

FIFTY YEARS OF ADVENTURE: RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND ICELAND

50 YILLIK SERÜVEN: TÜRKİYE-İZLANDA İLİŞKİLERİ

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Abstract

This study deals with Turkey-Iceland relations between 1930 and 1980. Relations between these two countries, which have completely different cultures and geographies, have always been limited because they have a long-distance between them, and Iceland is a small market. The contacts which began indirectly in the 1930s evolved into an agreement that resulted in abolishing visa requirements between these countries for three months in 1955. A few years after this agreement, diplomatic relations were established at the plenipotentiary level. Turkey's Embassy in Oslo and Iceland's Embassy in Copenhagen were accredited and started to fulfill this duty. Consulates opened in both countries in 1960. These did not make any contributions to the trade or tourism of either country. Almost no commercial activities have been carried out between these countries so far. As for political activities, Iceland has generally pursued an anti-Turkey policy. Iceland's relations with third countries, the importance it attaches to universal values, and being an opposition to Turkey cause this situation. This opposition is understood to be the effect of the 1627 Event. In addition, it is seen that the classical European view that Turks are dictators and oppressors also prevails in Iceland. The news in the Icelandic press about Ottoman-Armenian relations, especially in the news about the events between the Iraqi Government and the Kurds in the 1960s and 1970s have ascribed the Republic of Turkey as a dictator, which supports this idea. Another reason for Turkish opposition is the importance Iceland attributes to the freedom of nations. All these events and considerations show that both countries, especially Turkey, should care about the relations and introduce itself more. In this context, it is obvious that it would be an important step for Turkey to open an embassy in Iceland in the first place, which it does not have a single embassy among NATO members. This is the first study conducted on Turkey-Iceland relations in the said period.

Keywords: *Turkey, Iceland, Turkish Foreign Policy, Turkey-Iceland Relations, Tyrkjaránið.*

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Öz

Bu çalışma 1930-1980 yılları arası Türkiye-İzlanda ilişkilerini konu almaktadır. Birbirinden tamamen farklı kültür ve coğrafyaya sahip bu iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler, aradaki mesafenin fazlalığı ve İzlanda'nın küçük bir pazar olması nedenlerinden ötürü hep sınırlı kalmıştır. 1930'larda dolaylı başlayan temaslar 1955'te karşılıklı üç ay süreyle vizelerin kaldırılmasıyla sonuçlanan bir anlaşmaya dönüşmüştür. Bu anlaşmadan birkaç yıl sonra orta elçilik düzeyinde diplomatik ilişkiler kurulmuştur. Türkiye'nin Oslo Büyükelçiliği ile İzlanda'nın Kopenhag Büyükelçiliği akredite olarak bu görevi yerini getirmeye başlamışlardır. Her iki ülke 1960 yılında karşılıklı birer de konsolosluk açmıştır. Atılan bu adımlar ne ticarette ne de turizmde her iki ülkenin yüzünü güldürmüştür. Geçen süre zarfında yapılan ticari faaliyetler bu ülkelerin ticaret hacminde yok denecek düzeyde kalmıştır. Siyasi faaliyetler noktasında İzlanda, genelde Türkiye karşıtı bir politika izlemiştir. Bunda İzlanda'nın üçüncü ülkelerle olan ilişkileri ile evrensel değerlere verdiği önemin yanı sıra Türkiye özelinde de bir karşıtlığı söz konusudur. Bu karşıtlık da 1627 Olayı'nın etkisi olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Ayrıca Türklerin diktatör ve baskıcı olduğu şeklindeki klasik Avrupa bakışının İzlanda'da da hâkim olduğu görülmektedir. İzlanda basınında Osmanlı-Ermeni ilişkilerinde özellikle de 1960'lı ve 1970'li yıllarda Irak Hükûmeti ile Kürtler arasındaki olayları konu olan haberlerde zaman zaman Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ne yapılan diktatör yakıştırmaları bu düşünceyi desteklemektedir. Türk muhalifliğinin bir başka nedeni de İzlanda'nın ulusların özgürlüğüne atfettiği önemdir. Tüm bu olaylar ve değerlendirmeler, her iki ülkenin özellikle de Türkiye'nin ilişkilere daha fazla önem vermesi ve kendini tanıtmaya gerekliliğini göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda Türkiye'nin ilk etapta NATO üyeleri arasında tek büyükelçiliği olmayan İzlanda'ya bir elçilik açmasının önemli bir adım olacağı ortadadır. Bu çalışma belirtilen dönemde Türkiye-İzlanda ilişkilerini inceleyen ilk çalışmadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türkiye, İzlanda, Türk Dış Politikası, Türkiye-İzlanda İlişkileri, Türk Baskını.*

