leadership of the USA, and now I am being punished for this"** (Cumhuriyet, 18.04.1964; Bozkurt, 2008: 241).

On the other hand, in the USA, which was considered as the founder of the NATO and the leader of the western alliance, and which was believed to be able to end the events if he undertook a leading role regarding the events in Cyprus, the agenda was quite different from the expectations of Turkey. The Deputy Secretary of State of the USA of the period, George Ball, reflected the USA's perspective of the events in Cyprus in his memoirs he wrote later (Kışman, 2014: 132):

"The British Ambassador called me on 25 January 1964 and said that England would not be able to solve this problem alone, and that an international force should be situated on the island, and that they needed the USA both in diplomatic and military terms. That was not surprising for me. I indicated that the USA definitely did not want to partake in this matter. We were dealing with so many problems all over the world (Vietnam, Panama, Congo,...). Nevertheless, England could not carry this burden more, and besides the Turks had an intention to intervene on the island on the grounds of the attacks on the Turkish population. The UN was wary, and there was the risk of war between the two allies of NATO. I met with McNamara at five o'clock, and we discussed the issue with all its complications. He was also unhappy about our increased responsibilities. He was well aware that the issue would weaken our strategy of the East Mediterranean and the whole southern wing of NATO. Then, we discussed the issue with President Johnson in the evening. His reluctance was quite clear, but grasping the severity of the situation very quickly, he ordered me to take care of the problem with an acceptable solution."

The reason for this reluctance was that the votes of around three million Greeks living in the USA were very important for President Johnson in the upcoming elections. Besides, the strategic importance of Turkey in the eyes of its allies started to decrease due to the entente in the NATO-Warsaw Pact relations following the Cuban Crisis (Sander, 1979: 226; Bozkurt, 2008: 243-244).

The Delivery and Content of the Johnson Letter

In May 1964, relations in Cyprus became tenser due to the activities of Makarios. During a meeting with Prime Minister Ismet İnönü, the US Ambassador in Ankara was told that Turkey had to consider the military options more as a solution to the problems on the island. Despite the decisive messages given in such meetings, the US

diplomats still did not believe that Turkey would conduct a military operation on the island (Aktaş, 2009: 71).

The most important development that made the military option regarding the island more visible for Turkey was experienced on 1 June 1964. Despite all the objections of the Turkish minority in the parliament, which was under full domination of the Greek people living on the island and their administration, the adoption of the Law for Compulsory Military Service, which would enable Makarios administration to create their own military, was the last straw for Turkey, and National Security Council adopted the decision to carry out a military operation targeting the island. (Uslu, 2000: 95). Upon the decision made by one of the highest decision-making mechanisms in Turkey regarding conducting a military operation on the island, Raymond Hare, the US Ambassador in Ankara, saw the severity of the situation and relayed the importance of the situation and the decisiveness of Turkey by sending an urgent telegram to the US State Department (Aktaş, 2009: 72).

In the response sent by the US State Department to Ambassador Hare, it was ordered to take any initiative to prevent Turkey from taking this step. When Ambassador Hare understood the decisive stance of Turkey about the military intervention as a result of the active talks he made, he asked for a period of 24 hours from the Turkish government and tried to gain some time by stating that the USA would give a message in that time frame (Hürriyet, 06.06.1964; Aktaş, 2009:74). Although the US administration gained a period of 24 hours in order to prevent military intervention in the island, it still sent the Special Carrier Force affiliated with the 8th Fleet through NATO to the region between Turkey and Cyprus to prevent military intervention (Uslu, 2000: 96).

In addition to the telex messages which included the instructions of the US State Department sent to Ambassador Hare, who achieved to postpone the military intervention aimed at Cyprus for 24 hours, there was a special letter which was comprised of 5 typewriter pages sent by President Johnson addressing the Prime Minister Ismet İnönü (Şahin, 2002: 16). Although the message, which was recorded in Turkish history as "the Johnson Letter, was signed by President Johnson, it was not personally written by him. The US Deputy Secretary of State Ball mentioned this letter in his memoirs as:

"In the morning of June 4, 1964, I met with Secretary Rusk. He was given the task of writing a message to be conveyed from the President to Ismet İnönü. He showed me a draft of the letter before I left for the airport. I said that it was the harshest diplomatic note. As a matter of fact, the Deputy Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland and his aide Joseph Sisco had prepared a diplomatic equivalent of the atomic bomb. I said that this might dissuade İnönü about the intervention, but I was not sure how we would have him listen to us from then on. The secretary looked at me with a lovely smile on his face. And he said, 'that would be your problem'".

