# The depth of Turkish geopolitics in the AKP's foreign policy.
## From Europe to an extended neighbourhood

Alessia Chiriatti, Emidio Diodato, Salih Doğan,
Federico Donelli, Bahri Yılmaz

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# Preface

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This book is conceived as a spin-off of activities and research developed within the PhD program in Cooperation for Peace and Development at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. The academic program has given rise to a wide range of opportunities for several researchers, international experts and scholars. The two most important events were a conference entitled "Wars at the borders of the Europe: uncertainties and perspective in the Mediterranean", organized in October 2013, and a special session devoted to Turkish foreign policy during the Annual Conference of the Italian Society of Political Science, held in September 2014. A whole section looking at Turkey's foreign policy was the main focus of the conference.

The idea to gain a clearer picture of the 'geopolitical depth' of Turkish foreign policy emerged during these two conferences, and inspired the composition of this book. After decades of neutralist foreign policy, and retracing the ancient history of the Ottoman Empire, over the past years Ankara, under the rule of the AK Party, has started an assertive and emphatic approach modifying its international agenda. Turkish action in its extended neighborhood followed the architecture of the 'strategic depth' doctrine outlined by the current prime minister Davutoğlu. This doctrine was based on the so called 'zero-problems with neighbors' approach and was strengthened by the AK Party's dominance in the Turkish political system. But the idea of 'geopolitical depth' finds its roots in a more complex process of re-imagination of the state as a central power in the age of globalization. This book aims to illustrate the types of approaches Turkey has followed to expand its action in the last decades. The five chapters have been organized following a non-standard geopolitical analysis, and considering some relevant case-studies.

The first chapter, written by Bahri Yılmaz, constitutes a general introduction to a still challenging and debated argument, i.e. the comprehension of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, or Turkey as a model to be followed by the others countries, investigating Turkish-EU relations. The second chapter, edited by Emidio Diodato, addresses the decisive question about the 'zero-problems with neighbors' doctrine, i.e. whether it was a success or a failure. The following chapters, written by Alessia Chiriatti, Salih Doğan and Federico Donelli, contain analysis of specific case-studies, concerning with the bilateral or trilateral relations between Turkey, Georgia, Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia. These case-studies have been debated throughout a regional perspective, focusing also on the role of Turkish non-state actors. Moreover, the states chosen to illustrate the Turkish action in the extended neighborhood have some characteristics in common, even if they are totally different among them. These countries have been faced with dramatic crises and wars that have destabilized their internal and regional equilibrium, thus requiring an external support that Turkey has tried to give, with obvious consequences on its geopolitical engagement.

# Turkey as a model for the Middle East and North African (MENA) states: realistic or wishful thinking?

**Bahri Yılmaz**

We are currently witnessing historic changes in the Middle Eastern and North African states (MENA), which are destined to transform the region. It is a common belief in the West that authoritarian regimes are leaving the political arena one after another and anti-democratic regimes and institutions could be easily replaced by the newly elected reformist and western-oriented governments characterized as the so-called 'Moderate Islam'. This conclusion is very optimistic, and convincing reasons are needed to make such predictions about the regimes.

Profound historic changes have recently taken place in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. After the assassination of Colonel Qaddafi in Libya and the resulting civil unrest, it is no longer clear who governs the country, making it hard to deal with armed elements who fought against the old regime and want to take a share in the power. In Egypt, the recently elected President Mohamed Morsi, a leading member in the Muslim Brotherhood was ruling the country, but now the military has taken over power. Its rule of the country has been marked with violence and demonstrations against the military government continue with increasing violence in Tahrir Square; in Syria Bashar al-Assad is still in power: nobody knows how the chaotic situation will come to an end. In Yemen, the situation is also unclear; and in the other Arab countries the old regimes carry on in power. Obviously, it will take a long time before these countries recover from the economic, social and political disasters caused by former regimes and current revolts.

From the beginning of the Mediterranean uprisings and the revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, Turkey's leadership has been actively involved in the events, sometimes alone and sometimes in collaboration with Western countries. Turkey's new foreign policy draws a great deal of attention from America and Europe. *Newsweek* highlighted the role of Turkey in the region as follows: "…with Turkey flexing its muscles, we may soon face a revived Ottoman Empire"[1]*. The Economist* similarly overstate Turkey's new role in the region stating that"…Arabs looked in Turkey for inspiration. Turkey is not just a fellow country but their former imperial power"[2]*.*

In this context, two critical questions can be asked: first, how has Turkey's Middle East policy changed? And secondly, can Turkey serve as a model to the MENA countries, which has been suggested both by the United States and the European Union[3]?

The Ottoman Empire stretching from the Adriatic Sea to Yemen ruled the Middle East and North Africa for more than 400 years. After its collapse in 1918, the newly founded Republic of Turkey rose in 1923. In the early years, Turkey faced very serious economic, political and social problems. Under the leadership of Atatürk, reforms were initiated with the intent of transforming the economic

and political structures inherited from the Ottoman Empire. The main goal of Turkey's new republican elites, predominantly high ranging military officers who had served in the Ottoman army, was to build a modern state and to shed the Ottoman legacy. Three of these revolutionary reforms were beyond question vitally important for an Islamic society: introducing secularism, upgrading the status of women and the adoption and implementation of a European legal system.

Since the late 1940s, all Turkish governments have given top priority to Western institutions and their foreign and security policies have favoured cooperation with the West as opposed to the Middle East. Thus the so-called "Westernisation" process aimed at catching up with European civilisation and the full integration of the country into Europe in all realms once and for all. Thanks to its pro-western policy, Turkey became a member of western political, economic and security institutions such as NATO and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development(OECD). Turkey's application for membership into the European Union in 1959 predates those of most present member states.

Consequently, Turkey's post-1923 orientation towards the West was only one aspect of its new policy. The other was a changed attitude towards the Middle East. Turkey combined its embracing of the West with a distancing of itself from the Middle East. Thus, the weight of Turkey's foreign policy predominantly lay in the Western hemisphere and its ties with the region were slackened.

There are various factors that played a decisive role in the alienation from the Middle East and shift to the West. The pro-western elite including the leadership of the newly established Republic was strongly convinced, as it remains, that Turkey can only catch up with Western civilization if the country continues to reject the basing of the state on Islamic principles. Secularism was and still is used as a tool for the elimination of Islamic influences on politics and society and it was considered a pre-condition for becoming part of the European civilisation. In addition, recent historical and contemporary experiences between Turkey and the Arab World have been negative and Ninety years after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, despite being largely unfounded, mutual suspicions persist. Thus, for a long time reciprocal mistrust was evident between Turkey and the Arab States. Another factor was the emergence of the state of Israel in 1948. Turkey was one of the first Muslim countries to recognise Israel officially in 1949. As a consequence, Arab countries associated Turkey with anti–Islamic sentiments, Israel-friendly policies and the support of Western powers in the region. For more than eighty years, Turkey's Middle East policy was driven above all by the principles of non-interference and non-involvement in the domestic politics and interstate conflicts of the other countries in the region.

## What has changed?
The Turkish economy has demonstrated a tremendous growth and remarkable recovery after the 2001 economic and financial crisis. In the period from 2002 to 2008, the Turkish economy grew impressively,

at an average of 7.3 percent annually. Its GDP reached approximately US$750 billion, and the GDP per capita rose to approximately US$10,067 in 2010. Today, Turkey has the world's sixteenth largest economy and it is a member of the G-20. Furthermore, it is the sixth strongest economy in Europe.

The impressive economic performance between 2002 and 2008 is due, not only to a favourable international environment based on expanding world trade, relatively low inflation, low interest rates and a strong demand for emerging market assets, but also the implementation of a structural reform process, sound fiscal and monetary policies, all of which led to macroeconomic stability. All this is thanks to the external anchor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Union, and finally to the reform of economic institutions under the pressure of external anchors and the full engagement and participation of the state apparatus in the reform process.

This high economic growth rates are strongly related to the remarkable export performance of a new class of entrepreneurs called the 'Anatolian Tigers' who are located outside the big industrial and commercial power centres in Anatolia. This newly emerged business class can be referred to as the Islamic Calvinists. The famous German sociologist Max Weber regarded Calvinism as the main source of the capitalist spirit, since it made it possible to "worship God and Mammon at the same time"[4]. Turkey's new business class seems to be able to combine its economic activities with Islamic principles and the rules of the capitalist game. The Anatolian Tigers stand for economic liberalism: profit-orientation and global operations, while their social and cultural relations are conservative, preferring an Islamic identity to a national secular identity.

There are two main reasons for Turkey's rapprochement with the Middle East. First, the world economy is currently going through its deepest recession since the Great Depression, which started in 1929. Economies around the world have been heavily affected by the financial crisis. As a consequence, the demand for Turkey's export goods has diminished, especially in the European markets. In order to create new markets to make up for the lack of demand in Turkey's traditional trading partners, Ankara has created a "free trade zone without visa restrictions" under the motto "zero problems with neighbouring countries"[5]. Ankara intensified its bilateral trade relations with neighbouring countries regardless of their political system and leadership. Secondly, the present government has discovered the strong and two-way relationship between economic and political relations. Ankara's intention is to build up its foreign relations on stabile economic grounds, which are called trade driven external relations. But this is only possible if the markets can be expanded in the MENA countries. The share of export of MENA countries in Turkey's total export rose from 13 percent in 2002 to around 20.7 percent in 2011[6].

Besides the economic factors, other features have played an important role in Turkey's changed relations with the MENA countries, and Turkey's EU membership has been postponed indefinitely because of the resistance of some EU

member states. This disappointment has slowed down the negotiations between Ankara and Brussels. In addition the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) emerged from an Islamic movement and a pro-Islamic party. The party members and its sympathisers feel great empathy with Arab countries since they share their religiosity and the same faith. Therefore, it is easier for the leadership of the AK PARTY to intensify its economic relations with neighbouring Muslim countries than it would be for a different government to do. Finally, the confidence backed by economic success allows the present government headed by Erdoğan to take the role of global player in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East.

## What role can Turkey play in the MENA region?

After the initial uncertainty as to what stance to take, the EU members and the United States, particularly the former French President Sarkozy and U.S. President Obama, decided to support the reformist movements in the region. For economic and security reasons, the European Union and the United States have a great interest in the stability of the MENA countries. Both countries are looking for strategic partners that are reliable and ready to collaborate with Brussels and Washington. They could also act as mediators and help negotiate the transformation process in the Islamic countries smoothly and successfully.

  In this respect, Turkey and Israel come to mind: Turkey as a NATO member and partially democratised Muslim country, and Israel as a strategic partner of the West. But due to the Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel's close relations with the West, Israel is out of the question as a mediator with the countries of the Mashreq. This unresolved conflict constitutes a serious barrier to the improvement of political and economic relations in the region.

  Turkey, on the other hand, has been regarded as a strategic partner by both the EU and U.S. administrations. Turkey is a member of NATO, but at the same time is regarded as an integral part of the Middle East. As such, it has common borders with several crucial countries such as Syria, Iran and Iraq. Yet Turkey is also an Islamic country and its inhabitants share their faith with the populations of Arab countries and Iran. Therefore, the West can more easily democratise the authoritarian regimes in the region via Turkey than from Europe. The failed attempt at democratizing Iraq by America and Britain has left a political and security vacuum in the region, which Turkey could fill on behalf of the West. Finally, Ankara would make a good mediator since it has been intensifying its economic and political relations with the MENA countries since 2002 and, as a consequence, is more involved in the events of the region than any previous Turkish government.