Introduction

Iceland is an island state with a surface area of 39,769 mi² (103,000 km²) and a population of approximately 360,000 according to the 2019 data. It was under the rule of Denmark until it declared full independence in 1944. The Republic of Turkey, which was born from the ashes of the collapsed Ottoman Empire and is located at the point where Asia and Europe meet, has a surface area of 314,510 mi² (814,578 km²) and a population of around 83,000,000 according to the census taken in 2019. The distance between these countries is 2,789 miles (4,488 km) by airline. The long distance and the fact that Iceland is a small market have limited the relations between Turkey and Iceland. Turks (those who follow the media) know the Republic of Iceland by name, but they do not have an opinion about Icelanders. But the situation is different for Icelanders. Icelandic people who care about myths and stories heard of the name *Turk* with an incident they had in the 17th century. This incident, which took place in 1627 and is described briefly below, caused great trauma for Icelanders in the past.



Figure 1. Routes of Pirates

Source: Davies, "The Barbary Corsair Raid on Iceland, 1627" (12 February, 2017), <https://jddavies.com/2017/02/20/the-barbary-corsair-raid-on-iceland-1627/> [accessed 12 April 2020].

The peace treaties signed in 1604 ended the wars between England and Spain, and those between Spain and the Netherlands. Then, Spain recognized the independence of Denmark in 1609. British and Danish pirates played important roles in the war against Spain. However, those pirates become harmful after the peace. Therefore, Britain and other western states began to take increasing measures against pirates to protect international trade. Unable to take shelter in their own country, the pirates fled to North Africa where they were welcomed.¹ A significant part of North Africa had been dominated by the Ottoman Empire since the 16th century. But the region was semi-autonomous under the rule of the empire.² European pirates who came to these Barbary³ lands with

1 Bernard Lewis, "İzlandada Türkler", trans. H. D. Andresyan, Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni, İstanbul, 1954, p. 13-17.

2 "Barbary Pirates", 1911 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 3, USA, Horace Everett Hooper, 1910, p. 383-84.

3 Berbers are one of the indigenous peoples of North Africa, living in present-day Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco.

intense pirate activities taught advanced sailing and shipbuilding techniques to the locals. This development allowed Barbary pirates to expand their activities as far as the Atlantic Ocean. One of these activities took place in Iceland. In 1627, Maghreb pirates including converts came to Iceland under the guidance of a Danish⁴ convert and plundered some coastal settlements. The pirates were led by a convert named Murat Reis who was of Dutch origin. The plunder took about one month. The Pirates took as many as 400 prisoners, mostly from the Westman Islands, and killed about 40 people. Some of the captives died during the cruise. The rest were sold as slaves in North Africa. Some of the Icelanders who were forced to convert chose Islam. A very small number of Icelanders whose ransom was paid managed to return to their homelands.⁵ Priest Olafur Egilsson, who was taken to Algeria to be sold as a slave but managed to get free, wrote a book in which he said that a significant number of the pirates were European converts, the Turks (Muslims) were not so bad, but the converts were cruel.⁶ The hatred that developed in Icelanders against the Turks further increased by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire towards the west.

Known as *Tyrkjaránið* (Icelandic for “Turkish Abductions”) in Icelandic, this incident⁷ is considered a unique incident in the Icelandic history due to many first-hand information that is available.⁸ The incident was used as a driving force in Iceland’s struggle for national freedom in the 19th century.⁹ There are around five hundred reports of the incident in Icelandic newspapers alone within the time frame of this study. When we look at the newspapers up to today, we can see that this number has increased to over a thousand. The pirate raid of 1627 is still remembered today. There are also those who share the view that the incident was used as a tool to consolidate Icelandic nationalism and Christianity.