stating that the letter was written in the rudest diplomatic language he had ever seen and told the story of the writing process of the letter (Kışman,2014: 143; Sönmezoğlu, 1995: 14; Şahin, 2002: 10). When we examine the content of the letter sent by President Johnson, we can summarize the important messages intended to be given in general as follows (Hürriyet, 13.01.1966; Armaoğlu, 2005: 789; Denктаş, 1996: 325-329; Dönmez, 2012: 180-181):

- "Turkey cannot carry out military intervention in the island without full exploitation of the relevant articles of the Guarantor Agreement and without forming of the conditions for legal

intervention in full. ... I expressly have to ask you to accept your full responsibility to consult with the United States of America before taking such an action. I have the impression that you believe that such an intervention is lawful as per the provisions of the 1960 Guarantor Agreement. The agreement also requires consultation among the guarantor states. The USA is of the opinion that the possibilities of consultation with the other parties, in this case, have not been exploited, and therefore, the right to take action unilaterally cannot be used...

- In case Turkey attempts to use its right to intervene as per the Guarantor Agreement without consulting its allies in the NATO and without their consent, The Soviet Union may initiate a counter military intervention. In a potential military conflict to be experienced between Turkey and the Soviet Union, NATO may not support Turkey, which would carry out such an operation in defiance of its Western allies... *Military intervention in Cyprus to be conducted by Turkey could lead to a similar intervention by the Soviet Union. I believe that you would appreciate that our allies in NATO have not had the opportunity to negotiate whether they have a responsibility to defend Turkey against a Soviet intervention that may result from a military operation to be conducted by Turkey without full consent and approval of its allies.*
- As per Article 4 of the assistance agreement signed between Turkey and the USA on 12 July 1947, the arms that have been given to the service of the Turkish army by the USA are only for defense purposes, and therefore they definitely cannot be used offensively in Cyprus. *..Your government needs to get the approval of the USA in order for the military assistance equipment provided by the agreement to be used for purposes other than their intended use. Your government has notified the USA on various occasions that it has understood this condition. I would like to sincerely express that under the current conditions, the USA cannot approve of the use of the military equipment provided by the United States in the military intervention in Cyprus to be conducted by Turkey. "*

The Government's Attitude in Response to the Johnson Letter

The threatening language and style used in the letter signed by The US President Johnson created a shocking effect in the government circles. This letter was the first point of rupture which reversed the friendly relations based on confidence between the countries, the foundations of which were laid with the Truman Doctrine of 12 March 1947, and it was the point where distrust and pessimism started on the part of Turkey (Armaoğlu, 2005: 789). İsmet İnönü did not show a harsh reaction when he read the letter in the presence of Ambassador Hare, who delivered the letter. He told the ambassador that he did not agree on some issues claimed by President Johnson in the letter, but that he agreed with him on his idea that the problem should be solved through negotiations over diplomatic channels peacefully, and that he found it appropriate (Aktaş, 2009: 77).

Prime Minister İsmet İnönü had already foreseen before he had the parliament adopt the decision to intervene that the possibility of prevention of a military operation aimed at the island by the USA was quite high. As a matter of fact, it was also highly likely that such a military initiative taken by Turkey might result in a failure. İnönü had concerns about the presence of a society which was divided into fragile fault lines after the 1960 military coup, the uncertainty about the damage caused in the army left by the coup attempt by Talat Aydemir, albeit not successful, and the high risks of conducting a military operation by using passenger and cargo ships with an army that was undeveloped in terms of technique and equipment.

