



ARTICLE

Economic cooperations between the Turkish Republic and the USSR in the 80s of the XX century

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Abstract

At the end of the Cold War, within the international relations among the world's leading powers underwent sharp and dynamic transformations occurred. Relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Republic of Turkey remained confined to a narrow and uncertain framework within this global context from the conclusion of World War II until the early 1960s. However, the 60s and 70s of XX century marked a period of notable progress and gradual development in bilateral ties. During the 80s of XX century, opportunities for cooperation between the two countries expanded significantly. This article focuses on the evolution of economic cooperation between the USSR and Turkey during this period, with particular emphasis on the "Agreement between the Government of the

Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Transportation of Natural Gas," signed on September 18, 1984. The study analyzes the historical significance and economic implications of this agreement as a key milestone in the broader context of Soviet-Turkish relations.

1 Research Methodology

This article employs the dialectical-materialist methodology of historical inquiry, which allows for a comprehensive understanding of the development of Soviet-Turkish economic relations within their broader socio-political and economic context. The research also incorporates several specialized cognitive methods to enhance analytical rigor. Among them, the problem-chronological method is used to trace the evolution of bilateral relations over time; the comparative-historical method enables the identification of similarities and differences in the approaches of both countries; and the method of systematic analysis facilitates the exploration of economic cooperation as part of a complex and interrelated international framework.

1.1 Source Base of the Study

The source base of this study is composed of a diverse array of materials, including official documents, periodicals, and press publications from the relevant time period. In addition to primary sources, the research draws extensively on the academic contributions of both local and international scholars. Among the notable authors whose works have been consulted are Musa Gasımlı, Vugar Savzaliyev, Adem Çhaylak, V.C.Akkaş, Arda Ozkan, A.Aydın, Jemaledin Kalaycı, Erdinj Tokgoz, Erer Tellal, Erhan Boyukkancı, Evren Balta, Eyup Zengin, Halil Akıncı, İlyas Topsakal, C.Kalaycı, Selcuk Duman, Selim Kurt, Seyfi Yıldız, Adilbek Ermekbayev, Kalugin P.E., Kireev N.G., O.A. Kolobov, Vdovichenko D.K., and Danilov

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V.I. These scholars have explored various dimensions of bilateral cooperation, including trade, energy, and diplomatic engagement. The articles and works of the above-mentioned and other authors on the subject examine the contradictions and common views of the two countries in the international arena in the most objective and detailed way.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to explore the various forms, directions, and dynamics of political and economic cooperation between the Republic of Turkey and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the 80s of XX century. The article seeks to examine the implementation of bilateral agreements, analyze statistical indicators of trade and economic exchange, and identify the factors that facilitated or hindered cooperation between the two states with differing ideological and economic systems. The article addresses the following research questions: • In which areas was economic cooperation between Turkey and the USSR realized despite ideological and systemic differences? • What were the tangible benefits for both parties, and how did these shape their domestic and foreign policy agendas? • What opportunities did this cooperation create for the future trajectory of bilateral relations?

2 Research Methods

The methodological foundation of this research is built upon a combination of comparative political analysis and systematic functional analysis within the disciplines of international relations and global political economy. These methods allow for the comprehensive examination of how national interests are pursued through a synchronized interaction of political and economic mechanisms, viewing cooperation not in isolation but as part of a broader strategic framework.

The study also employs the comparative analysis method to assess the applicability and limitations of foreign models and experiences in securing national and state interests. Furthermore, the historical method is applied to trace the evolution of bilateral relations and to provide a chronological account of the development economic diplomacy.

3 Introduction

A new era in relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Republic of Turkey began in 1980. In the economic sphere, a

mechanism for long-term cooperation was established, and clearing relations (it is a system of non-cash settlements through the calculation of mutual claims and obligations trade) were replaced with a free trade model. A significant development in this period was the signing of the *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Supply of Natural Gas to Turkey* in 1984 [56].

Dissolution of the USSR in 1991, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries entered a new phase. Key sectors of collaboration included energy, light industry, food production, construction, and tourism. Joint ventures were established, trade turnover between the two nations grew dynamically, Turkish investments in the Russian economy increased, and a number of joint projects were launched across various fields of activity [56].

At the same time, Turkey faced a persistent current account deficit, primarily caused by a growing foreign trade imbalance. Prior to 1980, the country had pursued an import-substitution industrialization strategy, aiming to produce domestically all essential goods. However, with the adoption of the "open-door policy" on January 24, 1980 spearheaded by Turgut Ozal Turkey shifted towards liberalizing its economy and foreign trade. Export-promotion policies led to a rapid increase in exports, paving the way for free trade and the implementation of an export-oriented growth model.

Nonetheless, the structural adjustments necessary to support this economic liberalization were not fully realized. Consequently, the country began experiencing a chronic foreign trade deficit, largely driven by increased imports. This issue persists today, with a significant contributing factor being Turkey's dependence on foreign energy sources and the rising costs of energy imports. Overall, despite these challenges, Turkey succeeded in both increasing its export volume during the 1980s and 1990s and transforming the structure of its exports—shifting from agricultural to industrial products—thereby expanding its export markets globally.

