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## CHANGES IN TURKISH-AFGHAN RELATIONS AFTER WORLD WAR II

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**ABSTRACT:** Relations between the two countries weakened significantly after World War II due to Afghanistan's policy of neutrality. This article examines how Turkey's relations with Afghanistan deteriorated in the context of the changed political conditions after the war, which forced Turkey to conclude new international agreements. Nevertheless, Turkey continued to play great role in the modernization process in Afghanistan. The entry of the Soviet troops into Afghanistan and the coming to power of the Taliban have caused changes in relations.

**KEYWORDS:** Pashtunistan, Saur revolution, Afghan migrants, Taliban, Zahir Shah.

### INTRODUCTION

The biggest event in the international relations of this period was the Second World War, and Afghanistan declared its neutrality in this conflict situation, as in the First World War, and did not come close to any of the warring parties. After the war, the Afghan rulers wanted to improve their relations with the USA and benefit from it, and they achieved this in a short time. Turkey, becoming the only member of NATO, began to provide a lot of support to Afghanistan in international affairs. As a result, Afghanistan started a new economic development with American loans through American companies and technicians.

Between 1955 and 1958, high-level relations between Afghanistan and Turkey were intense due to the border conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Davut Khan (Muhammad Davud 1973-1978) took his relations with the Soviet Union to the next level and tried to improve his relations with Turkey and especially to get Turkey's help in resolving the Pashtunistan conflict. For this purpose, in July 1955, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Naim Khan, came to Turkey on an official visit. During the visit, the Afghan Foreign Minister offered Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes mediation to resolve the ongoing political crisis between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the Pashtun issue. After that, Prime Minister Menderes announced that he accepted the offer of mediation to resolve the conflicts between the two countries[1].

As the border crisis between the two neighboring countries continued, on July 27, 1956, Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes visited Kabul to discuss the issue of Pashtunistan and Afghanistan's accession to the Baghdad Pact. Turkish Prime Minister Menderes, who was received with great enthusiasm in Kabul, decided to discuss the border conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan and Afghanistan's participation in the Baghdad Pact. At first, he gave priority to solving the border problem, because it was creating an obstacle to the rapprochement of the two countries. However, the conflict between the two countries could not be resolved

because the proposals presented by Turkey to the two countries to solve the problem were accepted by Afghanistan, and the Pakistani side rejected the proposals. Moreover, despite all efforts, Afghanistan remained outside the Baghdad Pact. According to Jalal Bayar, despite the proposals and demands of Turkey, as a result of Eisenhower's objection, Afghanistan did not join the Baghdad Pact. On April 18-24, 1955, a conference was held in Indonesia to resolve the issue of Afghanistan's participation in this international project, but this time, too, there was no result[2]. Against the background of Western indifference to regional processes, the influence of the Soviet Union began to be felt in Afghanistan's policy of neutrality. As a result of this indifference of the Western countries, the Soviet Union gradually began to influence Afghanistan, and after that the state of Turkey-Soviet relations became the most important factor determining the shape of Turkey-Afghanistan relations. When Davut Khan's government did not get the help it wanted from the United States in this process, it turned to the Soviet Union. During this period, the country's dependence on the Soviets expanded and deepened through the supply of large quantities of modern weapons and other war technologies from the Soviet Union, especially the training of the military and security forces.

During Zahir Shah's reign, Turkey's aid to Afghanistan increased in every way. Turkey has invested heavily in the Afghan education system in order to reduce the radical religious formation in the social structure of Afghanistan and to reform the state. During Zahir Shah's time, achievements were made in the field of education and personnel training, and he contributed to the establishment of education and training ground in the process of westernization of Afghanistan[3]. During this period, 627 new schools were opened throughout Afghanistan. During Zahirshah's time, new military schools and girls' lyceums, medicine, literature, law, political science and theology faculties were established in Kabul University. During this period, great cultural opportunities were created, especially for women, and financial opportunities were created to send students abroad. In addition, during this period, literacy courses for illiterate adults began to operate throughout the country.