Years later, the journalist Metin Toker, who was also İnönü's son-in-law, explained that the Prime Minister İsmet İnönü was expecting that the USA would intervene somehow diplomatically in the Cyprus issue that was

getting tenser and leading into a crisis, and that the USA would prevent Turkey's military intervention (Şahin, 2002: 116-118):

"At the time, Cyprus was a hot issue in Turkey. The country had undergone a military coup, experienced the 27 May coup, and witnessed Talat Aydemir incidence. The only issue other than the coup was Cyprus. The bloody incidents in Cyprus led to a great tension; Turkey was on edge. Ismet Pasha was the Prime minister of the period. Zurich and London Treaties gave us the right to intervene. The matter was being discussed in the council of ministers. Some of them are on their feet, saying, "Let's intervene in the island." Ismet Pasha was a cautious person. He was thinking if the army would be able to succeed. The price in case of an adversity would be too high for Turkey to pay. Pasha was calculating this. Later, it was seen that the army was not ready for an amphibious operation, because it did not have any landing ships. The army would be moved to the island on regular ships. Pasha did not say "no" to those saying "Let's do the operation." He was saying that they should base the operation on a diplomatic aspect. Then, he told the Minister of Foreign Affairs Cemal Erkin: "Invite the US Ambassador and tell him that we would land on the island." Erkin replied: "My dear Pasha, how can we inform them about the intervention?" Pasha replied back: "Just tell them." Erkin invited the ambassador to the ministry. The ambassador requests some time, and the famous reply was given with the letter (...). Then, the letter arrived, and Ismet Pasha was relieved. I understand that Ismet Pasha was using it; he was afraid to create an opportunity for a failure."

Although Ismet Pasha was giving harsh messages about Cyprus due to the sensitivity created in the public opinion, it is understood that he was reluctant to authorize a military intervention in the island.

Upon the promise made through President Johnson's letter that the USA would now play an active mediating role regarding the events in Cyprus, Turkey's military operation aimed at the island was stopped, as İnönü expected and planned. However, the arguments and the threatening discourse used in the letter led to a great awakening in the Turkish state bureaucracy as well as the discomfort it created. This letter caused a confrontation with the reality for Turkey, which thought until then that the NATO and its western allies would come to its help in case there was an attack on Turkey, especially in the face of a Soviet threat, and therefore felt itself secure. In fact, the discussions made at TBMM after the disclosure of the letter to the public revealed the functionality of the NATO for Turkey and the USA's real perspective regarding Turkey. This situation was also reflected in the discussions at the Republic Senate, and in the session where negotiations were held for the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Esat Mahmut Karakurt, CHP's Urfa Senator, summarized the crisis of confidence that Turkey was experiencing due to the conclusion inferred from the letter with his statements:

"(...) "If a Russian submarine attacked an American torpedo boat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, Turkey would go to war as if the Russians attacked a Turkish ship in the Black Sea. Of course, it is stipulated in the agreement that if Turkey were attacked in such a way, its allies must enter the war immediately. This was what we gathered from the agreements until now, and due this understanding, although we gave all our forces under the command of the NATO and allowed military bases to be established on our lands even with extreme conditions, we were feeling ourselves in a secure atmosphere, and we would see no harm in doing these as we thought them as our allies with whom we had joined our fates. We accepted the situation as it was. However, we were shocked and concerned to have understood from the content of Johnson-Inönü Letters published that if Turkey was to be attacked, the USA and its allies would not take action immediately, that they would consider, examine the issue of the attack, evaluate the right and the wrong, then make a decision, and finally act in accordance with what they would decide on."

(Tutanak Journal, 07.02.1966: 156; İlhan, 2015: 271-272). Suphi Karaman, who was the member of the National Unity Committee, which was established after the 1960 coup and was one of the highest decision-making authorities of the state, explained that the unconditional trust in the USA was being questioned for the first time by relaying (As cited in İlhan, 2015: 265):

"When Johnson displayed naivete about Cyprus, everyone was awakened. If he did not show that naivete, no one would be awakened. In the letter written by Johnson addressing the prime minister of the period, the issues related to foreign aid, NATO and alliance with the USA came to the surface, but the content of the letter was not published. This was because the infinite shame in the Turkish foreign policy would be revealed. Finally, it was published. I call the president as naive; if he were not naive, the public would be sleeping for another 3-5 years.