## The EU and Mediterranean Partnership

The Barcelona Process/Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (BP/EMP) was initiated in 1995 to provide foreign policy instruments for handling the EU's southern neighbourhood. The BP/EMP aims at creating an area of peace, stability and prosperity. But the results so far have been poor. Former French President

Sarkozy had tried to replace the Barcelona Process with the concept of a Union of the Mediterranean. The reasons for the failure of the Barcelona Process is that the enlargement waves of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 have added twelve new members to the European Union, ten of which are ex-Soviet states situated in Central and Eastern Europe. This massive, eastern-oriented enlargement induced the European Commission to introduce a Wider Europe through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to establish a secure and coherent neighbourhood along its new borders in the East. Although the ENP aims at including both the East and the South of Europe, the pro-Eastern policy preferences of the newly admitted member states along with Germany caused the ENP to pay more attention to the East at the expense of the South. This affects the present and future of the BP/EMP negatively.

There is not yet a well-defined European security and foreign policy regarding the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus. As a close partner of the Atlantic alliance in the European Union, the British government continues to cooperate with Washington in order to establish security and to foster modernization in the region. Each member country follows its own interests and takes its own decisions, as seen in the Iraq war in 2003. Only Euro-Mediterranean member states such as France, Spain, and Italy seem to be more involved due to their geographic proximity to the MENA countries. The European Union as a whole still considers Turkey as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East, and as a bulwark against the growing danger of Islamic fundamentalism, illegal migration and terrorism.

The question, therefore, is how the cooperation between Ankara and Brussels can be improved. Brussels intends to keep the negotiation over Turkey's EU membership and a strategic partnership as two separate issues. This means that Brussels wants to collaborate with Turkey in a Middle East policy within the framework of a strategic partnership but without promising full EU membership. Ankara wants to combine the EU negotiation process with a strategic partnership since it is not interested in close cooperation in Middle East policies in the framework of a strategic partnership alone.

## The role of the USA in the region

The United States supports Israel militarily and economically without any restraints and is solely interested in security matters and the fighting of terrorist activities. Another important policy aim of Washington is to protect the energy sources and supply of oil produced in the Arab Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries, namely the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia and Iraq[7].

The United States and the European Union agree that the Arab world or the wider Mediterranean region should become more democratic. However, they have different approaches to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. American and Israeli commentators tend to claim that as long as Arab states cannot create democratic states it would be premature, to resume serious peace efforts in the Middle East. European policy makers,

on the other hand, are willing to support reform-minded forces in these countries to resolve the conflicts through dialogue, material support and forms of conditionality.

Brussels and Washington are of the common opinion that Turkey's growing strategic importance shows its ability to be a worthy representative of the interest of the West to overcome the conflicts. President Obama and his administration have changed their attitude towards Turkey witnessed by their early consultations with Ankara concerning the revolutions in Egypt and Libya. U.S.-Turkish relations are now closer than during former President Bush's era. Turkey was among the few regional states consulted and Ankara's growing influence in the Middle East is now widely acknowledged. Washington also aims to balance Iran's growing weight in the region with the help of Turkey.

## Turkey as a role model for MENA countries: can Turkey live up to high expectations?

Western experts, politicians and journalists hold up Turkey as a model whenever political and economic turmoil breaks out in any Muslim country. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communism in the 1990s, it was commonly held that the 'Turkish model' based on secularism, pluralist-parliamentarian democracy and a free-market economy could make an essential contribution to the economic and political re-structuring processes of the Turkic republics in Central Asia. Turkey was expected to offer them close co-operation in the fields of trade, economic construction, cultural

affairs and education. The expectations on both sides were set very high. At the time, the slogan for Turkey was the "Star of the Orient" in *Der Spiegel*[8] and political leaders in Ankara saw this as a unique opportunity to actively participate in and settle political issues from the Balkans to China. Former Prime Minister Demirel confidently announced in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* that with the collapse of the Soviet Union a "gigantic Turkish world" was emerging from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China[9].

However it was not long before this euphoria was dampened by reality. The initial enthusiasm was followed by a return to business as usual. Mere rhetoric was not enough for Turkey to be regarded as one of the new regional powers of the new international order, words needed to be followed by deeds. In particular, the economic expectations of the partners were too high and the hoped-for 'privileged partnership' could not be established. It soon became clear that Turkey's financial and technological resources were too limited to meet the immense socio-economic needs of the underdeveloped former Soviet republics. At the same time, there was a reserved response to the so-called 'Turkish model' in the Turkic republics. Turkey had to turn back to 'real-politic' and began to develop its relations on a more pragmatic basis.

European and American think tanks and experts present us with a similar scenario with a new trade market called 'Neo-Ottomanism' which should follow the 'Arab Spring,' namely Turkey as a model for the Arab world. How relevant is the so-called Turkish experience to the Arab world?

The major difference between Turkey and other Islamic countries is the secular basis of its state, which it adopted from France in the 1930s. According to this model, by definition everybody has the right to their own beliefs with religion considered a part of private life. In addition religious affairs are not admitted in the public sphere and religious communities must operate under public law. However Turkey has had difficulties enforcing and instituting its secularist principles due to strong resistance to secularism within the Turkish population. There is still a gap between the rhetoric and reality of secularism in Turkey in that religion is not fully divorced from the state but under the control of the state[10]. The radical changes and rising political Islamic movement in the MENA states may accelerate the re-islamisation processes in Turkey rather than its being viewed as a model of government in these countries.

The most important characteristic of the MENA countries is their strong Islamic identity, which is inseparably linked to their cultural, social and economic life. Thus, it seems to be difficult to adopt and implement the separation of state and religious affairs in the coming decades. The election results in Morocco in 2011, Tunisia and Egypt confirm that political Islam is on the rise. For example, Nahda (Party of Renaissance) an Islamist party won Tunisia's general election. In Egypt, the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party won with the majority, and the Party of Nour (Party of Light) showed a striking performance. In Morocco, the Justice and Development Party won 107 seats in the 395-member parliament in November 2011, indicating that it is very likely that Islam will dominate the Arab world politically in the coming years. Most Arab countries will probably continue to be governed by the military and authoritarian regimes where Islamic identity may continue to persist at least for a while under different names and dresses.

Another important characteristic of the MENA countries, with the exception of Libya and Algeria, is that they are poor economically. The 'Euro Med 2030' report published by the EU Commission lists a slow growth rate, high unemployment among young people, poverty and worsening income distribution. In order to reduce the unemployment rate by 2030, 55 million new jobs would have to be created.[11] All these economic factors contributed to the revolutionary movement in the MENA countries. Financial capital from Europe, the United States, China and the oil-exporting Arab states is urgently needed. Yet the fundamental and urgent question remains unanswered: who is going to finance these poor countries? The MENA countries over-estimate Turkey's capabilities since Turkey itself also suffers from high youth unemployment, current account deficit, poverty and a worsening income distribution. At the same time, a pessimistic view gaining ground among experts that Turkey's economic growth will fall from 8 or 9 percent to 2 percent due to the expected economic recession in Europe in the coming years. Furthermore, the economic conditions of Turkey's neighbours are worsening as a consequence of political instability. Besides all these facts, Turkey might be able to make con-

tributions to education and economic institutions building by exporting human capital to these economies, if it is demanded.

According to the progress reports published by the EU Commission and various global rankings, Turkey is seriously underperforming in a wide range of areas. It stands 67th in the Economic Freedom Index 2010, 58th in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Index, 83rd in the latest UN Human Development Index, 138th in the Reporters Without Borders 2010 Press Freedom Index and 123rd in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index.[12] Under these circumstances, it makes more sense for Turkey to deal first with its own internal priorities such as the implementation of universal values, before it can be accepted as a model by the Arab world. However, it is unclear if there is any strong demand, besides from some liberal-minded Arab intellectuals, by MENA countries to adopt and to implement the so-called Turkish model. It is also pertinent to ask if whether the Turkish model is perfectly replicable or suitable for the region's democratisation process. While it is clearly the case that these countries can learn some important lessons from Turkey's economic development and democratisation process, surely each country should decide and design its own modernisation model and strategy by learning from the experiences of various countries.

To conclude, the negotiation process with Brussels for Turkey's full membership into the EU continues to be sluggish and the relations have reached their lowest point since 1959. On the part of the EU no considerable interest has been shown in the improvement for full membership and there are also no signs of when the negotiation process will be completed. Ankara has, in a fit of frustration turned its face to the Middle and Far East. Recently the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan stated that "…Turkey can join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia and China) instead of its accession to the European Union". He described that group as "better and more powerful than the E.U." on top of which these states share "common values" with Turkey[13]. It is obvious that Turkey's leadership is frustrated and is loosing its orientation to the West and moving East. Unfortunately, if the decision makers in Europe start believing that Ankara is bluffing in an attempt to force Brussels into serious negotiations, this could be costly for both partners[14]. If the relations between Ankara and Brussels should remain unchanged for the coming years, nobody would be surprised. Further, I would emphasize that we could come face to face with an entirely different Turkey in political and social norms if it were anchored in the Middle East.

On the one hand, Brussels would be well advised first of all to re-establish and intensify the usual relations during a negotiation process between a candidate country and the EU. On the other hand, the negotiation process for EU membership appears to be the best chance not only to reform Turkish institutions, but also to improve the political system by changing the political culture in Turkey. In this respect the Turkish government has to continue to enforce and promo-

te the 'Europeanization process', namely restructuring and modernizing policies in all realms. Whether Turkey becomes a full EU member or not, the implementation of EU legislation, norms, standards, and regulations are crucial with help of an external anchor, namely the European Union. Only if Turkey is able to complete its negotiations with the European Union successfully, will its political and economic role in the region be able to markedly change as a consequence.

## Notes

1 Neil Ferguson (2011) "The Mideast's Next Dilemma," in *News Week* (Jun 19,).
2 Economist, "Ottoman dreamer" (Nov 5, 2011).
3 A comprehensive paper on this topic: See Bahri Yılmaz (2012), "Arab Spring and Revolutions in Turkey's Near Abroad," in Stephen Calleya and Monika Wohlfeld (eds) *Change and Opportunities in the Emerging Mediterranean,* University of Malta, Malta: Gutenberg Press, pp.349-370.
4 Clough Cole (145), *Economic History of Europe* Boston, Heath, pp.151-152.
5 Ahmet Davutoğlu (2001) *Stratejik Derinlik İstanbul*: Kure Publications, pp. 151-152.
6 State Planning Organisation, "Main economic Indicators," Ankara.
7 Volker Perthes (2004) "America's Greater Middle East and Europe", SWP Comments in Daniela Schwarzer and Isabelle Werenfels, T*he Union for the Mediterranean: A missed Opportunity*, SWP Comments (2008).
8 Der Spiegel (February 10, 1992) p.137.
9 Cumhuriyet (February 24, 1992).
10 Prime Minister Erdoğan gave his own interpretation of secularism in his recent visit to Egypt. He stated "…Do not be wary of secularism. I hope there will be a secular state in Egypt." He added that secularism does not mean a lack of religion, but the creation of respect for all religions and of religious freedom for individuals, saying "Secularism does not mean that people are secular. For example, I am not secular, but I am the prime minister of a secular state" Mark Champion, Matt Bradly, "Islamists Criticize Turkish Premier's Secular Remarks," in *The Wall Street Journal*, September 15, 2011. Available at: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142 405311190449170457657067026411617 8.html. The statement made by PM Erdoğan has been heavily criticised by Muslim Brotherhood: see, same article "[...]It's not allowed for any non-Egyptian to interfere in our constitution", said Mahmoud Ghazlan, a spokesman for the Brotherhood, "if I was to advise the Turks I'd advise them to crop the secular article in their constitution, but I'm not allowed. It's not my right".
11 European Commission, Euro-Med 2030. Report of an Expert Group (Brussels: European Commission, 2011):11-25.
12 See Laura Schmidt and Jörg Dehnert, (2011) "Die neue Rolle der Türkei angesichts der jüngsten Entwicklungen in der Arabischen Welt," in *Friedrich Naumann Stiftung*, pp. 9-11
13 Andrew Finkel (2013), "Eastern Promises", in *Latitude, Views around the World*, 29 January.
14 According to Public Opinion Surveys of Turkish Foreign Policy 2013/1 published by EDAM, 2/3 of Turks are Euro-Pessimistic and 87 % of experts answered that Turkey's future lay with Europe. Less than 3 percent thought it should look elsewhere.