In fact, the incident does not seem to have much to do with Turks. The Europeans referred to the Muslims living in the Islamic region, especially Ottoman-dominated areas, as *Turk*. For this reason, the Maghrebians who raided Iceland were also named Turks, and the incident was written on books as a *Turkish raid*. This situation is clearly expressed in some publications today although it remains between the lines of other resources providing information on the subject.¹⁰ Therefore, many Icelanders today know that it was not the Turks who orchestrated those attacks. However, using the name *Turk* while mentioning the incident will cause people to have a negative perception of the word *Turk*.

The study is about the bilateral relations between Turkey and Iceland. The development of relations between the parties and the factors affecting this development

4 Gaining their freedom later on, the Icelanders said that the fight for freedom was led by a Danish slave named Paul. According to other sources, this person is likely to be Icelandic. See Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

5 Hundreds of articles have been published on the subject. For some of them, see: Sögufélag, *Tyrkjaránið á Íslandi 1627*, Reykjavík, Prentsmiðjan Gutenberg, (n.d.), p. 1906-09; Lewis, *op. cit.*, 13-17; Arnarsdóttir, “The Long Way Home”, <https://www.iceland.is/the-big-picture/news/the-long-way-home/13449/> [accessed 20 March 2020]; Abidin Daver, “Atlas Okyanusunda Türk Denizcileri”, *Cumhuriyet*, 4 June 1952, p. 2,4; *Cumhuriyet*, 25 June 1944; *Cumhuriyet*, 28 July 1958.

6 Bryndís Björgvinsdóttir, “Hvers er verið að minnst?” *Morgunblaðið*, 21 July 2007, p. 8; Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

7 Sources also refer to it as “Turkish raid” or “Turkish plunder”.

8 Arnarsdóttir, *op. cit.*

9 Björgvinsdóttir, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9.

10 *ibid.*; See Erdem Erner, *Davulun Sesi*, Ankara, Bilgi Yayınevi, 1993, p. 213; York Underwood, “History Repeating: The Pirates Came And The Vikings Conquered”, 20 November 2015, <https://grapevine.is/mag/articles/2015/11/29/history-repeating-the-pirates-came-and-the-vikings-conquered/> [accessed 20 April 2020]; Julia Duin, “Iceland’s Bestselling Book On The Woman Who Escaped Pirates” *Religion Unplugged*, 9 January 2020, <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2020/1/9/icelandic-author-searching-for-english-publisher-for-best-selling-book-on-muslim-pirate-abductions> [accessed 20 April 2020].

are examined. The time period was selected taking into account the year 1930, in which the first serious contact took place between the parties, and the 50-year period following this contact. No other studies could be found on the relations between Turkey and Iceland in the said period. Mostly primary resources such as the Department of State Archives of the Presidency Republic of Turkey, Turkish Statistical Institute, and the Turkish and Icelandic press were used in this study. The Icelandic resources were used more for the data related to commercial statistics.

A. Development of Relations

The first significant contact between Turkey and Iceland took place in 1930. Turkey signed a trade agreement with Denmark on 31 May in that year. During this agreement, Iceland informed Turkey of its desire to establish trade relations through the Danish embassy. Upon this request, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the head of the delegation assigned to trade agreements to prepare a project for a trade and navigation agreement with Iceland.¹¹ A report on this issue was then prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sent to the Ministry of Economics. The report stated that commercial activities with Iceland were deemed appropriate.¹² In addition, the ministry sent a letter to the Stockholm embassy asking for a report on the goods to be bought from and sold to Iceland.¹³ The embassy stated in the report that cod oil might have been bought from Iceland. Thus, fish oil imported from Norway would be supplied from Iceland, trying to partially close the trade exchange gap between Turkey and Norway. The report stated that tobacco, carpets, raisins, figs, almonds etc. could be exported to Iceland.¹⁴ Although the report was positive, there was no trade agreement between the two countries in that period.

In Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, a merchant named Monsieur Björn Olafsson applied to the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm to become the consul general of the Republic of Turkey in 1934.¹⁵ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not consider it necessary to open an honorary consulate as there were hardly any commercial relations with Iceland. However, they asked the embassy for an opinion on the personality of the said person and whether they could benefit from his reputation, and demanded that the person be investigated thoroughly.¹⁶ The investigation carried out by the embassy revealed that Olafsson had a good reputation and could make a significant contribution to the development of commercial relations with Iceland. The report stated that Olafsson would take up the tobacco business and therefore it would be beneficial to have an official officer in this country even if it was merely aimed at ensuring our sale of tobacco. However, the embassy did not approve the opening of the consulate as he had previously rejected the Danish Embassy's offer for a commercial agreement with Iceland.¹⁷ The ministry showed the embassy the fact that there was almost no trade between Turkey and Iceland as the reason for not opening a consulate.¹⁸

11 *The Presidency of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Turkish Diplomatic Archive (DiAD), 42/221401/215263.13.*

12 *DiAD, 542/221401.215263.11.*

13 *DiAD, 542/221401.215263.8.*

14 *DiAD, 542/221401.215263.7.*

15 *DiAD, 542/221406.215266.5.*

16 *DiAD, 542/221406/215266.3.*

17 *DiAD, 542/221406.215266.2.*

18 *DiAD, 542/221406.215266.1.*

The first international conference Iceland attended after declaring its independence was hosted by Turkey. The 40th conference of the Inter-parliamentary Union was held in Istanbul. The Icelandic delegate Thoroddsen who was also the mayor of Reykjavik held a press conference at the Şale Pavilion in Istanbul on 30 August 1951. After giving some information about his country, Thoroddsen went on as follows:

“... Fishery and seafood constitute 90% of our trade. Unfortunately, no commercial and cultural relations have been established between Turkey and Iceland so far. Everyone in Iceland knows about the great genius Atatürk and the sagas of his heroic soldiers very well. These people who admire your country have read the life of Atatürk, which has been translated into Icelandic. Their myths and novels contain Turkish women. When I return to my hometown, I will try to tell the Icelanders about what I have seen here through radios and newspapers. Iceland has attended an international conference for the first time since its foundation and luckily, this conference is being held in Turkey”.¹⁹

It is understood from his statement that Thoroddsen had good impressions about Turkey. Four years after this visit, there was a significant development in the relations between these two countries. An agreement on mutual abolition of visas was signed between the ambassadors of Turkey and Iceland in Paris on 28 June 1955. According to this agreement that came into force on 1 July 1955;

1. Citizens of Turkey and Iceland would be able to reside in the other country without a visa up to three months. The countries would be free to grant or decline visa demands of those who went to these countries for not more than three months but wanted to extend the period.

2. Citizens of both countries traveling to Iceland and Turkey would be subject to the laws of the respective country when they entered and resided in the country or had a paid job there. The countries would have the right to deny entry and residence of persons they considered harmful to their country.

3. Citizens of Turkey and Iceland who wished to travel to Iceland and Turkey for purposes of art, profession or other profitable work could not benefit from the provisions in Article 1 of the Agreement and would have to obtain the necessary visas in advance from the political representatives or consulates of the two countries in such cases.

4. Citizens of Turkey and Iceland who were holders of diplomatic, private or service passports and persons travelling with a joint passport would benefit from the provisions of Article 1.

5. Political and consular officers from each party serving in the other country would be exempt from visa along with their families regardless of their period of residence.

Each party would be able to terminate the agreement by giving one month's notice.²⁰ The relations between these countries started to improve after this agreement. In September 1957, the Turkish government decided to establish a plenipotentiary embassy

¹⁹ *Cumhuriyet*, 31 August 1951.

²⁰ *DiAD*, 542/ 221407.215267.21, For the full text of the agreement, see *The Republic of Turkey (T.R.) Official Gazette*, Issue: 9053, 13 July 1955.

in the capital of Iceland.²¹ However, no separate ambassador was appointed to Iceland and no embassy building was opened. In 1958, it was decided that Fuad Bayramođlu, the Turkish ambassador to Oslo, would represent Turkey as a plenipotentiary in the Republic of Iceland.²² Bayramođlu went to Iceland and presented his letter of credence to Asgeir Asgeirsson, the president of Iceland, on 22 August.²³ Iceland accredited its embassy in Copenhagen for Turkey.²⁴ Thus, relations between the two countries began, albeit not directly, at the plenipotentiary level in an accredited manner. While the information about Iceland had been previously submitted by the Stockholm embassy, it started to be submitted by the Oslo embassy after this development.