In the late 70s of XX century, Turkey experienced another systemic crisis. Its nature is perhaps best reflected in the statement made by the leader of the military junta that carried out the subsequent coup d'état in the country. The statement declared: "*Political, economic and social problems have reached a level that threatens the state and the nation, leading to a crisis*

unprecedented in the history of the republic. Ten years ago, it was impossible to imagine that the republic would find itself in such a situation... The governments that had been in power for years, replacing each other, instead of ensuring internal stability and resolving urgent issues, disappeared under the influence of primitive party calculations, grudges and whims..." [52]. At the same time, armed groups in Turkey supported by the Soviet Union also played a significant role in the developments that led to the military coup of September 12, 1980.

Thus, while economic and trade relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union continued to develop, a political shift occurred that adversely affected bilateral relations a military coup took place in Turkey on September 12, 1980. The then Prime Minister, Suleyman Demirel, was arrested and held for 122 days, subsequently being removed from political life. The country's highest military leadership assumed power. The National Security Council (NSC), formed by generals under the leadership of Chief of the General Staff Kenan Evren, dissolved the parliament and suspended the activities of all political parties.

At the time of the coup on September 12, 1980, Turkish-Soviet relations were essentially stagnant, if not entirely frozen. The determination of the September 12 regime to suppress anarchy and terrorism, along with its initial successes, and the assertive policies of U.S. President Ronald Reagan who came to power in November 1980 and described the Soviet Union as an "Evil Empire" deeply concerned the USSR [17]. Furthermore, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and the rise to power of Kenan Evren and his associates who favored closer ties with the United States and remained fully committed to NATO negatively affected political relations with the Soviet Union. The repressive assimilation policies of the Bulgarian government under Todor Zhivkov, known for its alignment with the USSR, which aimed at the forced assimilation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, further exacerbated tensions [53].

In the aftermath of the September 12 military coup, the new military leadership initiated significant foreign policy adjustments in parallel with efforts to restore internal peace and security. A more diversified foreign policy approach was adopted. A balanced policy was pursued between the USSR and the United States while enhancing relations with the United States, the leadership did not entirely sever ties with the Soviet Union. This approach was both pragmatic and realistic

[17], and ultimately led to a gradual normalization and softening of relations with the USSR.

Turgut Ozal, who assumed power following his victory in the 1983 elections, continued the trajectory of USSR-Turkey cooperation initially associated with Suleyman Demirel [18]. During Ozal's administration, significant emphasis was placed on enhancing economic and trade relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union. The appointment of Vahid Halefoglu an experienced diplomat and former ambassador to Moscow as Minister of Foreign Affairs was perceived as a promising step toward revitalizing bilateral relations. Notably, it was under Ozal's leadership that the two countries signed their first agreement concerning the Soviet Union's borders.

At the same time, Turkey's economic development strategy underwent substantial transformation, influenced by both prior economic progress and an overarching aspiration for integration into Western Europe. In the early 1980s, against the backdrop of a deepening economic crisis, the Turkish government embarked on a program of structural reforms grounded in the principles of a market economy and free competition. These reforms included the reduction of state intervention in the economy, the elimination of several state monopolies, significant deregulation of price controls, a strategic shift from import-substitution industrialization to an export-oriented model, and the initiation of a gradual privatization process. The theoretical underpinnings of this new economic approach drew from monetarist and liberal economic doctrines prevalent in the United States and Western Europe. Nonetheless, the implementation of these policies faced immediate challenges due to persistent political instability and the inefficacy of the executive branch.

Factors Contributing to the Development of Closer Ankara-Moscow Relations In 1929, in response to the global economic crisis, Turkey adopted a highly protectionist foreign trade policy, which it maintained until the early 1980s. However, the ascendancy of free market ideology during this period prompted a departure from import-substitution industrialization in favor of an export-oriented strategy. Consequently, the promotion of exports became a priority over protectionism in Turkey's foreign trade policy [16]. While this policy shift resulted in increased exports, imports grew at an even faster pace, thereby generating significant trade deficits.

In 1981, the Second Economic Congress convened in

İzmir by the military regime, echoing the original congress held in 1923 under Atatürk's initiative served as a platform for debating the future of the mixed economy model. Turgut Ozal, who was responsible for organizing the congress, declared that the era of state-led economic planning had ended. He emphasized that statism should be viewed not as an objective of economic development, but rather as a transitional necessity. Ozal further referenced the 1938 law regarding GEO, which stipulated that such entities could be privatized under favorable conditions. In his address, the head of the military regime, Kenan Evren, underscored the principles of Kemalism and Atatürk's economic philosophy. According to Evren, Atatürk believed that, given Turkey's specific conditions, reliance solely on private enterprise was insufficient; the successful execution of large-scale projects necessitated active state participation [26].