# Was 'zero-problem with neighbours' a failure? Turkey's foreign policy and the regional/global framework

**Emidio Diodato**

In 2009 prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu explicitly promoted the doctrine of 'zero-problems with neighbours' and predicated the idea that Turkey should be a pro-active player in international diplomacy, seeking closer relations with neighbours including Syria and Iran. Current conflicts inside the country and in the Arab world are certainly challenging Turkish pro-activism, especially after the eruption of the Syrian unrest, the Gezi Park movement, allegations of political corruption and the establishment of Daesh, i.e. the co called Islamic State. In October 2012, the Turkish parliament authorized the use of military force against Syria. In the summer of 2013, a number of young people lost their lives protesting in Taskim square. After March 2014, when the Turkish government first banned twitter and then blocked access to you-tube (citing reasons of national security), the image of the country as a democratic and peaceful player deteriorated dramatically. The establishment of the Islamic State in 2014 seems to confirm this conclusion.

As stated by Bülent Aras, during the last two years "Turkey's new foreign policy has been exposed to severe criticism, despite the broad appreciation it has received from many quarters".[1] But the points that Aras has highlighted in his article, supporting Turkish foreign policy, have not addressed the main problem: was 'zero-problem with neighbours' a failure? After having taken into account different approaches to Turkish foreign policy and, above all, after having considered some empirical examples, in this chapter I will argue that the regional/global framework has been, in the last decade, and continues to be the key pattern to explain Turkish foreign policy. That is to say that the 'zero-problem with neighbours policy' was not a failure per se, and that the country still feels more confident and secure to face global changes since it is successful in operating, without problems, in its regional environment or geopolitical milieu.

## Abiding persistence of international threats? A critique of realism

During the second half of the twentieth century, discussions of Turkish foreign policy were subsumed by the Cold War. Many scholars considered Turkey nothing more than a middle power abutting on a great power, i.e. the Soviet Union.[2] Throughout the Second World War, Turkey and five other European states – Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, the Republic of Ireland and Portugal – had managed to preserve their neutrality and independence. However, with the beginning of the Cold War the logic of the bipolar system became stronger than before. Gradually, a defensive alliance with the United States was created as the only available strategy and this process was considered the by-product of two international determinants: on the one hand, Turkey's

importance in terms of its geostrategic position; and on the other, the opportunity to exploit this asset to find protection against the Soviet Union. This alignment with the United States remained compelling during the Cold War, conditioning Turkish foreign policy also in the Middle East. For example, it discouraged Turkey from being overly hostile to Israel during the Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1967 and 1973, when Turkey, nonetheless, did not allow the United State to use the İncirlik air base to support Israel, while the Soviet Union used Turkish airspace to supply military equipment to the Arab countries.

William Hale extended this security-first logic, rooted in political realism, also to the post-Cold War period. In his seminal book, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000*, he stated that "for middle powers, especially those which, like Turkey, had previously been threatened by the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War had obvious benefits, since it removed the most immediate threat to their security. However, it did not by itself end regional conflicts".[3] In other words, Hale considered that, although the end of the Cold War generated a relative shift in power politics, regional and global threats did not decrease and Turkey still continued to behave like a middle power. In this regard, Turkey would offer many indications as to how a medium-sized state acts in the changing international environment. According to this point of view, there is a kind of *abiding persistence* of the strategic logic of realism: Turkey's security problems remain essentially the same regardless of historical change.[4]

Effectively, the collapse of the Soviet Union opened up many regional conflicts. Although some security threats from Asia ended, new military crisis emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War, and in many cases, notably in Transcaucasia and Syria, Turkey continued to behave in contrast to Russia. Moreover, during the 1990s, Turkish foreign policy was characterized by the perception of what Şükrü Elekdağ – a former Under-Secretary at the Turkish foreign ministry – defined as the 'two wars and a half', i.e. a potential and simultaneous struggle with Greece and Syria and an internal struggle with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).[5] In this context, although the main cause of Turkey's attachment to the Western alliance had effectively ended, a defensive tie with the United States still appeared to be the only available strategy for the future.[6]

However, the persistence of the strategic logic of realism is not fully convincing and, in particular, it is not helpful in understanding the foreign policy of the Justice and Development (AK) party governments since 2002. In the last decade, we have witnessed a partial turning point in Turkish foreign policy.[7] New approaches, focused on state identity and social interaction among states, juxtaposed with the realist thinking in international relations. As an alternative framework, these perspectives put into the study of foreign policy innovative concepts like Ottoman legacy or Turkey's soft power. From a radical viewpoint, some scholars insisted that identities and interests were constantly redefined through social interaction in Turkish politics.[8] This point of view is the opposite of political realism and is generally referred to as

constructivism. Certainly, a security-first logic can survive alongside constructivism, and as Hale also recognised – in a third edition of his seminal book[9] – constructivism and realism can coexist in analysing Turkish foreign policy after the Cold War. But any attempt to link some constructivist concepts, like post-imperial legacy or soft power, to the determinants of realism should explain whether the primacy of security over identity still remain alive or not.

The most prominent attempt to give a theoretical framework to the new orientation was that developed by Davutoğlu himself. As a scholar, he had already outlined a foreign policy doctrine in several works, of which the most famous is *Strategic Depth*.[10] Without rejecting realist thinking, he continued to argue, during his involvement in politics, that Turkey should have behaved as a regional player and aspired to assume a leading role, with regional and global strategic significance.[11] This idea of proactive foreign policy was based on the historic and geographic depths of Turkey, amplified by its Ottoman legacy and hegemonic capacity in terms of soft power. One can agree or not with Davutoğlu and his view, but it must be recognised that new contours of Turkish foreign policy had already emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War. For example, as Şule Kut underlined at the end of the 1990s, Turkey's foreign policy had changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union with regard to: (i) an active foreign policy, (ii) a new geopolitical position with respect to its neighbours, (iii) an innovative regional power, and (iv) an attitude of assuming the role of model.[12]

During the AK Party governments, pro-activism, geopolitics, neighbouring region, regional model etc. simply became the key-words of Turkish foreign policy. Even though Turkey's commitment to pro-active foreign policy – transforming itself into a model for the Arab world, while anchoring the country to the European Union – was too ambitious or, as we will see, rather propagandistic, there are no doubts that new contours of Turkish foreign policy were strengthened between 2003 and 2011. Despite the idea of the persistence of realism, Turkish foreign policy became a novelty for regional and international equilibrium.

## Logical pre-eminence of domestic preferences? A critique of liberalism

In the first period of the Cold War, the main foreign policy actors in Turkey were the foreign affairs ministry and the military. This secular state establishment was largely influenced by the logic of the Cold War. In a condition like that, for realist scholars it was quite easy to defend the idea of the abiding persistence of international threats.

However, by the 1980's the process of Turkey's accession to the European institutions began to change the domestic balances. The role of the public became gradually more relevant in foreign policy and this shift was encouraged by economic liberalisation, when new economic constituencies emerged and the state-dominated centre receded in power to the benefits of provincial and regional elites. With the anchoring of Turkey to European institutions and, later, with the decline of the Cold War, liberal approaches to Turkish foreign policy became well

accepted among scholars.[13] A transformation of Turkish foreign policy was recognised, in the second half of 1980s and during the 1990s, when civil society acquired a new role in policy making. The fact that civil society gained influence in policy making and became incorporated into the foreign policy process was considered relevant for the study of Turkish foreign affairs.

Historically, the military establishment had acted in the Turkish political system not only as 'moderator' or 'guardian', but also as a 'ruler' and especially for external affairs.[14] During the second half of the 1980s, there was a relevant change that preceded the turning point of the end of the Cold War. Indeed, Turkey's security culture has never been completely influenced by the military. Since the 1950s, Westernisation of national security culture had prepared the ground for the introduction of liberal and internationalist elements. Furthermore, with the beginning of the Cold War – as Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu pointed out – the 'offensive' realism of the Ottoman period was gradually transformed into a 'defensive' realism.[15] When, after the military government (1980-83), the civilian elites started to participate significantly in the formation of foreign policy, the country was prepared for a public discussion on foreign policy and national security.

The civil-military divide has dominated domestic political analysis in Turkey. At the end of the 1990s, Ümit C. Sakallıoğlu started his article in an important academic journal affirming: "The most profound contradiction marking Turkish democracy in the 1990s is the demonstrated inability of civilian politicians to control the military".[16] But with the modification of Article 118 of the Constitution, adopted on 17 October 2001 to meet European political standards, the role and function of the National Security Council[17] in policy making in general, and in foreign policy in particular, changed radically.[18] During the AK Party governments, the civilian elite enhanced its freedom of action even more, increasing its leverage both regionally and globally. Under the reform package introduced by the AK Party in July 2003, "the National Security Council (NSC) was reduced to a truly advisory body; the requirement that the NSC secretary be a military officer was abolished and the number of civilian members of the NSC was increased".[19] But it was only in 2007, with the failure of the attempt to prevent the presidential election of Abdullah Gül, that the reduction of the military became effective.[20]

The empowerment of civil society has been crucial during the last decade, especially with the increasing performances of the Turkish economy. However, it is important to be careful in welcoming this transformation. From a purely liberal viewpoint, state preferences should be determined by democratic qualities in terms of the incorporation of civil society into the process of policy-making. According to this literature, many scholars assert that preferences are logically previous and invariant in response to changing international circumstances.[21] Although interdependence and international organisations are considered beneficial for the peaceful behaviour of democracies, many liberals think that government structures, interest groups, political parties, and public opinion, thus

domestic preferences, are prior to external ties. But this point of view is not convincing in the Turkish case. It is probably true that voluntary recourses to costly or risky foreign policy in democratic or egalitarian polities are much less likely than in authoritarian regimes. However, the idea of pre-eminence of national preferences has to be demonstrated, especially in a country constrained by regional turmoil.

Even though an unaccountable body such as the military does not play the role of ruler any longer, democracy in Turkey is still not fully functioning. The main problem is due to the historical failure in settling differences between secular and religious elites, but also to the degree in which governments are vulnerable or not to external pressure. During the AK Party governments this problem probably became more compelling than before, as also the Gezi Park movement has dramatically shown in 2013. Correctly, Philip Robins pointed out that only an international anchorage can support a more consensual path to democratisation in Turkey.[22] Liberal approaches gave relevance to domestic determinants, as I argued before. But also institutional devices, through which states are able to resolve conflicts that arose in international society, are important. In this view, economic interdependence between states and international institutions are relevant determinants since they impose a binding constraint on state preferences. In the case of Turkey, the Europeanization process has been considered an external tie working both as an 'anchor' and as a 'trigger': that is to say a force promoting domestic change spearhead-ed by domestic actors, and an external force driving internal change directly.[23] But beyond the European anchoring, external influences of turmoil in the Middle East are also important factors. Since 2011, as we will see, the impact of the Arab Spring on the commitment of the AK Party government in foreign policy has certainly been relevant.

Like realism, liberalism is also challenged by constructivism. From a constructivist point of view, in explaining Turkey's pro-activism one needs to recognize that the cognitive level is relevant, especially when new rules and norms are adopted by governments. In other words, process, ideas and beliefs are more important than rational, free and competitive preferences. As seminal constructivist scholars argue, foreign policy is part of a broader process of internalizing identities and interests, not something occurring external to them.[24] The Turkish case points out that external and, above all, regional constrains on state preferences must be taken seriously into account. Particularly important is what is happening in the Middle East and in the Arab World, but also in other neighbouring countries of the former Soviet Union. Democratisation of Turkish foreign policy is strongly affected by external events.