In 1959, general Behçet Türkmen was appointed as the Oslo ambassador (hence the Iceland plenipotentiary) in place of Bayramođlu.²⁵ When Türkmen went to Iceland to present his letter of credence, an Icelander named Arsael Jönasson informed the ambassador that he wanted to be Turkey's honorary consul general in Iceland.²⁶ Upon the approval of the request by the Turkish government, an honorary consulate was established in Iceland by decree No. 4/12850 dated 02.04.1960 and Jönasson was appointed as the consul.²⁷ However, Jönasson gave up this post after some time and was replaced by Svein B. Valfell in October 1961.²⁸

In the days when Turkey was considering opening a consulate in Iceland, Iceland's intention to open an honorary consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, was reported to Turkish authorities via Iceland's embassy in Copenhagen.²⁹ After the request was accepted, Iceland opened a consulate in Istanbul on 27 July 1960.³⁰ Nihat Hamamciođlu, one of the Turkish businessmen recommended by the Danish consul general of Istanbul to the Copenhagen ambassador, was appointed as an honorary consul to this consulate.³¹

Another development occurred during Türkmen's visit to Iceland. The Icelandic authorities told him about their desire to elevate the representative offices to the level of embassy in both countries. In fact, Turkey had mutually elevated its representative offices to the level of embassy in all NATO members and the only exception was Iceland. Moreover, the representative offices of all other NATO member countries in Iceland were at the embassy level. Appraising the situation, the Turkish government decided to elevate Icelandic plenipotentiary to the embassy level by Resolution No. 4/12950 dated 21.4.1960.³² Thus, diplomatic relations were mutually raised to the level of the embassy. The relations were maintained in an accredited manner by ambassadors acting as plenipotentiary. Today, diplomatic relations between both countries are still not established. Iceland's ambassador to Copenhagen and Turkey's ambassador to Oslo are accredited to carry out this mission.³³ Iceland has an honorary consulate general in

21 *The Presidency of Republic of Turkey Department of State Archives, The Republic Archive (BCA)*, 30.18.1.2/147.44.9; *T.R. Official Gazette*, Issue: 9727, 9 October 1957.

22 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 149.28.14, *T.R. Official Gazette*, Issue: 9933, 16 June 1958.

23 *Cumhuriyet*, 22 August 1958.

24 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/154.85.3.

25 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 153.38.3; *T.R. Official Gazette*, Issue: 10278, 13 August 1959.

26 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 154.85.3.

27 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 154.85.3.

28 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 154.85.3.

29 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 154.85.3.

30 *Visir*, 24 August 1960; Gunnar -Velasman Fridriksson, *Íslenzkt Sjómannna-Almanak 1978*, Reykjavik, (n.d.), p. 352.

31 *Morgunblaðið*, 8 September 1971.

32 *BCA*, 30.18.1.2/ 154.90.2.

33 The Turkey of Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), "Türkiye-İzlanda İlişkileri", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-izlanda-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa> [accessed March 19, 2020].

Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir. Turkey still has an honorary consulate general in Iceland.³⁴

1. Economic Relations

Commercial activities between Turkey and Iceland remained limited in that period. As stated before, the distance between the countries and the fact that Iceland is a small market are the main reasons for this limitation. Iceland imported 49 tons of products from Turkey in 1947.³⁵ The volume of Iceland's trade with Turkey was as follows in the following years:

Table 1: The volume of Iceland's trade with Turkey (1950-1980).