A major turning point in bilateral trade relations occurred in 1982 with the signing of a protocol permitting transactions in freely convertible currencies. During this period, Turkey steadily increased its exports, while the Soviet Union, facing its own internal economic challenges, gradually reduced its share in trade. Soviet exports to Turkey consisted primarily of minerals, fuel, non-ferrous and ferrous metals, woodworking machinery, and various technical equipment and spare parts. However, by the early 1980s, many joint industrial construction projects had concluded, leading to a sharp decline in the Soviet Union's share of Turkish imports [32].

On November 10, 1982, following the death of L.I. Brezhnev, President Kenan Evren sent a telegram of condolence to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In his message, Evren acknowledged Brezhnev's role in the advancement of Turkish-Soviet relations and conveyed condolences on behalf of both himself and the Turkish people [27]]. Subsequently, on November 16, N.A. Tikhonov, representing the Council of Ministers of the USSR, met with Turkish Prime Minister Bulend Ulusu at the Kremlin. Tikhonov expressed appreciation for the respect shown by the Turkish people toward Brezhnev, and both parties reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining good-neighborly relations [28]. In the same spirit, Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, sent a congratulatory telegram to K. Evren on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the USSR. In this message, Andropov expressed optimism regarding the continued development of

friendly relations and cooperation between Turkey and the Soviet Union [29].

Following the 1980 military coup in Turkey, the new leadership pursued a more balanced and stable foreign policy, carefully navigating between the USSR and Western powers by capitalizing on Turkey's strategic geopolitical position. This approach was considered more beneficial from Ankara's perspective [14]. As a result, mutual confidence in bilateral cooperation was revitalized, and economic relations expanded across multiple sectors to enhance Turkey's role in the global market.

Energy policy remained a persistent item on the Turkish government's agenda. Since the late 1980s, Turkey had sourced hydrocarbons from Iran—primarily natural gas—as well as from Greece via the Trans-Balkan Pipeline and from Algeria in the form of liquefied natural gas. Nevertheless, persistent political instability and internal crises hindered the comprehensive revision and implementation of a coherent national energy strategy. In particular, despite regional interest, the procurement of natural gas from the Middle East remained a low priority in Turkish foreign policy due to Ankara's strained relations with many Arab states in the region [2].

During the 1980s, Turkish-Soviet relations experienced notable improvement, driven largely by Turkey's energy shortages and the USSR's economic difficulties. The cornerstone of this evolving partnership was the initiation of energy cooperation, formalized by the signing of a landmark agreement on the supply of natural gas to Turkey [23]. Motivated by the need to transition from environmentally harmful energy sources to cleaner alternatives, the Turkish government opted to adopt natural gas as a principal energy source. Consequently, on September 18, 1984, in Ankara, Turkey and the Soviet Union signed the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Transportation of Natural Gas." The agreement was based on existing models of economic cooperation, financial arrangements, and bilateral trade mechanisms, and marked a major milestone in the economic relations between the two states. It represented Turkey's first international contract for the import of natural gas and laid the foundation for a broader and more structured form of energy cooperation.

The agreement enabled the construction of Turkey's first natural gas pipeline the Western Line which

became a symbol of deepening bilateral energy ties. This development sparked the expansion of broader economic relations into formal trade partnerships. Under the terms of the agreement, Turkey committed to importing substantial quantities of natural gas at market exchange rates, while the USSR agreed to import Turkish goods in return. This mutually beneficial arrangement significantly strengthened the business partnership between the two countries.

The specifics of the gas transportation, pricing, and contractual procedures were delegated to the Soviet agency Soyuzgazexport. In Turkey, the state-owned company BOTAŞ was tasked with overseeing implementation, including the assessment of consumption potential and the identification of a viable pipeline route, which was put into operation in 1985. After thorough research, Northwestern Anatolia was selected as the most suitable region for the project [50, pp. 85–101; 37, p. 298]. Subsequently, on February 14, 1986, BOTAŞ and Soyuzgazexport signed a long-term natural gas purchase and sale agreement in Ankara, valid for 25 years and subject to automatic renewal every five years [49].

It was agreed that the initial 1.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas would be determined jointly by BOTAS and SOYUZGAS. As in previous agreements, payments were to be made through the export of Turkish goods [9]. This marked the first significant step toward large-scale natural gas cooperation between Turkey and the Soviet Union. The parties consented to a barter-based model, whereby Turkey would supply goods such as wool, vegetables, meat, iron, and grain in exchange for natural gas, in accordance with domestic capabilities and the specific demands of the USSR [46, p.353; 3]. Following the agreement, the two sides promptly determined the optimal pipeline route for the delivery of natural gas from the Soviet Union to Turkey and assessed Turkey's projected consumption. The initiative, which was unprecedented in the context of bilateral energy relations at that time, commenced with the construction of a pipeline across the Black Sea. Under the terms of the agreement, natural gas volumes were gradually increased beginning in 1987. By 1993, Turkey was receiving up to 6 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually through the pipeline traversing Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria. With the signing of a supplementary agreement with the Russian Federation successor to the USSR in 1996, this volume was further increased to 8 billion cubic meters per year [40].