## Turkey's predisposition for the role of regional player? Some empirical evidence.

With its efforts to liberalise domestic economy, and to move from an import substitution-led economy to an export-led economy, the Özal government (1983-1989) probably anticipated the turning point in the international system

which occurred with the end of the Cold War. However, "before 1989 Turkey was a *status quo* power. It neither wanted nor sought change".[25] During the Cold War, Turkey's foreign policy aimed to be as distant as possible from neighbouring regions. In the 1990s, Turkey started to pursue liberal international policies based on commerce and cooperation in the Black Sea region and in the Middle East. But it was only in the next decade that Ankara became very engaged in regional politics, when its "economy-oriented" new activism prevailed over the "security-first" activism of the 1990s.[26]

As already said, ideas and beliefs are relevant in explaining this transformation. Erdoğan has been close to the Nakşibendi movement, an Islamic Sufi order, as Özal was until his death.[27] This connection between the two leaders is important in order to understand the continuity of their governments: "Economic and political liberalisation during the administration of Turgut Özal facilitated the development of a "religious market" in Turkey".[28] With the Erdoğan government it appeared clearer than before that – using Işık Özel's words – the "re-invention of *homo Islamicus* within the context of Islamic economics epitomises an ideational legitimacy in line with the dominant discourses of neo-liberalism".[29]

But geopolitical factors can also explain this transformation. During the Cold War, geographical position was an economic disadvantage for Turkey. With several communist countries as neighbours, Turkey faced a reduction of opportunities for regional trade. Moreover, the Cold War was also a halt to economic development because of the related military burden.

Already in the 1980s, it became clear that certain aspects of Turkey's geographical position were more auspicious (e.g. with regard to tourism, transportation and communication). As a consequence, the monolithic political economy of a one-party system gave way to a more pluralistic vision of economic development.[30] But this economic change, related to geography, was strengthened only after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In order to be effective and successful, any pro-active foreign policy needs to boost its economic ties and to secure, at the same time, geopolitical interests. This aspect has usually been neglected in the analysis of the Turkish case. Whenever the notion of regional player is invoked, Turkey's progress or decline in modernisation and democratisation are related only to Islamic religious traditions. In this regard, Turkey is often judged as an "inheritor [...] of a culturally distinctive imperial past that continue to blend with [its] contemporary "Europeanism".[31] Obviously, such an argument is seen as problematic for the future of political Islam, as well as for global stability and international security. The United States and European countries are consequently asked to promote Turkey's anchorage to a "larger West".[32]

This anchorage is invoked to contain Turkey's geopolitical shift and avoid a global redistribution of power in Eurasia. From a realist viewpoint, the threat of China as a growing power is also cited to this account. However, even when Turkey's international orientation is related to the role of China in terms of global economy, Turkish performances in the

economic realm are rarely considered important.

We can look to some empirical evidence in order to clarify this point. To face the realist concern about the threat of a geopolitical shift in Eurasia, liberals assigned great relevance to the 2008 admission of new countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America into the G8, transforming this exclusive and largely Western club of financial decision-makers into a more globally representative G20. The G20 was established in 1999, as a forum for financial ministers in response to the East Asian financial crisis and with a prominent role for emerging polities, particularly for China. According to Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Turkey became a full member of the G20 only in 2003. But since then "Turkey's foreign policy has become very active in international organisations, as illustrated [also] through its presence in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), its United Nations Security Council membership and the summits it has hosted since 2003".[33] Many liberal scholars are inclined to connect the G20 status of Turkey to multilateralism in its foreign policy, and multilateralism itself is often related to the aim of defusing conflicts and misunderstandings between the Western and Islamic worlds.[34]

But the idea that Turkish multilateralism had been a process influenced by the European and Western anchors – and, therefore, the opposite of a geopolitical shift of axis in Eurasia – is misleading in order to understand Turkey's role in the international arena, both for political and economic activities. The first evidence to support this argument is related to Iran. This Islamic country is often considered a regional competitor of Turkey, but when Turkey became more dependent on Iranian energy supplies, i.e. after the 2003 war in Iraq, the two countries started new diplomatic relations. In the aftermath of the disputed 2009 elections in Iran, "the Turkish government, together with Caracas and Moscow, was among the first to salute the election results and congratulate president Ahmadinejad on his re-election".[35] The height of the relationship between the two governments was in 2010, when Turkey, together with Brazil, brokered an agreement over the Iranian nuclear question and rejected a UN Security Council vote on sanctions on Iran.[36] In response to this position, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton successfully garnered Russian and Chinese support for enhanced sanctions against Iran.[37] How can we explain the Turkish initiative that, on one side, was openly in contrast with the aim of multilateralism, and, on the other side, was completely unable to gain a geopolitical shift of axis in Eurasia?

It is not easy to give an answer. But approaching Turkey's international conduct without linking global dynamics (i.e. multilateralism vs. great powers equilibria) to changes in the region is reductionist. The fact is that Turkey was attempting, between 2003 and 2011, to become a regional player, not to manage global dynamics directly at global or multilateral level. The G20 itself was just a tool in the resolution of the global economic crisis, rather than a new mechanism for multilateral global governance. Turkish foreign policy was 'a work in progress'

of adaptation and adjustment, and this process was driven by national interests shaped in a changing and challenging regional environment.[38]

Another example can clarify this point. According to Onur Sen's critique, tension between Turkey and Syria in the aftermath of the Arab Spring can be seen as the end of Davutoğlu's doctrine of "zero-problems'. When hostilities with Syria increased – involving Russia in 2012 – Turkey got back to 'the realities on the strategic surface [instead of] venturing into strategic deep waters".[39] This happened because the crisis had proven "that Turkey's real friends and allies are located toward its west […]. The United States, NATO and the European Union countries immediately, unanimously, unconditionally and officially announced their support for their long-term ally Turkey".[40] This critique is partly correct with regard to great power equilibria. But I think it is above all incomplete. Until the outbreak of the crisis, as Kemal Kirişci underlined, Syria was the greatest challenge for Turkey in terms of the future of Turkey's economic integration with the Arab world. Turkey invested extensively in economic relations with Syria, and Davutoğlu himself was very active in developing Turkey's economic engagement with Syria. The neighbouring country became a transit area for Turkish trucks ferrying exports to both the rest of the Arab world and the Persian Gulf countries.[41] After turmoil in Syria, Turkey joined the Arab League in instituting limited sanctions on Damascus. When Syria retaliated for this, imposing taxes on border commerce and transit, "track trade in the first three months of 2012

diminished by 87%, and alternative options, such as shipping containers, have proven more expensive".[42]

All things considered, these two examples show that geopolitical milieu matters. A global-scale international system requires a differentiation between those powers that operate across the whole system and those that operate at the regional level. From a regional perspective, Turkey's opening to Iran and Syria were necessary, peacefully founded in the spirit of zero-problems approach and not dangerous for global stability or international security. "Since the capture of Öcalan [in 1999], Turkey's relations with Iran and Syria have steadily improved". [43] Turkey "has been struggling to formulate de-securitisation policies at the regional level in a region where the security regime [was] completely constructed around the position of the superpower, the US".[44] Therefore, the political structure of the Middle East, considered as a regional security complex, directly impacts international relations' equilibrium, and "this clearly explain why constant intervention of a global actor, the US, in the Middle East [was] seen as an obstacle for Turkey in realizing its regional integration".[45] The most important reaction was Turkey's decision not to accept being involved in the coalition of the willing during the invasion of Iraq in 2003, with consequences that limited the role of the military in foreign affairs.[46] However, difficulties with Washington also emerged when Turkey opened to Iran and Syria (even though these two initiatives failed because of the consequence of turmoil in the Middle East). In other words, Turkey's attitude to behave

as an emerging polity and regional power was related to its geographical position and to the ambition to behave as a cooperative and conciliatory neighbour partner.

Turkey is not exactly a bastion of democracy.[47] As Nur Bilge Criss pointed out, the AK Party governments have introduced new populist and sometimes incoherent parameters into Turkey's traditional foreign policy.[48] This happened because the government sought out public support at home through its international actions. In this regard, it is true that with Davutoğlu emerged a 'new geopolitical vision' that moved from 'the defensive-Kemalist geopolitics' toward a "multifunctional mechanism of geopolitical representation of Turkey in the wider geographical context".[49] But it is also important to considered that, thanks to its economic performance, Turkey really became a potential agent for diffusing liberal policies in its neighbourhood, despite the increasing deficit.[50] In a globalized international economy, state capacity depends on progress in modernisation and also on the quality of democratic institutions. But consolidation of state ability to deal successfully abroad requires the establishment of a balance between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of democracy, i.e. between participation and responsible leadership. With respect to the horizontal dimension, the Western anchorage has been very important since the 1980s. The development of the EU's political conditionality has been relevant for the formation of domestic preferences in particular. But with respect to the vertical dimension, external or foreign commitment to stability and peace be-

came more and more relevant between 2003 and 2011. The AK Party governments find out a new kind of international anchorage, different from the classical conditionality and more related to the regional stability of the Middle East. In other words, regardless of geopolitical rhetoric Turkey really tried to perform the role of a regional player. However, the basic challenge for Turkey was to transform the dialectics of competition and cooperation into a model in which cooperation dominates over competition.

## The regional-global framework

In general, it is far from clear how to define a *regional player* in the study of foreign policy. The regional dimension itself can be regarded as a level of analysis that any scholar should consider, especially in studying macro-areas where state capacity is eroded, notably in the Middle East. But, quite the contrary, the regional dimension can also be seen as a geopolitical space in which a polycentric system of governance may emerge, for example in Europe. Thus, the regional dimension covers a wide range of international processes. However, in the Turkish case we can refer to regionalisation as a way to link regions, on the one hand, and the globalisation process, on the other.[51] In this regard – and according to the debate on the 'new regionalism' – the regional dimension is related to "strategies that states (and other actors) have adopted in the face of globalisation".[52] For Turkey, the strategic rationale of being pro-active in its eastern neighbourhood rested on the global restructuring of production and power after the Cold War. This tran-

sformation required, not only a new kind of international anchorage mostly related to the regional stability of the Middle East, but also a more pro-active foreign policy led by responsible government.

As Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver stated, "any coherent regionalist approach to security must start by drawing clear distinctions between what constitutes the regional level and what constitutes the levels on either side of it", i.e. national and global.[53] This is particularly true, in the case of Turkey, if we combine security, identity and economic interests. The question here is not the institutional type of regional integration, but how much of the process of policy-making in the field of international security, cultural links and economic development, is subject to interdependence between states, and how much this interdependence imposes a binding constraint on one's own preferences.

is not similar to the traditional and realist division between great and middle-size powers. By definition, middle-size powers operate exclusively in their own region. On the contrary, regional players seek to be able to operate in response to global change since they are successful in providing security and promoting economic development in their regional environment. Despite the global players, they cannot directly affect changes of global dimensions; nonetheless, regional strategies may influence global changes. During the AK party governments, although pro-active commitment has not been successful, Turkey demonstrated a predisposition for this role. As Davutoğlu stated, trying to defend his 'zero-problems with neighbours policy', the polity was seeking "a new regional order in a global context'"[54] However, this general tendency did not constitute an impediment to regional conflicts in political and security relations.

| | |
|---|---|
| Global player | Preferences are formulated in the context of global changes, while dimensions of change are related directly to strategic capabilities, cultural attractiveness and economic strengths at the international level |
| Regional player | Preferences are formulated in the context of regional changes, while global dynamics at the international level shape regional changes and, in turn, regional strategies may affect global changes |

**Tab. 1** Regional and global players

In this regard, Turkey has not behaved as a global player – seeking the recognition of a multilateral status or a new geopolitical equilibrium – but as regional one. And this new role was relevant since the distinction between regional and global

Concluding remarks: the worth of the regional/global framing

How can we explain Turkey's pro-activism during the last decade? In Ziya Önis's opinion, the most critical aspect during the AK Party governments was the absence of a firm axis around which

the multidimensional and pro-active foreign policy was structured and anchored. Turkey has taken on many commitments, more than it could handle, and the consequence of this deficiency is "a certain inconsistency in Turkey's style of foreign policy activism".[55] Furthermore, Önis also believes that unilateral foreign policy style and an independent regional status, similar to other emerging countries, namely Brazil or India, could be framed by the European Union member states as a problem in the negotiation process of Turkey's accession. This perception could effectively favour European opposition to Turkey and, consequently, a shift of axis by Turkey away from Western democracies towards Eastern authoritarian regimes.