Year	Import (tons)	Export (tons)	Share in Total Import (%)	Share in Total Export (%)	Year	Import (tons)	Export (tons)	Share in Total Import (%)	Share in Total Export (%)
1950	-	410	-	0.097	1969	744	1,942	0.007	0.021
1951	-	12	-	0.002	1970	1,102	1,525	0.008	0.012
1956	-	28	-	0.003	1971	1,880	1,657	0.010	0.013
1960	38	28	0.001	0.001	1972	2,901	99,204	0.014	0.594
1961	65		0.002	-	1973	6,969	268,328	0.022	1.031
1962	164	160	0.004	0.004	1974	11,968	3,502	0.023	0.011
1963	106	516	0.002	0.013	1975	11,269	3,079	0.015	0.006
1964	355	1,056	0.006	0.022	1976	18,600	174,282	0.022	0.237
1965	283	1,567	0.005	0.028	1977	27,970	354,126	0.023	0.348
1966	399	642	0.006	0.011	1978	41,642	704,655	0.023	0.400
1967	681	660	0.010	0.015	1979	60,275	9	0.021	0.000
1968	732	1,280	0.010	0.027	1980	608	-	0.013	-

Sources: *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1951-*, Volume II, No 4, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1952, p. 26-27; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1956-*, Volume II, No 16, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1957, p. 29; SBI, *op. cit.*, p. 31-32; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1964-*, Volume II, No 35, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1965, p. 33, 35; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1967-*, Volume II, No 42, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1968, p. 37,39; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1970-*, Volume II, No 51, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1972, p. 42,44; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1973-*, Volume II, No 58, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1975, p. 41-44; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1976-*, Volume II, No 65, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1977, p. 45,47-48; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1979-*, Volume II, No 72, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1980, p. 42-45; *The Statistical Bureau of Iceland, Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1982-*, Volume II, No 78, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1983, p. 44-47.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ The Statistical Bureau of Iceland (SBI), *Statistics of Iceland -External Trade 1961-*, Volume II, No 28, Reykjavík, Ríkisprentsmiðjunní Gutenberg, 1963, p. 23.

As can be seen in the table, the trade volume between the two countries is not even at the one-thousandth level. In 1973 alone, Iceland's exports to Turkey were just over 1%. Today, this volume is still low.³⁶ Turkey's main exports to Iceland are road vehicles, salt, sulfur and gypsum. Iceland's main exports to Turkey are fish, seashells, unprocessed aluminum, machinery and boilers.³⁷ Tourist visits, another important economic activity for both countries, remained at very low levels mutually. The number of tourists increased from around ten to only a few thousands in the 2000s.³⁸

2. Political Relations

The political relations between Turkey and Iceland were more in the form of multilateral meetings. Iceland is one of the founding members of NATO that was founded in 1949. It was one of the states that initially did not want the membership of Turkey and Greece, which applied to join the union in 1951. Iceland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway initially objected to acceptance of Turkey and Greece as they wanted Pact forces to concentrate their strength on the defense of Western Europe and felt that extending the pact to Asia Minor would weaken it. Instead, they had the idea of making Turkey and Greece a separate command and making them accountable to the North Atlantic Pact or appointing Greece to the Eisenhower Command's Southern Command located in Naples, and Turkey to either the Middle East Command or to both the Eisenhower and Middle East commands.³⁹ However, the Icelandic parliament accepted the entry of Turkey and Greece into NATO in early 1952 with the suggestion of the USA.⁴⁰ In fact, Iceland was one of the first four states that ratified the protocol with both states.⁴¹

Another important issue between Turkey and Iceland is the Cyprus problem which caused a major crisis between Turkey and Greece. In 1954, the request of Greece to include the Cyprus issue on the agenda of the United Nations was put to a vote. The United States abstained in this voting, which was a case against Turkey. The United Kingdom, France, Australia, Denmark, Sweden and Norway voted in favor of Turkey while Iceland supported Greece's demand.⁴² A news report in the Icelandic press stated that Iceland's policy of supporting nations fighting against the colonial system affected this decision. It was somehow expressed in the article that the desire for independence against the United Kingdom would be supported in favor of Greece as the population living in Cyprus was mostly Greek.⁴³ However, Iceland abstained from voting when there was a voting for putting the Algeria issue on the agenda in 1955 which was against France.⁴⁴ For some

36 The bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Iceland was 51 million Dollars in 2018 including 24 million Dollars of export and 27 million Dollars of import. MFA, *op. cit.*