The USSR-Turkey natural gas pipeline, which entered

Turkish territory at Malkoçlar on the Bulgarian border and extended to Ankara via Hamidabad, Ambarlı, Istanbul, İzmit, Bursa, and Eskişehir, spanned a total length of 845 kilometers. Construction of the pipeline began on October 26, 1986, and it reached its first destination, Hamidabad, on June 23, 1987. Since then, imported natural gas alongside domestically sourced gas has been used at the Thrace Combined Cycle Power Plant in Hamidabad for electricity generation. Between 1987 and 1994, Turkey's annual natural gas supply rose from 0.4 billion to 6 billion cubic meters, reflecting the pipeline's full design capacity. The supply was facilitated via the Trans-Balkan Pipeline [23].

The pipeline reached Ankara in August 1988. By July 1988, natural gas had been supplied to IGSAS (Istanbul Fertilize Industry RC.), to the Ambarlı Power Plant in August 1988, and to residential and commercial consumers in Ankara by October of the same year. To meet increasing domestic demand, the capacity of the Malkoch Natural Gas Facility, situated at the Bulgarian border, was expanded from 8 billion to 14 billion cubic meters annually [50].

This agreement not only addressed Turkey's immediate energy needs but also facilitated the entry of Turkish goods and services into the Soviet market. Under the terms of the natural gas agreement, Turkish exports were used primarily to pay for imported gas, as well as to offset the costs of previously constructed facilities under the framework of the 1967 agreement. A dedicated bilateral commission was established to oversee these transactions.

During this period, Turkey's enhanced economic engagement with the USSR also yielded political dividends, enabling the country to strengthen its diplomatic position vis-à-vis both the United States and the Soviet Union. From the Soviet perspective, deepening relations with Turkey served to counterbalance Western, particularly American, influence in the region. Furthermore, it allowed the USSR to gain competitive access to the Turkish market. It is also important to recall that since the early 1980s, Turkey had actively pursued a strategy of diversifying its foreign trade portfolio by seeking out new export markets [41].

In summary, by the mid-1980s, the necessity for bilateral trade between Turkey and the USSR extended beyond energy policy to encompass broader economic and geopolitical considerations [50].

As a result, the gas agreement concluded with the

USSR in the 1980s created new economic opportunities. The most significant advantage for Turkey was the provision that 70% of the payment for imported natural gas could be made in the form of products and services. The remaining portion of the payment was carried out in accordance with the terms outlined in the agreement. Through this arrangement, Turkish contractors gained access to the Soviet market.

As previously noted, under the gas agreement, the Soviet Union committed to supplying natural gas to the Republic of Turkey for a period of 25 years beginning in 1987, with transactions conducted in freely convertible currencies during this period, while Turkey agreed to import natural gas throughout the duration of the agreement. Thus, the supply of Soviet natural gas to Turkey commenced. The agreement stipulated that Turkey would pay for the natural gas in freely convertible foreign currency, which the USSR would subsequently use to purchase Turkish goods in general. The intention was to promote the export of Turkish industrial products, rather than traditional goods, in exchange for natural gas. In response, Ankara directed approximately 70% of its exports and services to the USSR, where they found a market within the context of widespread shortages and a lack of competition in the Soviet economy. Subsequent developments in various sectors further advanced economic relations between the two countries. On one hand, during this period, the energy sector became the cornerstone of the Russian economy; on the other hand, Turkey's demand for energy grew rapidly from 1987 onward. Energy companies in Turkey expanded swiftly in collaboration with construction firms and simultaneously assumed important social responsibilities.

Consequently, starting from 1988, it was planned to offset 25–30% of the total receivables of Turkish contractors operating in the USSR against Turkey's overall debt for natural gas. As previously emphasized, this agreement was signed between two states belonging to opposing strategic blocs, at a time when the Reagan administration was attempting to reignite Cold War tensions. Nonetheless, the agreement constituted a milestone in bilateral economic relations. In addition to facilitating closer energy cooperation between Turkey and the USSR, it also established the USSR as Turkey's primary supplier of natural gas. It should be recalled that this gas agreement, coupled with the end of the Cold War, encouraged Turkey's ruling elites to position the country not only as an energy hub but also as a transit corridor for gas from the Caucasus and Central Asia, thereby

laying the groundwork for future pipeline construction. Although the Caucasus project was realized, the objective of transporting Central Asian hydrocarbon resources to the West via Turkey has yet to be fully achieved. The involvement of private Turkish enterprises under the coordination of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (in Turkish DEİK) in the development of economic ties led several major companies, particularly in the construction sector, to become dominant players initially in the Soviet Union, subsequently in the Russian Federation, and eventually in the newly independent states following the Soviet collapse, thereby fostering bilateral trade and marking a significant stage in economic development.

In other words, the developments in the second half of the 1980s well before the collapse of the USSR and the conclusion of the Cold War represented a turning point in Turkish-Soviet relations and laid the foundation for a robust economic partnership that has persisted for over three decades. Following the agreements signed in 1984, in which Turkey agreed to purchase natural gas from the USSR, numerous Turkish private and state-owned companies initiated commercial relations with the Soviet Union. However, this transformative agreement and the conditions that facilitated its success must be understood within the broader context of the historical economic cooperation between the two nations.