These critical evaluations of Turkish foreign policy has increased among scholars during the last two/three years, particularly because of the critical evolution of the Arab Spring and the democratic regression of the AK party government, or even its support to the Islamic fighter in Syria. But the discussion is still far from a conclusion.[56] Some scholars have affirmed, in parallel, that the spread of the Arab revolts and conflicts could favour a positive shift of axis, with related progressive regional activism. In Mohammed Ayoob's opinion, for example, after the Egyptian revolution "Turkish and Iranian interests converge more than they diverge".[57] And this is because the centre of political gravity in the Middle East shifted from the Arab heartland comprising Egypt and the Fertile Crescent to what was once considered the non-Arab periphery, i.e. Turkey and Iran. Both neo-Ottomanism and the

emergence of a Shia crescent could benefit from this shift in the strategic and political balance, and this advantage, in Ayoob's opinion, could also be reinforced by the United States political failure in the region. In my opinion this argument is well founded. But the spread of the Arab revolts and conflicts has put Turkey and Iran into opposition to each other, resulting in an emerging wedge between the two countries. The importance of Iran's partnership with Syria has amplified old rivalries, limiting windows of opportunity for economic and mutual benefits.[58]

If anything, maybe bilateral relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia entered in a new phase in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. According to Muhittin Ataman, both Ankara and Riyadh attempted to decrease their dependence on global powers because of the international economic crisis. During the last decade, each country has pursued a regional policy that has not alienated the other: "While Turkey was following a regional policy that attempted to solve regional problems through regional dynamics (...) Saudi Arabia pursued a regional policy that did not marginalize Turkey in the Middle East".[59] This diplomatic harmony increased in the aftermath of Arab revolts, when the two countries discovered more common points than dissimilarities, continuing to reinforce their economic ties. However, this relationship also presents many differences and some rivalries. Saudi authorities are reluctant to speed up either economic or political reforms and, although the Turkish economy provides an interesting case-study of the feeling of ambivalence with respect to economic and democratic modernisation,[60] the

liberal pattern of Turkish economic development has not been in question up to now. Saudi Arabia, on the contrary, is interested in preserving a less dynamic Middle East in terms of political reforms and economic liberalisation.

The problem is that the current Middle East scenario is exceptionally turbulent and, as a consequence, it is very difficult to state whether the multidimensional and pro-active foreign policy of Turkey is really inconsistent or whether it could turn out successful. Önis is correct in affirming that Turkish dynamism in its neighbourhood can be perceived as problematic for the European Union, and also for the United States. Although some scholars still believe in the democratic path of Arab revolts,[61] Western democracies are looking with anxiety at the current turmoil which is shifting from less important Tunisia to vitally significant Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. The absence of a clear axis around which the Turkish foreign policy is going to turn up is seen as problematic. Seeking to reframe or de-securitize policies in a region where the security regime was constructed around the position of Western democracies, Turkish dynamism is perceived with incertitude by the United States and its European allies. Although Turkish diplomacy is economy-oriented, Western democracies are not sure that, overcoming the realist and security-first diplomacy of the past, the new trend will be better for all. In particular, the Turkish support to Islamic forces in Libya, Egypt and Syria is seen with worry.

The case of Egypt is very instructive in this regard. When Mohamed Morsi became the Egyptian President in the wake of the Arab Spring, it was properly argued that in Egypt 'secular and religious groups appear to be more deeply seated and widespread than they were in Turkey'. In the latter country, moderation of religious groups such as the Fethullah Gülen Movement, or many other Sufi orders, 'heavily engaged other secular groups [...] and to a large extent overcame their suspicions'. In Egypt, on the contrary, religious groups and secular-liberal groups seemed "to be living in an environment marked by mutual suspicions and fears".[62] In July 2013, Egypt's military officers removed Morsi as elected President. One month later, Turkey and Egypt canceled naval military drills and recalled their ambassadors, while the Western democracies adopted a rather hesitant attitude towards the military coup. The interruption of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Egypt obscured the Middle East scenario much more. But, in the following months, the rupture between Gülen and Erdoğan made the stability of Turkey even more problematic, especially considering that the global crisis is causing Turkish economic performance to slow down.[63]

Concerns about Turkey's diplomatic relations, political stability and democracy, although reasonable from the point of view of realism and that of liberalism, are not forward-looking. Turkey is an emerging polity affected by globalisation and deeply involved in contributing to regional policy. For emerging countries, the geopolitical milieu is a crucial variable relating to the state's ability to face globalisation. Realist scholars can insist on the relevance of unequal distributions of power between Turkey and Russia,

looking at the past, or between Turkey and some Middle Eastern states, as Iran, Saudi Arabia, or even Egypt, looking at the future. But they are not able to explain how much social and economic conditions, including the regional impact of globalisation, can shape the arena of power competitions. On the other side, liberal scholars are right to considered the importance of democratic institutions and democratic qualities, that may influence the way in which national preferences are produced. After the end of the Cold War, Turkey's foreign policy has been driven by new preferences, since the country has started perceiving itself, especially during the AK Party governments, as a regional player. But the AK Party government's reaction to the Gezi Park movement strongly compromised the idea of a Turkish model. This dramatic epilogue demonstrates Turkish weakness in terms of democracy. Also liberals recognize this problem, but they are not able to explain how much states must adapt their strategies to their regional contexts. In this regard, the vertical dimension of democracy – responsible leadership – can be a source of external commitment to stability and peace although the horizontal dimension – participation in the policy-making process – is still not fully working. The spread of the Arab Spring definitively eroded the structure of the Cold War security regime. Furthermore, the global economic crisis is affecting the Turkish economy and, in  such a condition, framing a liberal and pro-active foreign policy is very difficult. Nevertheless, maybe it is still worthy.[64]

Notes

1  Bülent Aras (2014), "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy Revisited", in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2014.938451.
2  Ersel Aydinli and Julie Mathews (2008), "Periphery Theorising for a Truly Internationalised Discipline: Spinning IR Theory out of Anatolia", in *Review of International Studies*, 34, pp. 693–712.
3  William Hale (2000), *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000,* Frank Cass, London-Portland, p. 6.
4  During the last 200 years, i.e. from the late Ottoman empire to the end of the Cold War, the main factors affecting Turkey's international position would be related to its strategic relevance and to the power distribution within the international system.
5  Şükrü Elekdağ (1996), 'Two and a Half War Strategy', in *Perception (*Ankara*)*, 1(1), *passim*.
6  Problems with Greece intensified in 2004, when Cyprus became a member of the European Union. Also internal struggles with the Curds are still ongoing, even though the capture of Ocalan opened-up a new era in the relations with the PKK. However, troubles with Syria, above all, can be considered the thorn in the side of Turkey.
7  Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yilmaz (2009), "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Er'", in *Turkish Studies,* (10)1, pp. 7-24.
8  Yücel Bozdağlioğlu (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach,* Routledge, New York-London. That is to say – in Karl Holsti's worlds – that 'the "texture" of international politics never remains the same' (Kalevi  J. Holsti (2004) *Taming the Sovereigns. International Change in International Politics* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. xiii).
9  William Hale (2013), *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, Routledge, London-New York, 3rd edition, p. 1.
10  Ahmet Davutoğlu (2000), *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkie'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position], Küre Yayınları, Istanbul, particularly section 1.
11  Ahmet Davutoğlu (2010), "*Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy"*, 20 May, <http://www.foreingpolicy.com>
12  Şule Kut (2001), "The Contours of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s"*,* in Barry M. Rubin and Kemal Kirişi (eds) *Turkey In World Politics: An Emerging Multi-Regional Power,* Lynne Reinner, Boulder.
13  Meltem Müftüler-Baç (2011), "Turkish Foreign Policy, its Domestic Determinants and the Role of the European Union"*,* in *South European Society and Politics,* 16(2), pp. 279-291.

14  Frank Tachau and Metin Heper (1983), 'The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey', in *Comparative Politics,* 16(1), pp. 17-33.

15  Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu (2000), "The Evolution of the National Security Culture and the Military in Turkey", in *Journal of International Affairs*, 54,(1), pp. 201-206.

16  Ümit C. Sakallioğlu (1997), "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy", in *Comparative Politics,* 29(2), p. 151.

17  After the 1982 constitution, the role for the military was institutionalised in the form of the National Security Council. This council consisted of the President of the Republic as presiding officer, the Prime minister, the Chief of the general staff, the Ministers of foreign affairs, interior, and defence, and the commanders of land, air, and naval forces and of the gendarmerie. The council of ministers was obliged to consider with priority the decisions of the National Security Council concerning necessary measures for the protection of the State.

18  Gencer Özcan (2011), "The Changing Role of Turkey's Military in Foreign Policy-Making Process", in Mustafa Aydın (ed), *Turkish Foreign Policy, Old Problems, New Parameters,* Unisci, Madrid.

19  Stephen F. Larrabee (2010), "Turkey's New Geopolitics", in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy,* 52(2), p. 161.

20  Ahmet T. Kuru (2012), "The Rise and Fall of Military Tutelage in Turkey: Fears of Islamism, Kurdism, and Communism", in *Insight Turkey*, 14(2), pp. 37-5.

21  Andrew Moravcsik (1997), "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics", in *International Organization,* 51(4), pp. 513-553.

22  Philip Robins (2007), "Turkish Foreign Policy since 2002: Between a 'post-Islamist' Government and a Kemalist State", in *International Affairs,* 83(1), pp. 289–304.

23  Nathalie Tocci (2005), "Europeanization in Turkey: Trigger or Anchor for Reform?", in *South European ociety and Politics,* 10(1), pp. 73-83.

24  Alexander E. Wendt (1992), "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", in *International Organization,* 46(2), p. 339.

25  Philip Robins (2003), *Suits and Uniforms. Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War,* Hurst & Company, London, p. 12.

26  Kadri Kaan Renda (2011), "Turkey's neighborhood policy: an emerging complex interdependence?", in *Insight Turkey,* 13(1), pp. 89-108. The AK Party victory in the 2002 election followed ten years of alternation between governments with different political orientations, including the country's first Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, in power for a year before his ousting via a *soft* military coup in 1997. As Daniel Pipes stated, 'in retrospect, that period [the 1990s] marked the interim between the death in April 1993 of Turgut Özal, the towering former prime minister and president, and Mr. Erdoğan's becoming prime minister in 2003' *S*(D. Pipes (2013), "Turkey's Islamist Turn, 10 Years Later", *in The Wall Street Journal*, November 13, 2012, <http://www.danielpipes.org/12192/turkey-islamist-ten-years>.

27  Angel Rabasa and F. Stephan Larrabee (2008), *The rise of political Islam in Turkey,* RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, p. 13.

28  Ivi, p. 15.

29  Işık Özel's (2010), "Political Islam and Islamic capital. The case of Turkey", in Jeffrey Haynes (ed), *Religion and Politics in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa,* Routledge, Oxon, p. 140.