Although the events developed as he expected, the Prime Minister İnönü replied with a letter on 13 June 1964, expressing the discomfort he felt due to the letter, but with a soft and careful tone. The outline of İnönü's letter in response is as follows (Armaoğlu, 2005: 790; Şahin, 2002: 78-79; Kışman, 2014: 148-149);

- *"Both the wording and the content of the letter have been disappointing for such an ally of the USA as Turkey.*
- *Including this last effort, this is the fourth time that a necessity was felt to conduct a military intervention in Cyprus, and Turkey has always been in consultation with the USA.*
- *Cyprus Greek government openly started to arm, got involved in anti-constitutional activities, increased "violence" against Turks, and all these were supported by Greece although they were all in defiance of the international agreements it signed, but despite all warnings of Turkey, the USA did not take any steps. If pressure was to be applied, it should have been applied on the Greeks.*
- *The letter led to some questions regarding Turco-American relations. Is it possible to mention an alliance between the states which refuse to fulfill their responsibilities for each other stipulated by the mutual agreements whenever they wish to do so?*
- *The letter also raised some questions about the status of the NATO. An attack on any member of the NATO alliance will of course be tried to be justified by the aggressor state. If the NATO is too weak to be influenced by the claims of the aggressor, and if it is to function as explained in your letter, then it needs to be treated.*
- *It is Turkey's understanding that the NATO must immediately help its member under an attack. What is left to the discretion of the member states is the content and scope of the aid.*
- *I accept your kind invitation to Washington D.C."*

Despite the letter from Johnson which was in direct violation of the international manners, the Prime Minister İsmet İnönü did not reply back with the same tone, and as per the invitation made to normalize the relations, he traveled to the USA on 21 June 1964 on a specially allocated airplane by the President, who wanted to wipe out the bad impression caused by the letter (Armaoğlu, 2005: 791).

The Reflections of the Johnson Letter on the National Press and the Turkish Public

The first news related to the delivery of the letter written by the US President was learned by the Turkish public through a brief announcement made by the White House on June 6 rather than through the Turkish authorities; therefore, there was no information about the content and language of the letter. There was just a news report on the letter in the Turkish press (Cumhuriyet, 07.06.1964; Bozkurt, 2008: 246), which read as:

"Last night, the White House spokesperson read an announcement related to the contacts between President Johnson and the Prime Minister of the Turkish government. In this announcement, it said, "The President, who considered the increasing concerns of Turkey about the conditions in Cyprus, has made a contact again with the Prime Minister İnönü. In fact, the President suggested a visit to Washington D.C. if it is deemed appropriate by the Prime Minister İnönü. The messages exchanged between the President and The Prime Minister İnönü constitute one of the links of the chain of continuous consultations between the allies. The message sent to İnönü by the President is no more than an exchange of ideas between close friends. In these exchanges of ideas, the United States of America has always been committed to keeping the peace in Cyprus and the efforts of the UN to mediate and ensure peace."

Although the letter written by President Johnson did not comply with diplomatic traditions in terms of content and language, it achieved its purpose by preventing the intention of Turkey to conduct a military intervention in Cyprus, which was ascertained at the high levels of the state. Due to the interruption of the military operation aimed at Cyprus and bits and pieces of information in the press, a negative opinion was formed in the national press and the Turkish public, although they did not know anything about the content of the letter. In fact, the news that made the headlines of Milliyet newspaper was (Milliyet, 06.06.1964): ***Landing Operation Postponed, (Johnson sent a special message to İnönü yesterday and requested consultation), Inonu Has Been Invited to the USA, The Commander in Chief of the NATO unexpectedly Came to Ankara***". The statements included in the letter explaining that the USA and the NATO would not come to help Turkey in a potential Soviet threat or military operation against Turkey led to a great disappointment and a crisis of confidence in the state bureaucracy. An opinion was formed among the state bureaucracy that the course of the Turco-American relations that developed after the Marshall Aids and the Truman Doctrine in the aftermath of World War II caused a unilateral dependence, and that Turkey made a huge mistake by obtaining its military equipment only from the western bloc (Izgi, 2007: 33; Bozkurt, 2008: 249).

In response to the letter, which created a deep disappointment in the upper bureaucracy of the Republic of Turkey, İsmet İnönü wrote a letter in accordance with diplomatic rules and using common sense and had it delivered to President Johnson through the US Ambassador Hare, and accepted the president's invitation to the USA (Kesiktaş, 2005: 90). The outline of İnönü's letter in response is as follows (Armaoğlu, 2005: 790-791; Şahin, 2002: 78-79; Kışman, 2014: 149):