In the latter half of the 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in the Soviet Union and implemented the principles of glasnost (openness), perestroika (restructuring), democratization, and the "New Thinking" approach to foreign policy, all of which were reflected in the economic relations between the two countries. Simultaneously, the political shifts occurring in Eastern Europe, internal political renewal within the Soviet Union, and the surge of nationalist sentiment had a significant impact on Turkish foreign policy during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, the outbreak of hostilities between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia, which escalated into full-scale war in Nagorno-Karabakh, prompted Turkey to adopt a definitive stance. Turkey, owing to its geographical proximity and ethnic and cultural affinities with the region, initially adopted a cautious stance regarding the conflict between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia. This hesitance was primarily driven by Cold War dynamics, particularly the desire to avoid antagonizing the Soviet Union. However, as the conflict escalated into full-scale war and spread along Turkey's borders, Ankara began to express support

for Azerbaijan. This shift in policy was met with skepticism by the Soviet civilian and military elite, reigniting long-standing suspicions regarding Turkey's intentions toward the USSR.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the longstanding military and ideological threat posed by the northern neighbor effectively dissipated for Turkey. Nonetheless, the 1990s introduced a new set of challenges stemming from regional tensions in the Black Sea and the Caucasus, as well as divergent approaches to key geopolitical issues in relations with the newly formed Russian Federation. Despite these tensions, bilateral economic relations remained largely unaffected compared to earlier periods. Historically, the strategic competition between the two states over control of the Black Sea straits of immense economic and geopolitical significance persisted until the First World War, abated during the interwar period, and briefly reemerged after the Second World War. However, with the onset of the Cold War, the Black Sea experienced an unusually stable period. This stability can be largely attributed to the Montreux Straits Convention of 1936, which established a legal framework for regulating naval passage through the straits in a manner that aligned with the strategic interests of both Turkey and the USSR [45].

During the 1970s and 1980s, disputes continued between Turkey and the Soviet Union over the regulation of maritime traffic through the straits, particularly given their significant economic value. For instance, on 18 November 1979, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed amending Article 2 of the Montreux Convention concerning the mandatory presence of maritime pilots, citing serious risks posed by the passage of high-tonnage oil tankers [44]. In response to growing concerns, Turkey issued the "Istanbul Port Charter" and the "Chanakkale Port Regulation" in 1982, which imposed additional control measures over specific navigation routes. Furthermore, on 17 August 1985, the planned transit of a Soviet nuclear-powered aircraft carrier through the straits prompted renewed debate [44].

A pivotal episode in Turkish-Soviet relations during this period was the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which occurred in Ukraine on 26 April 1986. Despite the incident occurring during a period of normalized economic relations between the two countries, the Turkish government did not pursue formal legal claims against the USSR. Turkey's initial response

focused on monitoring and mitigation efforts, led by the Turkish Atomic Energy Agency (TAEK), which initiated radiation measurements immediately after the accident was reported on 29 April 1986 [4]. Importantly, the Chernobyl disaster did not evolve into a political crisis in bilateral relations. Rather, Turkey treated it primarily as an economic challenge. The incident also prompted Turkey to engage in international efforts aimed at preventing and managing the consequences of similar disasters in the future [4].

A significant development in Turkish-Soviet relations was the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal to the Soviet Union from 28 July to 5 August 1986. This visit marked a turning point, fostering the expansion of cooperation in the fields of trade, economics, and culture. It also reinforced diplomatic dialogue aimed at promoting mutual understanding and good-neighborly relations between the two nations [26]. Also, during T. Ozal's visit to Moscow, an agreement was reached on construction projects, and in 1986, cooperation between Turkey and the USSR in the field of energy products began. Another important aspect of the natural gas agreement from Turkey's perspective is that part of the natural gas costs was used to finance projects implemented by Turkish contractor companies in the USSR. Provisions on this subject were included in the 9th KEK protocol signed in 1986 [16, p.88]. In 1987, the transportation of Soviet natural gas was ensured by the signing of joint declarations. It should be noted that Turkey's dependence on Soviet oil was not yet high in the 1980s. For example, during the Gulf War, USSR oil accounted for approximately 10.4 % of Turkey's energy consumption.

Thanks to the requirement included in the Turkey-USSR natural gas agreement that part of the cost of natural gas to be purchased from the USSR was to be paid for with Turkish products and services, Turkish construction companies began to enter the USSR market in 1987. In other words, a system was created in which part of the trade was paid for with construction works and products. Later, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, this process gained momentum [50] [54]. Thus, starting from the early 80s of the 20th century, the dynamism in bilateral relations gained momentum [23, p. 50; 42]. The rare cooperative initiative in the history of the republic allowed for increased economic development. As mentioned, this process continued its development in various directions after the collapse of the USSR.

Year	Raw Oil (M\$)	Raw Oil (%)	Natural Gas (M\$)	Natural Gas (%)
1986	45.3	2.7	–	–
1987	49.9	2.0	9.0	9.6
1988	58.6	2.6	80.7	67.1
1989	97.6	4.3	179.7	66.3
1990	337.6	10.4	234.0	58.8

Table 1. Oil and natural gas exports from Russia to Turkey in 1986-1990

Note: by author Between 1987 and 1994, when the first natural gas purchases began, natural gas imports worth \$1.9 billion were carried out, the amount of exports within the framework of product production recorded between these dates was \$271 million, and the total volume of contractor services provided was \$609 million [16].