Despite the fact that Turkey's foreign policy during this period sought to join NATO and strengthen relations with Western countries, it did not cut ties with Afghanistan and continued to support this country. In the article written by a researcher of the University of Maryland Global Campus in America about the military cooperation between Turkey and Afghanistan as a result of interviews with local residents, it is stated that in the 1960s, Afghan officers were trained in Turkey, Turkish military doctors helped the health facilities of the Afghan army, and notes that other Turkish officers participated in training Afghans at the Afghan Military Academy in Kabul. At the moment, hundreds of Afghan officers write that they received training at the Turkish Military Academy in Ankara, the Command and General Staff College in Istanbul, the Infantry Division in Chanqiri, the Artillery School in Polatli and a number of other Turkish military institutions[4].

After the beginning of the Soviet expansion into Afghanistan, Turkey faced a huge dilemma. In the early 1980s, the Republic of Turkey condemned the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, considering it a military intervention in the affairs of another state[5]. At the same time, we can also observe that Turkey has refrained from any measures that would have a negative impact on

relations with the Soviet Union. For example, Ankara did not agree to the decision of the Organization of the Islamic Conference "On providing assistance to the Afghan insurgents" adopted in Islamabad in January 1980 and was limited only to providing practical assistance to Afghan refugees. Turkey has tried to maintain a policy of balanced approach to regional conflicts and maintain normal relations with all warring parties. Therefore, Ankara also rejected the proposal of forming an Islamic Union consisting of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey put forward by Pakistan. Turkey did not respond to Afghan President M. Najibullah's appeal to Turkish President K. Evren in February 1989 to provide mediation assistance and to convince the USA and Pakistan not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan[6].

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of independent Central Asian countries, the direction of Afghanistan became strategically important in Turkey's foreign policy. In addition to the embassy in Kabul, a consulate general was opened in Mazar-e-Sharif, which caused some protests in the central government of Afghanistan, because Turkey supported General Abdul Rashid Dostum, established the necessary close ties with political parties, groups and movements in the north of the country. Of course, there were political goals under this risk. In particular, millions of Turks, ethnically very close to Turkey, lived in the north of Afghanistan. Most of them were Uzbek and Turkmen.

In September 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul, and a few months later, the south and northwest of Afghanistan. Turkey's financial aid to Afghanistan did not stop until this year. According to the sources, Turkey's financial aid to Afghanistan in 1992-1996 amounted to \$9.2 million[7].

Turkey did not officially recognize the Taliban, who were in power in Afghanistan in 1996-2001. Turkey has condemned the Taliban's violence against the vulnerable Afghan people against the backdrop of their seizure of power. One of the famous Turkish newspapers explains these events as follows: "The massacre in Afghanistan caused horror not only in the West, but also in Muslim countries." At that time, the relations between the two countries remained only in the technical and humanitarian spheres. During the Taliban rule, many Afghans left their country. Most of them settled in Turkey.

After spending four months in Turkey, General A. Dostum returned to his country at the end of September 1997 and continued the struggle from where he left off. When General Dostum returned to Afghanistan and came to thank Turkey after reestablishing dominance in the north, his friend Lieutenant General Rauf Beg, who was with him, made the following statement about the situation of Afghan refugees who had taken refuge in Turkey: "I have not seen other countries, but according to what I have heard, Afghans who have gone to other countries are homeless, unemployed, weak, half-starved, living in miserable conditions in refugee camps or prisons. Because they don't have a permit, especially in Pakistan and Iran, they make them work like slaves for a piece of bread... But I was very surprised when I saw the situation in Turkey. Afghans who came to Turkey were treated with respect and had the same rights as Turks: they could work, earn money, eat and drink. It is believed that women and men from Afghanistan sent their family jewelry to Turkey during the Turkish War of Independence[8]. The city of Mazari Sharif, which changed hands several times after this date, was recaptured by Dostum on November 9, 2001[9].

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that the formation and development of cooperation relations between Afghanistan and Turkey coincided with the period of unique historical processes. After World War II, due to changes in Turkey's foreign policy, Afghanistan became closer to the USSR, and this rapprochement ended with the intervention of Soviet troops in Afghanistan in 1979. Turkey expressed its dissatisfaction with these events. During the years when the Soviet troops were in Afghanistan, the relations between the two countries stopped growing. However, Turkey continued to use ethnic Turkic nationalities in Afghanistan. General Abdurashid Dostum appeared as one of such persons.

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