- *"Both the wording and the content of the letter have been disappointing for such an ally of the USA as Turkey.*
- *Including this last effort, a necessity has been felt to conduct a military intervention in Cyprus. And Turkey has always been in consultation with the USA starting from the very beginning of the issue.*
- *Cyprus Greek government openly started to arm, got involved in anti-constitutional activities, increased "violence" against Turks, and all these were supported by Greece although they were all in defiance of the international agreements it signed, but despite all warnings of Turkey, the USA did not take any steps. If pressure was to be applied, it should have been applied on the Greeks.*
- *The letter led to some questions regarding Turco-American relations.*
- *The letter also raised some questions about the status of the NATO. If the NATO was to function as explained in the letter, then it needed to be treated.*
- *I accept your kind invitation to Washington D.C."*

Upon the invitation of the US President Johnson, the Prime Minister Ismet İnönü traveled to Washington D.C. on a plane allocated by the President on June 21 and had talks on June 22-23. In these talks, it was agreed upon the appointment of Dean Acheson, one of the former Secretaries of the State of the USA, as a mediator in order for a permanent peace to be established regarding the Cyprus issue (Armaoğlu, 2005: 791).

The content of the letter, which was recorded in history as the Johnson letter, was not announced to the Turkish public immediately, and it was kept a secret for a year and a half. In order to obtain a political benefit, Ismet İnönü started to apply pressure on Süleyman Demirel's government, to which he turned over the power as a result of the elections, to announce the content of the letter, the content of which he himself hid from the public (Mucuk, 2013: 40). The parties in opposition and the national press were in a great effort for the content of the letter to be revealed. The Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel did not want to harm the relations with the USA and claimed that the pressure to publish the letter was coming from the supporters of socialism who wanted to increase anti-American attitude in the country (Cumhuriyet, 30.12.1965). As a matter of fact, Abdi İpekçi, who was the editorial writer of Milliyet Newspaper, called on the government to publish the letter (Milliyet, 05.01.1966).

"... In his letter, Johnson reminded Turkey that it could not use the weapons provided for the NATO and the troops allocated to the NATO in the military intervention to be made in Cyprus. More importantly, he stated that if Turkey was encountered with the Soviet Russia in the operation, the NATO might not consider such a Russian intervention to be against the NATO, that is, Turkey would be left alone. Using the term "recommendations which include some warnings" for this message would create a wrong impression about the real situation. This is because this was not a recommendation, but a warning, and even a threat. After all these debates, it became necessary to announce the content of the famous letter in order for everyone to understand the reality.

While debates were continuing for the publication of the content of the Johnson Letter, about a year and a half after the delivery of the letter, and despite all efforts of the government to prevent it, the letter was leaked to the press on 13 January 1966, and it was published in the headlines by Cüneyt Arcayürek, a columnist in Hürriyet Newspaper, thanks to the journalist Metin Toker (Hürriyet, 13.01.1966). Upon the publishing of the content of the letter first in Hürriyet, and in all newspapers in the national press on the next day, Süleyman Demirel government decided to publish the letter.

A huge reaction was given against the USA in the whole country after the letter was published with all its content. The positive image of the USA in bilateral relations and in the public, which developed rapidly in order to eliminate the increased Soviet threat facing Turkey in the aftermath of World War II, received a great damage. Nihat Erim, who was İnönü's adviser on Cyprus and future prime minister, briefly summarized the situation (Erim, 1975: 303):

"It can be said that Turkey was the only country until that time where the Americans were not shouted at as 'Yankee Go Home.' After the publishing of the Johnson Letter, the trust of the Turkish public in the USA was deeply shattered, and for the first time, a negative public opinion in Turkey started to form against the USA. This negative opinion became more established in the coming years."

When the Turkish public learned about the content of the letter, the relations between Turkey and the USA underwent more destruction (İlhan, 2015: 271). As a result of the increased reaction after learning about the content of the letter and nationalist feelings, the slogan of "*Yankee Go Home*" started to be used against the USA on the streets for the first time. Pro-socialists, who were growing in number and newly organizing thanks to the democratic environment provided by the 1961 Constitution in the country, and sympathizers of the Soviet Union were trying to keep the issue on the agenda through both press and meetings and demonstrations in order to turn the increasing reaction against the USA into a political advantage (Armaoğlu, 2005: 790; İlhan, 2015: 272).