30  Zivi Yehuda Hershlag (1988), *The Contemporary Turkish Economy,* Routledge, London-New York.

31  Zbigniew Brzezinski (2012), *Strategic Vision. America and the Crisis of Global Power*, Basic Book, New York, p. 133.

32  Ivi, pp. 132-140.

33  Müftüler-Baç op. cit., p. 283.

34  Although two other emerging market economies of the G20 – Indonesia and Saudi Arabia – are members with a Muslim majority, only Turkey is considered a special country when it is allowed in certain exclusives club of states such as the G20. The UN project to promote, in 2004, intercultural dialogue entitled Alliance of Civilisations is frequently cited in this regard.

35  Henri J. Barkey (2012), "Turkish-Iranian Competition after the Arab Spring", in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 54(6), p. 144.

36  Nathalie Tocci (2012), "A Trilateral EU-US-Turkey Strategy for the Neighbourhood: The Urgency of Now", *in IAI Working Papers*, 1208, March, <http://www.iai.it>, p. 14

37  Graham E. Fuller (2010), "Former CIA Officer on Iran: Brazil and Turkey are Vital Checks and Balances*, The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 May, <http://www.csmonitor.com>. Turkey and Brazil failed in their attempt to behave as global southern states, with an independent and pro-active foreign policy. Still in 2010, Turkey and Brazil supported the Chinese proposal to use national currencies for bilateral exchange (see Konstantin Rozhnov (2010), "Bric Countries try to Shift Global Balance of Power", in *BBC News,* 15 April, <hhttp://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8620178.stm≥ and Joe Parkinson (2010), 'Turkey and China to Shun the Dollar', *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 October, <http://online.wsj.com/news/

articles>. Also these radical, although informal, agreements were unsuccessful.

38 Emidio Diodato, E. (2014), "Turkey in progress: foreign policy, geopolitics and democracy", in Firat Cengiz and Lars Hoffmann (eds), *Turkey and the European Union: Facing new challenges and opportunities,* Routledge, London.

39 Onur Sen *(2012), "*From "Strategic Depth" to "Strategic Surface"*, in The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, Wednesday, 10 October, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/op-ed/3024/from-%C3%ABstrategic-depth%C3%AD-to-%C3%ABstrategic-surface%C3%AD.html>

40 *Ibidem*.

41 Kemal Kirişi (2012), "Turkey's Engagement with Its Neighborhood: A "Synthetic" and Multidimensional Look at Turkey's Foreign Policy Transformation", in *Turkish Studies*, 13(3), pp. 319-341.This economic interest can better explain the development of military cooperation in 2009, when a Turkish-Syrian High Level Strategic Cooperation Council was established.

42 Barkey op. cit. p. 152.

43 Kemal Kirişci (2004), "The Kurdish question and Turkish Foreign Policy"*,* in G. Martin Lenore and Dimitris Keridis (eds), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy,* MIT press, Cambridge, p. 313.

44 Özden Zeynep Oktav (2011), "Regionalism or Shift of Axis? Turkish-Syrian-Iranian Relations?", in Id. (ed), *Turkey in the 21st Century. Quest for a new Foreign Policy,* Ashgate, Surrey, p. 77.

45 *Ibidem*.

46 Mesut Özcan (2011), "From distance to engagement: Turkish policy towards the Middle East, Iraq and Iraqi Kurds" in *Insight Turkey,* 13(2), pp. 71-92.

47 Aslı Ü. Bâli (2011), 'A Turkish Model for the Arab Spring?', Middle Eastern Law & Governance, 3(1/2), pp. 24-42; Daniel Pipes (2013a), 'Is Turkey Leaving the West?', The Washington Times, February 6, <http://www.danielpipes.org/12526/turkey-shangai-five-sco> -original Washington Times' title was: Trading Europe for the Shanghai Five Turkey dissembles over joining the EU).

48 Nur Bilge Criss (2011), 'Parameters of Turkish Foreign Policy under the AKP government', in Aydin, op. cit.

49 Murat Yeşiltaş (2013), "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy", in *Turkish Studies*, 14(4), p. 680.

50 For a criticism of the political economy of the Turkey's 'economic miracle', see Turan Subaşat (2014), "The Political Economy of Turkey's Economic Miracle", in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 16(2), pp. 137-160.

51 Şaban Kardaş (2013), "Turkey: A Regional Power Facing a Changing International System" in *Turkish Studies*, 14(4), pp. 637–660.

52 Andrew Hurrell (2005), "The Regional Dimension in International Relations Theory'" in Mary Farrel, Biorn Hettne and Luk Van Langenhove (eds), *Global Politics of Regionalism. Theory and Practice,* Pluto Press, London–Ann Arbor, p. 42.

53 Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003), *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 27.

54 ; Davutoğlu (2013) Michel Nawfal and Cengiz Çandar (2013), "Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu", in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42(3), p. 98; see also Ahmet Davutoğlu (2013), 'Zero Problems in a New Era. Realpolitik is not the Answer to the Challenges Posed by the Arab Spring', Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13 march, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/zero-problems-in-a-new-era.en.mfa> and Id. (2013a), "The Three Major Earthquakes in the International System and Turkey", in *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, 48(2), pp. 1-11.

55 Ziya Önis (2011), "Multiple faces of the "new" Turkish foreign policy: underlying dynamics and a critique"*, in Insight Turkey* 13(1), p. 59.

56 Aras, op. cit.

57 Mohammed Ayoob (2011), "Beyond the Democratic Wave in the Arab World: the Middle East's Turko-Persian Future"*,* in *Insight Turkey*, 13(2), p. 9.

58 Aaron Stein and Philipp C. Bleek (2012), 'Turkish-Iranian Relations: From "Friends with Benefits" to "It's Complicated"', *Insight Turkey* 14(4), pp. 137-150.

59 Muhittin Ataman (2012), "Turkish-Saudi Arabian Relations During the Arab Uprisings: Towards a Strategic Partnership?"*, Insight Turkey*, 14(4), p. 124.

60 E. Fuat Keyman and Berrin Koyuncu (2005), "Globalization, Alternative Modernities and the Political Economy of Turkey"*, Review of International Political Economy*, 12(1), pp. 105-128; see also Keyman (2010), "Modernization, Globalization and Democratization in Turkey: The AKP Experience and its Limits"*, in Constellations*, 17(2), pp. 312-327*.*

61 Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Linz (2013), "Democratization Theory and the "Arab Spring"', *Journal of Democracy,* 24(2), pp. 15-30.

62 Birol Baskan (2013), "Overcoming the Secular Suspicion? State Secularity and its Impact on Societal Relations in Turkey and Egypt"*, in Arab Studies Quarterly*, 35(2), p. 166.

63 Once the common enemy, i. e. the military, was neutralized, the potent social force of the Gülen movement probably considered the concentration of power in the hands of the politicians more dangerous. The rupture between

Gülen and Erdoğan was related to domestic allegations of political corruption. But there may also be consequences for foreign policy. The main line of the Gülen approach 'to oreign policy is that Turkey should follow multiple orientations in its foreign policy, maintaining close relations with the West' (M. Hacan Yavuz and John L. Esposito (2003), 'Introduction. Islam in Turkey: Retreat from the Secular Path?' in Id (eds), *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: the Gülen Movement,* Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, p. xxxii. For example, Gülen was very critical on the Turkish rupture with Israel in 2010, in the aftermath of the Flotilla case. However it is more difficult to state if the economic crisis plays a role. In 2013, Turkish GDP grew by 4 per cent and, between 2003 and 2013, the mean annual growth rate was 5 per cent. Only the GDP for 2009 saw a 4.8 per cent decrease (data available on www.economy.gov.it).

64  In this regard, good or bad relations with Israel could represent a sort of *litmus test* for Turkey. Even though Israel remained a strong economic partner for Turkey, the Israel-Turkish diplomatic crisis in 2010 was the first example of contrast with the zero-problems foreign policy. Furthermore, the problem of Palestine is the key question to re-frame and de-securitize the region.

# Turkey's presence in Somalia: a humanitarian approach

**Federico Donelli**

During the summer of 2011, former Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Somalia, marking the beginning of Turkey's presence in this East African country. Turkey's involvement in Somalia highlighted aspects of Ahmet Davutoğlu's multifaceted approach to humanitarian diplomacy and the diversification of roles through the involvement of various non-state actors[1] in the policy-making process. At the same time Erdoğan's visit has represented the turning point in the Somali process of stabilization following twenty years of civil war. Turkey's policy in Somalia has particular characteristics and, as argued by Mehmet Özkan, can best be described as a triangle of state, civil society, and the business world combined together to support each others engagement.

In this study two questions will be critically examined: the first asks what was and remains the role assumed by Turkish civil society organizations in Turkey's foreign policy. The second is concerned with the adoption of novel frameworks, such as humanitarian discourse, and new instruments in Turkey's soft power, as development assistance and emergency aid. In addition this work examines how Turkey's new toolkit has brought partial success in Somalia. The work assumption is that Turkey has been able to operate in Somalia thanks to the gradual involvement of a greater number of non-state actors driven by strong humanitarianism.

In the first part will be an analysis of Turkey's paradigm shift in the last decade focusing on Ahmet Davutoğlu's geopolitical doctrine known as 'central country theory'[2]. The role of non-state actors in Turkish foreign policy has increased in fact the so-called following Arab Spring when Turkey has expanded its (strategic) depth towards a long ignored region. Following this will be a consideration of Turkish rapprochement toward Africa, stressing that Turkey's approach is different from the traditional Western one as well as non-Western emerging powers. Finally using the case of Somalia it is possible to attempt to explain and problematize the characteristics, challenges and limits of Turkey's policy toward the whole continent.

The aim of this work is to present the growing role played by non-state actors in accordance with the 'total performance principle' propounded by the former Turkish Foreign Minister – current Prime Minister - Ahmet Davutoğlu. The Somali case shows how 'total performance' understanding of foreign policy has fostered integrated action between state institutions and civil society organizations, both marked by a humanitarian oriented approach. Thus, Turkey's presence in Somalia provides a context in which to test the 'total performance' policy as an example of inter-agency coordination between state and non-state actors. At the same time, Turkey's policy in Somalia could represent the litmus test of the whole Turkish foreign policy revised following the Arab Spring, of which development assistance, media-

tion efforts and humanitarian aid are the main tenets.

## Turkey's humanitarianism in the post Arab Spring period

The events of 2011 and the continuing drama of the Syrian civil war have increased the debate surrounding Turkey's foreign policy, in particular on the validity of the 'zero problems with neighbors policy'[3]. Several scholars have judged the 'zero problems' as a failed strategy, defining it as obsolete and unable to deal with the changes and challenges that emerged from the Arab Spring[4]. Although the term 'zero problems' appears abused and has been inappropriately used to summarize the whole Turkish foreign policy, it represents only one of the principles that form Davutoğlu's wider geopolitical doctrine defined as 'central country' or 'central power'. The central country concept is used by the former Foreign Minister to explain Turkey's international positioning in his academic writings. Davutoğlu believes that Turkey's unique geographic and geo-cultural position gives it a special central-country (*merkez ülke*) role, and therefore Turkey cannot define itself in a defensive manner. Turkey is still currently redefining its international identity from being a passive regional state to a constructive global actor. Turkey is identified both geographically and historically with more than one region and one culture, enabling the country to have a central role and maneuver in several regions simultaneously[5]. Davutoğlu stated that Turkey possesses a 'strategic depth' and it should act as a 'central country' and break away from a static and single-parameter policy[6]. The multi-direc-

tionality of its foreign policy has made Turkey a hub of a wider region defined as Afro-Eurasia, stretching from Central Asia to the Caucasus and sub-Saharan Africa via the Middle East. Şaban Kardaş argues that while the 'zero problems policy' has drawn wide scholarly attention and media coverage, the 'central country' concept is more important to understand Turkey's foreign policy before and after the Arab Spring[7].