S. Demirel's statement after his visit to the USSR was important in terms of indicating that balanced steps would be taken: "Turkey's foreign policy is not mortgaged. There is no question of mortgaged Turkey's foreign policy... Today, the distrust, hesitations, and prejudices that have cast a shadow over Turkish-Soviet relations and seriously damaged them for many years are on the way to being eliminated. Trade exchange between our countries continues to increase. Economic relations, as in our relations with other countries, should in no way be confused with political relations" [15]. During the rule of another right-wing politician, T. Ozal in the 1980s, economic relations with the USSR, especially in the energy sector, gained serious momentum. During his visit to Turkey in December 1984, the Prime Minister of the USSR, Nikolai Tikhonov, emphasized the importance of the agreements concluded by Prime Minister T. Ozal to increase bilateral trade to \$6 billion in the next 5 years: **"These two signed documents are compact documents that will bring new and positive vitality to the economic and trade relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union, which began in the second half of the 1960s and which for several years seemed to have stagnated for various reasons"** [15].

Even a complete and brief list of economic measures in the second half of the 1980s - early 1990s shows that these were, as T. Ozal said, truly reform measures. In Turkey, strict state control over the currency system that had existed since the 1930s was abolished, import regimes, foreign capital activity, and export promotion were liberalized, and state intervention in price formation was significantly limited. It should be emphasized here that it was during this period

that the position of Turkey and the USSR towards the Western Alliance underwent a radical change. With the Cold War, the world was located within a rigid alliance system called the Eastern and Western blocs. During this period, the USSR, by forming a balance of power, pursued a strong alternative economic policy aimed at both the Western economic system and international institutions. At the same time, Turkey increasingly took part in the economic system and structures of the Western Alliance.

The claim of a Soviet threat was the basis for Turkey's unconditional commitment to the Western Alliance during this period. However, despite this, Turkey did not hesitate to develop its bilateral relations with the USSR during the periods when it had problems with the Western Alliance. However, these bilateral relations did not rest on an inter-institutional and permanent basis. The stable structure of the Cold War alliance system caused both the struggle and cooperation between the two countries to remain limited. Therefore, cooperation, especially in the eighties, when the relations of the Western alliance with the USSR began to soften, was developed more through trade.

Economic relations brought the USSR and Turkey closer, and these two states tried to keep their existing strategic problems away from their growing economic dependence without highlighting them. This can be understood from the statements of the two prime ministers at the joint press conference within the framework of the VIII "Russia-Turkey High-Level Cooperation Council". Their statements expressed that the economic content was at the heart of bilateral relations. The late prime minister (later president) T. Ozal stated that after purchasing natural gas from this country, which was Turkey's long-standing rival, and paying for it by selling its products, the relations were deepening relations built on "asymmetric dependence" [9] [43].

After the collapse of the USSR, the obligation of Turkey to pay 70 percent of the price in products and

services under the natural gas contract had lost its significance [16, p.80; 22, p.38-42]. Still in 2011, after BOTAS refused to renew the contract based on the "take or pay" principle and disagreement over the price, the Western Line Contract, Turkey's first natural gas import contract, officially expired without being extended by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers. By the decision of the Council of Ministers adopted on November 29, 2011, the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Transportation of Natural Gas", signed on September 18, 1984 between the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Republic of Turkey, was officially terminated as of June 5, 2012 [50, p.85-101; 10].

After the statement of the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gazprom A. Medvedev that after BOTAŞ canceled gas purchases from the Western pipeline, gas could be supplied to Turkey through private companies, Turkish companies licensed by EMRA agreed with the Russian Federation to purchase gas through that pipeline [50, pp. 85-101; 6]. However, while natural gas imports from the Russian Federation were growing rapidly, the growth rate of exports to this country remained at a very low level. Thus, since 1980, a new era has begun in relations between the USSR and Turkey, and first of all, a mechanism for long-term relations in the economic sphere was established for the first time. At the same time, clearing relations were abandoned: they were replaced by free trade. Most importantly, the private sector, which strengthened in the Turkish economy during this period, for the first time established itself as an independent force in bilateral trade. The large population, geographical proximity, and acute shortage of goods and services in the USSR provided Turkey with excellent opportunities to develop its business. In the 1980s under review, there were three important agreements in Turkish-Soviet economic relations:

- Protocol on freely convertible currencies dated May 20, 1982;
- Agreement on natural gas dated September 17, 1984;
- Construction of residential buildings for Russian soldiers evacuated from Germany.

The transformations that took place in the USSR in the 80s of the 20th century, especially in the second half, and the strengthening of the private sector had

a positive impact on bilateral economic and trade relations, giving them not only a new form, but also a new dynamic [23].

As can be seen from the table, since 1987, a continuous progressive increase in mutual trade between the two countries began. Between 1980 and 1991, Turkey's exports increased by 261.4% and imports by 506.4% [23, p.46-47].