In the period after the Johnson letter, which was a great turning point in the Turco-American relations, the presence of the US military in the country started to be questioned more, and a reluctant attitude towards participating in the NATO missions was displayed (Poyraz, 2008:266). As a result of the USA's partial attitude in the Cyprus issue and the threats made by Johnson in his letter, the US products, which were being sold in the country as of 1966, were boycotted. The civilian reactionary activities against the USA reached the peak as of 1967. At every visit of the US 6th Fleet, which was located in the Mediterranean Sea within the scope of NATO missions, of the important coastal cities of Turkey, attempts were made to organize protest meetings. The sincerity displayed by Turkey in the relations between the two countries, the level of good intentions, and the rate of sympathy felt for the USA by the public have never reached the level that existed before the delivery of the letter, including today.

CONCLUSION

The Cyprus issue hosts many ruptures and disappointments in the alliance relations between Turkey and the USA, which developed very rapidly and positively along with the Truman Doctrine of the post-World War II period. With the Lausanne Treaty, the sovereignty rights over the island of Cyprus were politically given up, and the administration of the island was left to England. However, due to both the presence of the Turkish population on the island and its strategic importance and the efforts of the Greeks on the island to annex the island to Greece, Turkey's interest in the island gradually increased. Due to the attitude of the Greek administrators and Greek population on the island towards the Turkish population and the violent acts they committed, Turkey was involved in the island, and in accordance with the agreements made, The Cyprus State was established, and Turkey became one of the guarantor states. Despite the good intentions and attitude of Turkey, the negative attitude of the Greek administration did not change, and they continued their illegal activities in order to annex the island to Greece.

Based on the increasing acts of violence against the Turkish population, Turkey wanted to intervene in the island by using its guarantor rights. Turkey, which could not get the results it expected from its allies in the NATO despite its rightful arguments, and could not get a result from its diplomatic efforts in the UN, started to consider conducting a military intervention in the island on its own. When the USA, which did not want a hot conflict between the NATO allies and did not want to get involved in the events in Cyprus at the beginning,

understood the seriousness of Turkey regarding a military intervention in the island, started to take diplomatic steps in order to prevent it.

When it was understood that the initiatives taken by the US Ambassadors at the government level in Ankara would not produce expected results, a letter of warning was urgently sent by President Lyndon B. Johnson to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, İsmet İnönü. The document, which was to be recorded in the Turkish history as "the Johnson Letter", created a shock in the Turkish state administration. This is because it was stated in the letter personally by the President that in case of an attack or a threat against Turkey by the Soviet Union, the NATO would not come to help Turkey. The letter created a huge disappointment in Turkey, which felt itself secure under the protective umbrella of the NATO until then and therefore obeyed the rules of alliance to the letter. After this letter, Turkey was faced with the reality and gave up its policy of shaping its security and future based on a single block.

The letter led to the development of the idea in the Turkish administration that foreign policy was not only composed of the dependent and mandatory relations established with the western states on the axis of the NATO, that there were also other states in the region where Turkey was located, and that independent, healthy and constructive relations should be established with them as well. Thanks to the revelation of the shocking truth as a result of the letter, starting from that date, there was a transition in the Turkish foreign policy from an approach based on a single axis and dependence to a multidimensional approach. With the effect of this new reality and different ideologies developing in the country, as of 1965, special efforts are shown to establish diplomatic and economic relations with our close neighbors such as the Soviet Union and Arab States in the Middle East as well as with other third world countries.

An anti-American spirit started to rise in the Turkish public, who had had a special sympathy for the US image and the US products sold in the country. The image of the USA as a trustworthy ally began to disappear, which was replaced by slogans such as "*ugly Americans*", or "*Yankee Go Home*", and the military operations of the NATO started to be questioned. Boycott initiatives against the US products such as McDonalds, Coca Cola, and Pepsi, which were considered to be the symbols of American capitalism, started to be adopted more by the common people on the street. Especially starting from 1967, due to the activities of the leftist movements that were gaining strength in Turkey and protest activities against the US soldiers under the lead of these movements, the social reaction reached its highest point. Although the USA succeeded in preventing the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus as a result of the letter sent by President Johnson, it totally lost the confidence of the Turkish state and the feeling of sympathy towards it in the Turkish society. The USA, which noticed that it was wrong in its attitude that underestimated Turkey with a letter that did not comply with diplomatic traditions in the long term, albeit a little late, tried to establish positive contacts over time, but its image both at the state level and in the Turkish public eye would never gain its positive status again.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"This article complies with journal spelling rules, publication principles, research and publication rules, and journal ethical rules. The author is responsible for any violations related to the article. "

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