37 *ibid.*

38 No data is available for the period of this study while the number of tourists coming from Iceland to Turkey was 686 in 1989 and 590 in 1990. 355 of the Icelanders who came to Turkey in 1990 came on a daily basis. The number of people who went from Turkey to Iceland in 1990 was 367 (287 of them were living in Turkey and others were living abroad.). The number of those who went for touristic purposes is 112. 72 of them went for sports activities and 45 went to work (those who went from Turkey to work are those who were already living abroad). The number of people who came to Turkey from Iceland was 401 in 1955. 45 of them came for a daily excursion. This number increased to 2,935 in 2008. Prime Ministry State Institute of Statistics, *Tourism Statistics 1990*, Ankara, 1994, p. 5, 28, 56-57; Prime Ministry State Institute of Statistics, *Tourism Statistics 1995*, Ankara, 1999, p. 14; MFA, *op. cit.*

39 *Milliyet*, 22 November 1951.

40 *Milliyet*, 16 January 1952.

41 Other states are England, France and the USA. *Milliyet*, 2 January 1952.

42 *Cumhuriyet*, 24 September 1954.

43 *Priðjudagur*, 28 September 1954.

44 Turkey, on the other hand, voted in favor of France. Iceland and Greece were the only NATO member

reasons, Iceland did not pursue the policy of supporting the colonies which had been mentioned in the press.

Iceland was the only NATO state in 1957 that supported a bill introduced regarding the Cyprus issue at the political committee of the UN which would be in favor of Greece. The United States abstained while all the other NATO countries sided with Turkey in that voting. The Nordic countries Sweden and Denmark which were not NATO members also voted in favor of Turkey. However, Finland abstained. The situation did not change at the UN General Assembly held a few days later.⁴⁵ Iceland's policy on Cyprus stems more from its opposition to the UK than from its policy of supporting exploited nations.⁴⁶ Due to the Cod Wars that took place between the two countries from 1950 to 1970, Iceland preferred to support the Greek thesis on the Cyprus issue which they thought against the United Kingdom. However, the developments that took place later indicate that the second reason for the policy of Iceland on the Cyprus issue did not only stem from its opposition to the United Kingdom. During the negotiations of the Cyprus issue at the political committee of the United Nations in 1958, nine countries including Iceland submitted a proposal rejecting the *Turkish Partition Plan*.⁴⁷ The United Kingdom also rejected Turkey's offer.⁴⁸ The Icelandic press published articles supporting the Greeks on Cyprus in those days.⁴⁹

Iceland *abstained* in the voting of Draft Resolution no 32 on Cyprus adopted by the political commission at the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1965.⁵⁰ The Greeks made a motion to completely remove the part of the political commission's report that mentioned Cyprus or to replace it with a new text repeating the United Nations resolution of 18 December 1965 at the general assembly of the European Council held on 24 January 1966. The Greek proposal was rejected at the political commission. The proposal was backed by two Greek commissioners and an Icelandic member.⁵¹

Apart from the Cyprus issue, another important issue between Turkey and Iceland was the security council candidacy. It is understood from the European press that Iceland voted in favor of Poland in the secret voting held in 1959 about Turkey and Poland as candidates to fill the vacancy left by Japan at the Security Council⁵² although Turkey was Iceland's NATO ally.

Iceland also closely follows the developments in the areas inhabited by Kurds. There are a lot of news reports about the happenings between the Iraqi government and Kurds in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the news related to this matter imply that the Kurds

countries that abstained. The attitudes of Greece and Turkey towards France can be explained by the French policy on Cyprus. *Cumhuriyet*, 2 October 1955.

45 For the voting results, see *Milliyet*, 14 December 1957; *Milliyet*, 16 December 1957.

46 M. T. Ó, "Kommúnistar og Kirkjan Þjarna að Bretum á Kýpur". *Þjóðvitið*, 8 October 1955, p. 6-10; *Fimmtudagur*, 4 December 1958.

47 Other countries are India, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Nepal, Panama, Sudan, Ireland and the United Arab Republic.

48 *Cumhuriyet*, 3 December 1958; *Milliyet*, 3 December 1958.