The post-Arab Spring environment has partly invalidated Turkey's ambitious policy forcing Ankara to review and adapt its assertive approach. Political instability in the Middle East convinced Turkey's policy-makers to focus their attention on other regions such as the Balkans and the Horn of Africa. Despite this shift in attention to other regions, it does not follow that there has been a break with Davutoğlu's geopolitical vision. Following the 2011 events, Turkey's foreign policy has been modified in its content, instruments and mechanism but the 'central country' doctrine remains the main framework. Consequentially Turkey's aims remain unchanged: i) granting national and regional stability through a balance between security and democracy; ii) elevating its own position as an international power and conducting a pro-active foreign policy agenda; iii) protecting and promoting Turkish economic interests in the world in the face of the changes and challenges of the global economy[8].

Turkey's foreign policy agenda has assumed a more liberal value-based approach due to a new space of opportunity to get in direct contact with people emerged in post-Arab Spring environment. The Ankara government increased

the prospect for a more liberal functionalist foreign policy based on the promotion of stability, economic cooperation, democratization and interdependence[9]. As result there has been an increase of Turkey's civilian capacity through the involvement of non-state actors in the policy-making process and using new soft power tools in cultural and public diplomacy. At the same time, the growing number of non-state actors activities beyond the border has led Turkey's policy-makers to attach greater importance to the humanitarian discourse in some crisis situations such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria and Somalia. As evidence of these changes, humanitarian diplomacy was the main theme of the Fifth Annual Ambassadors Conference held in Ankara on January 2013. Even if Turkey's humanitarian policy was designed before the Arab Spring[10], Davutoğlu posed a new notion of humanitarian diplomacy to explain and legitimize Ankara's involvement in different regions affected by crisis and political instability. According to Davutoğlu, humanitarian diplomacy has become one of the most significant of the key explanatory principles of Turkish foreign policy[11].

Despite the broadness of the literature on humanitarian diplomacy[12], including 89 different definitions[13], none of these are completely suitable to the Turkish understanding[14]. Davutoğlu's holistic meaning of humanitarianism is multi-faceted and multi-channeled. According to him Turkey must adopt a pro-active attitude with a human focus in crisis regions, while at the same time promoting an inclusive humanitarian perspective at the global level, especial-

ly within international fora[15]. During the Ambassador's conference Davutoğlu also stated that Turkish humanitarian diplomacy placed human beings at the center, regardless of their nationality, religion or ethnicity[16]. In Davutoğlu's perspective, humanitarian diplomacy could help to move beyond the realist-liberal categories on the one hand and the hard-power versus soft-power dichotomy on the other. Davutoğlu believes that a new international system requires an approach based on a critical equilibrium between conscience and power, and Turkey is determined to be a leader in establishing such an understanding on a global scale[17]. Until ten years ago Turkey's humanitarianism aimed to restore the bond between Turkey and Muslim countries and it was articulated in relation to Turkish perceived responsibility toward Muslim communities outside of its borders (the ummah). In recent years this ummah focus has been replaced by an Islamic internationalism that suggests having cross-border humanitarian engagement as a holder of Islamic religious identity[18], without distinguishing between Muslim and non-Muslim communities[19].

The humanitarian approach is used by the Turkish government in some contexts to present its intervention to the eyes of the local people as genuine and detached. Moreover, within Turkey a strong humanitarian rhetoric helps to mobilize and sensitize Turkish public feelings, as ensuring public support is essential for an assertive foreign policy. In a global context Turkey's humanitarian-oriented approach is also used as a way to live up to the expectations of international solidarity and problem solving initiatives

that come with the status of being a 'rising power'. The Turkish government welcomes being called an 'emerging donor[20]' because the status of being 'emerging', and thus increasingly significant and influential, plays a decisive role in Turkey's identity as a self-confident international actor[21].

## The role of religious civil society and the total performance principle

For many years foreign policy has been understood in state-centric terms and only recent studies consider non-state actors in terms of contributions and challenges to government's decision-making process[22]. In accordance with Davutoğlu's understanding of international relations as an inclusive post-Westphalia system, Turkey's foreign policy has gained a liberal charter, in both its formulation and execution, with an emphasis on civilian capacity-building. Humanitarian initiatives reflect such developments and underpin both the role of state institutions and civil society organizations as actors in humanitarian diplomacy within an inter-agency coordinated policy[23]. This policy is linked with the multi-dimensionality or multi-track approach which corresponds to the ability of operating on different levels and on different fronts; from official diplomatic relations, within international and regional organizations, to trans-national relations or 'people to people', developed by non-state actors such as NGOs (non-governmental organizations), charities and business associations.

At this point, it is useful to briefly discuss the possible socio-political factors which, during the last thirty years, have created new opportunity spaces for civil society's engagement. Firstly, the introduction of liberal economic policies by the Özal governments following the 1980's *coupe d'état* that created the conditions for the rising of Anatolian Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) (the so-called Anatolian Tigers) and the gradual rehabilitation of religion in the public sphere. The general 'trans-nationalization' of small- and medium-sized business in Turkey was a driver of emerging civil society organizations[24]. Together these favoured the rising of a new Muslim bourgeoisie[25] and the asserting of pro-Islamic[26] or religious civil society. Religious middle classes have become stronger and more assertive politically and have used their private capital in charity through the promotion of benevolent foundations (*vakiflar*) and a large number of Islamic or faith-based NGOs[27]. Secondly, NGOs have proliferated in size and activism since the end of 1990s thanks to the relaxation of various laws and social restrictions inside Turkey's progress on Copenhagen criteria[28]. During that period, political parties with Islamic tendencies still had minimal power in the state system, so they built grassroots organizations to establish political and economic power. Finally, the governments led by Islamic political parties (Refah, AK Party) needed to carry forward the de-secularization process of administrative and bureaucratic cadres and to support the rising of an alternative elite[29]. Since its ascension to power in 2002, AK Party has shaped a new relationship between state and society[30] from one of mutual hostility to constructive

cooperation by promoting joint domestic and cross-border engagement with shared goals[31]. The Turkish government has strongly promoted an increased role of non-state actors in foreign policy, as demonstrated by its participation in the Turkish-African Civil Society Forum[32].

Following the Arab Spring, the growth of transnationalism has been one of the distinctive aspects of Turkey's foreign policy, as various non-state actors have become active agents in the policy-making process[33]. This process was accelerated by the diversification of roles through the involvement of a greater number of non-state actors alongside the implementation of another principle of Davutoğlu's strategy: the 'total performance' principle. This all inclusive approach involves the participation of all the political and socio-economic groups in Turkey during the foreign policy-making process, from universities to trade associations and humanitarian NGOs.[34]. The 'total performance' principle doesn't consider non-state actors as an alternative or threat to the state's actions but it aims to incorporate them in a unified and coordinated strategy with an emphasis on a presence on the ground[35]. This principle means inclusiveness in the foreign policy agenda of non-state actors like NGOs, business circles, think-tanks, public intellectual figures and thus mobilizing their support[36]. All these institutions can provide input into the foreign policy-making process in contrast to a past where there was no room for these actors[37]. Thanks to 'total performance', Turkey has shaped a new mechanism of mutual interaction between civil organizations and state institutions where both

are working to reach common international objectives. Non-government public diplomacy has become an essential part of Turkey's policies, fostering the development of new instruments in Turkey's soft power toolkit, such as humanitarian aid and international development assistance. During the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Istanbul in 2011, Davutoğlu stressed the importance of civil society organizations as a valuable tool to bringing global peace and stability. He stressed that they are an integral part of international relations and that Turkey believes strong civil society can only grow through heavy state support saying, "this is why we [AK Party government] strongly support civil society organizations participating in international affairs"[38].

During the last decade religious civil society has become a relevant component of Turkey's political agenda and their actions enjoy support from the government[39] but with complete financial independence. The state's role is minimal and in the form of indirect support, i.e. it provides the necessary legal authorizations and logistical support. With the AK Party's multi-faceted foreign policy, pro-Islamic civil society has become one of the key players in shaping Turkey's policies. This influence has extended to Turkey's foreign policy agenda as has been shown by the Mavi Marmara initiative in 2010 as well as in the case of Somalia, where several Islamic NGOs rushed to help Somalians facing famine and disease at the height of the 2011 drought crisis.

## Turkey as a hybrid actor in Africa

In the era of globalization Africa has become a key area for all emerging state actors who aspire to raise their international relevance. The main reason is the transformation of the global economy that has generated an unprecedented demand for mineral and energy resources, which make Africa a geo-political competitive arena[40]. In the last decade, Turkey earned a special place among these non-traditional partners driven by two main factors: diversifying its economic relations and maintaining its re-orientation in global politics[41]. Literature about the topic agrees that there are varying causes behind Turkey's opening to Africa: firstly, difficulties in the European Union (EU) accession process; secondly, searching for new markets for Turkish products; thirdly, looking for greater operating autonomy from traditional Western allies; fourthly, gaining political visibility and support inside international fora and, finally, fostering sustainable economic development by imparting Turkey's managerial skills and technological know-how[42]. Since 2004 Turkey has significantly increased its relations with the countries of the Horn of Africa through economic and trade agreements and bilateral projects of development and emergency aid. In recent years Turkey has multiplied its diplomatic offices[43] and the number of honorary consuls who are working on the continent as intermediaries. Diplomatic efforts and cooperation initiatives promoted by Turkey led to their appointment of 'observer status' in 2005 and 'strategic partner' by the African Union in 2008[44]. In the same year

Turkey organized the First Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit. It was a meeting of high level officials from Turkey and numerous African countries (more than fifty African Union members) and also included the presence of Turkish civil society representatives with the aim of assessing the opportunities and needs of the African continent[45]. Turkey's interest towards Africa was immediately distinguished by a continuous involvement of Turkish social forces and their cooperation with their African counterparts.

In order to change the mutually negative perceptions and to foster new relationships useful meetings have been organized by the Turkish public and private institutions on specific issues such as health, agriculture and the media. In particular in the field of economic and trade development private organizations are cooperating with state agencies including the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM). Among these private actors, the Islamic-oriented business associations such as MÜSİAD and TUSKON are active through the promotion of forums between Turkish entrepreneurs and their African counterparts. In addition, close cooperation between Ankara and other African countries has been fostered by the growing number of African migrants who see Turkey not as a temporary transit country towards other regions (EU, the Gulf), but as a place to settle, where they can improve their living conditions[46]. The Turkish activism and solidarity have increased the admiration of African people for Turkey[47].

Initially, Turkey has operated in Africa like the other non-Western actors in

the field of economic development and humanitarian aid, without concern for political issues which remain conventionally the scope of Western powers such as the EU countries and the United States. For Turkey, humanitarian and development assistance were and remain a means to strengthen bilateral relations with the governments of affected states. The Ankara government has also used its membership in multilateral organizations and other international fora to reach Africa and gain credibility in African eyes[48]. Since August 2011 the Ankara government has assumed more political responsibilities in the region without being merely an economic power or a donor country[49]. In front of the Syrian stalemate, Turkey has decided to focus its commitment in regions among which the Horn of Africa, where the Turkish government could enjoy greater autonomy than in the Middle East. In the Horn of Africa Turkey experiences its soft power-oriented approach characterized by complementarity of action between state and non-state actors through the implementation of humanitarian aid, peace-building and development assistance policies. Turkey's presence in Somalia points to a shift in its focus toward the political aspects of the region's problems; a change that has made Turkey a 'hybrid' non-traditional actor. This is because Turkey combines a traditional political-stability perspective (US, UE) with an economic-trade perspective of emerging powers (China, India, Brazil)[50].