In 1987, Eximbank was established in Turkey to support companies conducting foreign trade operations. This bank also participated in financial transactions in Turkish-Soviet trade. For 1989-1991, Eximbank opened a credit line to the USSR in the amount of 1,150 million US dollars, of which 555.3 million dollars were given before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thanks to these loans, exports of goods such as textiles, leather, ready-made clothing, shoes, toothpaste, household chemicals and medicines to Turkey increased significantly. During the period of study of trade relations, a system based on the exchange of freely convertible currencies was established, which allowed both countries to significantly increase the profitability of trade, as listed above [23].

In the late 80s, some Soviet enterprises that were privatized received the right to independent foreign trade operations. This quickly surpassed those dependent on the state in terms of commercial efficiency. Later, these enterprises, established after the collapse of the Union, became the foundation on which foreign trade was established. In addition, due to factors such as the loss of strong positions of Turkey's trade partners in the Middle East as a result of the decline in oil prices, as well as the end of the Iran-Iraq war, interest in the USSR increased among ruling circles and businessmen [23]. Also, the low prices and high quality of some Soviet products attracted the attention of many Turkish import companies. As a result, imports of natural gas, steel, fertilizers, lumber, synthetic fibers, and polyvinyl chloride from the USSR increased [23].

In the 1970s, the construction industry in all countries of the Middle East began to develop rapidly, and Turkish companies began to take their place among the strongest enterprises in this sector. In the 80s, Turkish construction companies gained a leading position in the markets of the Middle East and North Africa, and in the second half of the 80s they entered the new, but construction-hungry market of the Soviet Union. In general, at this time, Turkish companies of

Table 2. Turkish-Soviet trade in 1980-1991, million dollars

Year	Export (M\$)	Change (%)	Import (M\$)	Change (%)	Balance (M\$)	Export/Import
1980	168.96	33.32	167.14	68.16	1.82	1.01
1981	193.69	14.63	151.09	-9.60	42.60	1.28
1982	124.03	-35.96	98.81	-34.60	25.22	1.26
1983	88.71	-28.48	219.90	122.55	-131.19	0.40
1984	138.51	56.15	285.74	29.94	-147.23	0.48
1985	190.05	37.21	201.70	-29.41	-11.65	-0.94
1986	140.58	-26.03	322.72	60.01	-182.14	-0.44
1987	169.49	20.57	282.06	-12.60	-112.57	0.60
1988	271.40	60.12	408.68	44.89	-137.28	0.66
1989	704.72	159.66	578.95	41.66	125.77	1.22
1990	531.12	-24.63	1158.97	100.18	-627.85	0.46
1991	610.61	14.97	1013.27	-12.57	-402.66	0.60

various profiles, including financial companies, began to actively penetrate this market after the conclusion of the aforementioned natural gas contract in 1987. The Soviet state enterprise “**Soyuzvneshstroyimport**” and “**Techno-export**” together with Turkish companies signed a contract for the construction of 10 social facilities worth 550 million US dollars, and later the contract was expanded to include the construction of several more social and industrial facilities [23, p.48]. However, the turning point for the activities of Turkish companies in the USSR was the unification of Germany. At that time, the German government allocated a loan of 8 billion marks for the construction of housing for returning Soviet soldiers. The German government initially allocated this amount for idle construction companies in the eastern provinces, but Turkish firms were able to earn a significant part of this money due to their low prices and short-term construction skills. For a long time, the dominant position in the construction market of the USSR was held by companies from Finland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and the GDR, but since the beginning of the 90s, construction companies from these countries have been significantly squeezed out by Turkish enterprises [23].

At the same time, one of the most important places in bilateral economic relations was occupied by the shipbuilding and ship repair industry. This was due to the fact that by the end of the 80s, the Turkish shipping industry had developed to the point where it began to offer its services to other countries. It was as a result of this that in 1988, Sedef Gemi Industry began negotiations with the Soviet AKP Sovcomflot, which ended with the signing of two contracts in 1988-1989. At that time, the USSR had placed a number of orders

for the construction of ships, but financial difficulties prevented full cooperation [23].

Despite the difficulties, cooperation in this area continued, as a result of which, since 1989, a large number of Soviet ships have approached the Erkal Tuzla shipyard for repairs and inspections. However, over time, due to the poor functioning of the financial mechanism, the Turkish shipping industry began to suffer losses in economic competition. This was aggravated by the development of container river transportation, especially on old ships, the increasing role of Greece in the region, and the emergence of the Baltic countries as independent players in this market [23].

It was during this period that bilateral cooperation in the field of health began for the first time. A joint program was adopted, according to which the USSR built 15 special drug warehouses to import various types of drugs from Turkey. Measures aimed at the development of the Soviet health system and assistance in the construction of new hospitals were also envisaged. However, when implemented, the program failed [23]. Back in the 1960s, direct transport links between the two countries were improved, or rather established: the Moscow-Istanbul air and rail passenger transport was opened, railway and air transport from the USSR to Arab countries through Turkey was established, etc. However, as in other areas, relations between the two countries in the transport sector did not develop smoothly. In 1970, the USSR assessed the Brazinskas incident, which involved an armed attack on the crew of an Aeroflot plane during a regular flight from Batumi to Sukhumi, as air piracy.