49 For one of them, see. *Fimmtudagur*, 4 December 1958.

50 The Turkey of Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Aralık 1965'de Türkiye'nin Dış İlişkileri ve Başlıca Milletlerarası Olaylar Kronolojisi", *Dışişleri Belleteni*, No 15, 1965, p. 13-64.

51 The Turkey of Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Belge 12: Avrupa Konseyi Siyasi Komisyon Raporunda Kıbrıs Konusu", *Dışişleri Belleteni*, No 16, 1966, p. 117-20.

52 Ömer Sami Coşar, "Bizi Destekleyenler Kimler?". *Cumhuriyet*, 19 October 1959, p. 3.

living in Turkey are oppressed and that their identities are denied.⁵³ Similar comments are seen in the news about the relations with Armenians during the Ottoman period.⁵⁴ All these happenings are seen as a reason for Iceland's opposition to Turkey.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bilateral relations between Turkey and Iceland have been limited due to the distance between the countries and the fact that Iceland is a small market. Political and economic relations started to increase after the 1950s. NATO membership is an important factor in this. Diplomatic contacts that started at the level of plenipotentiary were soon elevated to the level of embassy but continued to be accredited in each term. The consulates opened in the 1960s contributed, albeit a little, to the development of economic relations. Today, the fact that there are honorary consulates of Iceland in Turkey is important because it shows the importance it attaches to its economic relations with Turkey.

Political contacts between these countries have mostly continued in the form of multilateral meetings. Iceland has mostly taken anti-Turkey stance on issues of interest to Turkey in those meetings. Although Iceland's political disputes with third-party countries (UK) are important in the attitude it has assumed on the Cyprus issue between Turkey and Greece, there is also an anti-Turkish side. An important reason for this situation is the Turkish image created by the piracy incident in 1627. The anti-Ottoman attitude was also an important factor in the formation of this image. Aside from the necessity to evaluate the piracy incident according to the circumstances in its own time, it is clear that it is not directly related to the Turkish people. The main mistake in this regard is to call the Muslim community in or near the Ottoman territory *Turk*. Although there are publications revealing that Turks are different from the Maghrebians who caused the incident, the fact that the incident is still remembered with discourses such as *Turkish raid* and *Turkish looters* may lead to a negative perception of Turks. However, it is understood that the 1627 Incident was used to consolidate Icelandic nationalism and feelings of Christianity. Unfortunately, this situation harms the image of both Muslims and Turks.

Another reason for Iceland's opposition to Turkey results from the classic European view that Turks are dictators and oppressors. The fact that the Icelandic press called the Republic of Turkey a dictatorship from time to time in the news about the Ottoman-Armenian relations and the incidents between the Iraqi government and Kurds in the 1960s and 1970s supports this notion. Another reason for opposition is the importance Iceland attaches to the freedom of nations. Apart from the importance it attaches to universal values, the fact that it was under the rule of other countries for many years has a great impact on this. It is quite natural for Iceland, which was under the rule of other countries for many years, to be more sensitive about the issues related to ethnicities in other countries. However, states advocating humanitarian values and justice must consider matters in all aspects and make their judgment accordingly. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that political relations between countries are not often maintained in accordance with universal values and realities. In any case, all these incidents and evaluations show that both countries, especially Turkey, need to put more emphasis on relations and promote themselves. In this context, it is obvious that it would

53 For some of these reports in the press, see "Uppreisn gegn Tyrkjum", *Morgunblaðið*, 3 March 1925, p. 3; *Morgunblaðið*, 27 June 1962; Erlendur Haraldsson, "Með Kurðum í Irak", *Morgunblaðið*, 17 September 1964, p. 17; "Kurdar í Irak Fagna Unnum Sigrí Og Nýfengnu Sjálfræði", *Timinn*, 18 August 1970, p. 9,14.

54 Ísafold, 9 January 1897, p. 7-8; *Heimskringla*, 11 October 1917, p. 8; "Soldier Of The Week", *The White Falcon*, 16 June 1944, p. 3.

be an important first step for Turkey to open an embassy in Iceland which is the only NATO member with no Turkish embassy.

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