The terrorists killed the flight attendant, seriously injured the pilot and navigator, and forced the plane to land in Trabzon, Turkey. The Soviet government demanded that the killers be extradited to the Turkish authorities for trial, but this demand was not met. This was also an event that seriously affected relations in the transport sector [26].

A breakthrough was achieved in the field of communications in 1989, when Turkish Airlines began operating regular flights to Moscow. That is, the Istanbul-Moscow route became one of the most important routes for this company [23].

Throughout the Cold War, Turkey shaped its international policy according to the threat perception of the Western Bloc, to which it belonged, and its relations with the Soviet Union were formed in the context of bloc relations. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, which began in 1989, Turkey-USSR relations entered a period of rapprochement against the backdrop of new searches in the international arena [24]. In this process, especially “the natural gas agreement signed in 1984 created the basis for the development of trade and investment relations between the two countries. The Turkish private sector made great efforts to enter the Soviet markets and benefited from the benefits of the natural gas agreement. The form of negotiation of the agreement strictly regulated the work to be done by Turkish companies in the USSR and provided maneuvering opportunities in a limited economic environment [9] [55]. This initiative and Turkey’s great need for natural gas put energy relations at the center of economic interactions and paved the way for Turkish contractor companies to dominate the Russian market.

In 1989, during the T. Ozal government, Turkish contractors took 932 workers from Turkey to the USSR for work for the first time. The second important trade development was the opening of border areas to trade with the “Border and Coastal Trade Agreement” signed on July 6, 1989. In this context, the “Sarp border crossing” was opened to trade for the first time [40] [30]. This paved the way for the emergence and development of the suitcase trade in the early 1990s. Thus, with the opening of the border crossing point, a very intensive “Suitcase Trade” began between the two countries. This, in turn, created new job opportunities in the trade and service sectors in the migrating Black Sea provinces and stopped migration [12] [11]. In this sense, we would not be wrong to say that the foundations of trade relations between Turkey and the

Russian Federation were laid in the 1980s [53] [13] [1].

In general, the 80s and early 90s were characterized by a very rapid rapprochement between the two countries, a rapid increase in Turkey’s exports and the opening of its economy to the world. Especially after T. Ozal became prime minister, he visited many capitals of the Eastern Bloc and signed various agreements on economic, political and cultural relations [41] [39]. Relations with the USSR and other socialist republics began to become permanent and stable, and private firms played an increasingly important role in these relations [23].

The Arab-Israeli and Iraqi-Iranian wars that continued in the Middle East during these years did not remain unaffected by the political relations between Turkey and the USSR. The ongoing US influence in the Middle East and the Gulf Wars were the most important issues of regional politics, and the Soviet Union continued to support the Baath regime in Syria at this time. However, the early 1990s, when the USSR found itself in a difficult economic situation, marked the end of the bipolar world. Although it was a period of bankruptcy for the Soviet Union, even during this period the struggle between the US and Russia over the Middle East continued from the previous positions (where it had left off). These did not remain unaffected by Turkish-Russian relations, and in some cases, they hindered them [21].

4 Conclusions

The “perestroika” policy implemented in 1987 on the initiative of Gorbachev, the first secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR, brought the country to the brink of civil war towards the end of 1991 and the economy fell into a state of “paralysis”. In such a situation, the nations, taking “Chaos” as an opportunity, declared their independence one after another. Instead of the USSR, which experienced all the difficulties of the transition from a single-party authoritarian political system to a “pluralist” political system and collapsed, its successor, the Russian Federation, was established. Turkey demonstrated an understanding that emphasized the elements of “Solidarity and Cooperation” in its relations with the newly formed Russian Federation from the very beginning. In this context, the “Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation” was signed between the two countries on February 25, 1991 [11]. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, economic relations between the two countries were built on a more solid foundation [46].

After the end of the Cold War between the USA and the USSR, diplomatically significant political processes began in the world. During this period, globalization took place in the world. Also, the communist system collapsed in the countries of the Eastern Bloc. The USSR itself entered the process of disintegration. The Western Bloc also exhibited a different attitude during this period. In this system of relations, the idea of integrating the Eastern European states that were part of the Eastern Bloc into the West emerged [7].

With the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, a new era began in the relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation. After the Cold War, the global world situation affected the relations between Turkey and Russia. The emergence of mutual threats and geopolitical competition between Ankara and Moscow in the 1990s did not allow for the comprehensive development of mutually beneficial relations. Relations became complicated, especially due to the intensification of Ankara's policy in the Black-Caspian Sea region, which Moscow considers to be its sphere of interest. It is worth noting that the Caucasus and the Black Sea still remain a region where interests often clash between Turkey and Russia. However, these countries continued their cooperation primarily in the field of trade. As a result of this policy, the Russian Federation became Turkey's most important trade partner from the early 1990s. This trade partnership continued at the beginning of the XXI century and continues today [30].

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