Turkey in its relations with African countries has two advantages compared with traditional Western actors: the absence of a colonial past that makes possible a 'clean slate approach'[51] and the existence of cultural, historical[52] and religious ties[53]. If the historical past is an obstacle for Western players, Turkey emphasizes its imperial past[54] and uses it to retrieve old identity links. Compared to other emerging actors, Turkey gives a religious meaning to its assistance; i.e. most of the works carried out by NGOs are promoted as Islamic solidarity[55]. The gradual rehabilitation of the religious dimension in Turkish foreign policy must be included in the multi-dimensional nature as a tool of its soft power. This dynamic was initiated with Turkey's diplomatic rediscovery of the Muslim world[56] and demonstrated by their role assumed abroad by the Directorate for Religious Affairs (DIB). In Africa DIB acts through its non-profit foundation *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi*[57] and promotes the spread and development of Sunni-Hanafi education through the opening of *Imam Hatip*[58], materials distribution and the organization of meetings between African religious leaders and their Turkish counterparts. [59].

A common feature between Turkish NGOs and business associations that operate in Africa is their shared Islamic background and direct link with pro-Islamic civil society and the new Muslim bourgeoisie[60]. Although civil society organizations deliver humanitarian assistance and aid to various Muslim and non-Muslim communities, their initiatives continue to be made mostly with a religious motive. The action of these NGOs are strengthened by a narrative focused on a faith based understanding of goodwill and benevolence, the main tenets of Islam[61]. Notwithstanding that

this religious bond is an important part of Turkey's rapprochement with Africa, it should not be overestimated as considered by Wheeler[62]. Moreover, the religious dimension in African environments presents several limits: i) Turkish NGO activities clash with those of other Islamic NGOs which have operated in Africa since 1970s and are linked to the Gulf monarchies[63] and affiliated to Islamist political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood[64]; ii) in some cases, as in Nigeria , Turkish efforts could seem sectarian oriented losing its neutrality creed; iii) the absence of control over NGOs and foundations increases the risk of infiltration by radical forces and relationships with terrorist groups.

## Turkey's opening to Somalia

Since the dissolution of Siad Barre regime in 1991, Somalia has been dragged into civil war and become the most famous 'failed state' in the world[65]. The Somalian civil war erupted at a time of profound change in the international order and Somalia became a testing ground for a new form of international engagement on an unprecedented scale[66]. Throughout the 1990s, the void created by the sudden loss of interest in Somalia on the part of the international community was in part filled by several Islamic NGOs, linked to different Muslim states and Islamist movements, which took over responsibility for reactivating the fundamental social services involving Somali professionals and civil society[67]. Since 1996, among these faith based NGOs was one of Turkey's most important humanitarian organizations, the Human Relief Foundation (İHH). Even

though İHH has operated in Somalia with small and localized projects, its activities established Turkey's first ties with local actors such as Somali NGOs. Between February and March 2011, several representatives from Somali civil society, who have collaborated with İHH, requested aid to face the growing famine and the spread of diseases[68]. After the efforts of İHH and other NGOs , the Turkish government also took steps towards recognizing the unfolding tragedy in Somalia and opened a privileged channel offering humanitarian aid to the Somali people.

Turkey's diplomatic rapprochement with Somalia formally began with the Istanbul Conference on Somalia in May, 2010 as part of the Djibouti Agreement[69] and long political transition process started in 2004. The real turning point marking Turkish commitment towards Somalia was Erdogan's visit during the holy month of Ramadan in the summer 2011. Erdoğan was the first non-African leader to visit Somalia in nearly two decades. The Turkish Prime Minister brought his family and an entourage consisting of various cabinet members, visiting refugee camps and hospitals to witness the devastation caused by the severe drought. The trip aroused both media attention and Turkish feelings; as a result, Turkey's public got involved through financial donations and a social-media campaign. This wide participation of Turkish people has made the intervention in Somalia somewhat of a 'domestic' issue[70] which has in turn driven the government's actions. In the summer 2011 a widespread campaign in Turkey, led by NGOs such as İHH, Kimse Yok Mu (KYM), Deniz Feneri Derneği and Cansuyu Char-

ity made a considerable contribution in finding substantial resources for relief efforts raising over $365 million in humanitarian aid[71]. Erdoğan's visit had an important symbolic meaning because it showed to the Turkish people that it wasn't dangerous to go to Somalia, and to the Somali's, that they weren't alone. Indeed, the feeling of being completely isolated from the international community was widespread among Somali people. The presence of a diplomatic office[72] and infrastructure connections[73] symbolized the reopening of the country to the world and was a great step in the process of normalization in Somalia.

In addition to several psychological implications, Erdoğan's trip also had important logistic and organizational consequences. After its involvement, the Turkish government created a single-integrated strategy of Turkey's humanitarian assistance toward Somalia which, as stated by Davutoğlu, represents "one of the visible examples of Turkey's humanitarian oriented foreign policy"[74]. Erdoğan's trip was highly significant in political terms as it brought the Somali situation onto the international agenda and paved the way for the participation of more intergovernmental organizations.[75] At the same time, Turkey's commitment in mediation and the peacebuilding process among Somalia's warring factions has showed a new role assumed by the Ankara government as a political player in Africa.

Despite Somalia being recognized as a single unitary state by the international community, it is in reality a fractured state, an agglomerate of 13 self-governing federal states[76] and three separate state entities, each with their own population and national identity[77]: i) Somali Federal Government (SFG)[78]; ii) Puntland[79]; iii) Somaliland[80]. At the political and intra-state level, Turkey supports national reconciliation and the preservation of the territorial integrity of all Somalia. For that reason Turkey has promoted the strengthening of SFG institutions, concurrently seeking the involvement of other political entities through dialogue and bilateral meetings[81]. Turkey emerged as an active actor and brought the issue to the UN General Assembly meeting, calling on the international community to undertake a continued approach in order to find a long-lasting solution. As part of its diplomatic efforts, Turkey hosted the second Istanbul Conference on Somalia between May 31 and June 1, 2012. Even though the event was not instrumental in radically changing the future of Somalia, it was hugely successful for the image of Turkey. Regardless of the long-term results of their involvement in Somalia, Turkey was elevated to the position of being a 'new humanitarian aid power' in Africa[82]. The conference was attended by a large number of international and regional actors and all Somali parties. The Ankara government has shown its autonomy without external pressures, acting in a position of impartiality towards all factions involved[83]. The conference also demonstrates how Turkish mediation efforts takes into account the 'voice' of the average Somali people in spite of the reluctance of the international community[84]. Turkey forecasts that strengthening the public and private sectors will ultimately contribute to greater national cohesion. Even though Turkey's position

is to support the central government and the territorial integrity of the country, the Ankara government developed very good relations with all the separate state entities, including Somaliland and Puntland.

## Peculiarities of the Turkish action in Somalia

In Somalia the Turkish mediation strategy stresses as its first goal the study of conflict, to understand its causes and also the reasons of the failure of previous mediation attempts. As Davutoğlu argued, mediation cannot achieve success without mutual trust because the psychological dynamics of a dispute cannot be understood without empathy[85]. Between 1991 and 2009 Somalia witnessed the failure of over 12 mediation attempts, failures due to several reasons which increased a general lack of confidence of the Somali parties involved in the conflict[86]. Turkey has understood the need to overcome this obstacle by working actively at ground level and it has structured its intervention in the framework of soft power and confidence building strategies.

In order to break the mistrust of Somali people, Turkey has implemented its 'total performance' policy with strong humanitarian rhetoric and the use of direct aid delivery mechanisms. In fractured contexts the main risk is that aid never appears as neutral resources but part of a hidden agenda. For that reason, Turkey has worked to gain the confidence of all the actors through the use of the humanitarian creed of neutrality as a core principle[87]. Humanitarian discourse has been used to legitimize Turkey's

engagement and, at the same time, providing comprehensive humanitarian aid creates an umbrella on the ground under which Turkish assistance can appear transparent and neutral. In this multifaceted scenario, the role of civil society organizations have become crucial for their ability to create links through visible assistance which facilitate winning trust. The presence of non-state actors (NGOs, charities and businesses) in cooperation with the official diplomacy (ministries and state institutions) fosters interpersonal dialogue and engagement with Somali actors. Turkey's decision to operate from Mogadishu, while most of the foreign NGOs operate from Nairobi[88], has improved knowledge of the Somali environment. Furthermore Turkey's presence on the field through the direct aid mechanism has increased its popularity among Somali officials and people. This mechanism has empowered and engendered confidence in the local population by signaling that they can be trusted as equal partners. Thanks to the old ties on the ground Turkey is able to bypass intermediaries and to deliver aid to final beneficiaries. NGOs micro-level visible assistance touches people lives directly and facilitate winning trust. Unlike the approaches often taken by Western and non-Western organizations, Turkey's initiative has the merit of involving local people in its activities and long-term projects[89].

A key factor in ensuring the effectiveness of Turkish engagement is the coordination of activities on the ground. The coordination of Turkish state and non-state actors in Somalia as well as in other countries is provided by an insti-

tutional framework at the top of which are both the Prime Minister's Office (The Disaster and Management Presidency, AFAD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main role is played by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). TIKA is the official state body of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) linked to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). TIKA represents an operative branch of Ankara's government with the aim of paving the way for subsequent public and private initiatives in three main areas: humanitarian aid, assistance in the development of the country and making financial investments to consolidate business[90]. TIKA's uniqueness and pivotal role in foreign policy has been bestowed via Davutoğlu's doctrine[91]. In addition to various ministries[92], a notable commitment is also provided by the Turkish Red Crescent (*Kızılay*)[93], the largest charity in Turkey. In terms of development, Turkey concentrates primarily works on four areas: health, education, infrastructure[94] and the establishment of institutional buildings.

In Somalia, Turkey has chosen to invest in youth education through the reconstruction of schools and the provision of scholarships,[95] but also by facilitating private schools founded by NGOs[96]. Turkish intervention in the education sector in Somalia shows a joint action of state (Ministry of Education, Dyanet, TIKA) and private sector (KYM, IHH). Turkey invests heavily in local capacity building through training programs and creates local jobs with lots of Somalis acting as translators, labourers and representatives for Turkish organizations. Thus, Tur-

key's humanitarian assistance efforts can be considered long-term relationship building tools.

In Turkish mediation efforts non-state actors help foster the inclusiveness of all conflict parties and increase mutual trust, which are central aspects of Turkey's conflict sensitive method. The activities of civil society organizations allow the access to local channels and agents that the state officials can't or don't want to reach. The NGOs ability to build mutual trust and dialogue leads to the inclusive approach of all factions during talks and negotiations. Consequentially during the mediation process Turkey's officials are then able to use links and credibility gained by its own non-state actors which help to pursue the commitments made at the negotiating table.

## Limits and dilemmas

Turkey's partial success in Somalia has not only increased Somali hopes but has also demonstrated Turkey's intention on becoming influential at a regional level via its soft-power and humanitarian oriented policy. Turkey aims to strengthen its role and its image as a 'new' political actor in Africa and to ensure stability in the region of East Africa. For Turkey, Somalia is a gateway into the Horn of Africa, an area which represents an important crossroads of global visions but also clashes. In this region the Ankara government has cultivated many strategic interests, pursuing an integrated approach which acknowledges the interconnectedness of Eastern African countries. Turkey promotes stability in Somalia in order to create peace and the development' conditions for the whole

region and to limit the rising of a regional leading power as Ethiopia.

However Turkey's involvement in Somalia has many limits. While the 'total performance policy' has served to breach Somali lack of confidence, the coordination among state organisms, Turkish NGOs and Somali governments remains a great limit of Turkey's initiative. This issue is further exacerbated by the fragmented condition of official institutions and their endemic corruption. Furthermore, the Turkish method of direct delivery aid has advantages but also risks, as Turkey's officials and NGO members have sometimes bypassed state channels, a practice that undermines the state-building process that they are hoping to support. The weak performance in the state-building process of the SFG, generated frustration in Turkey and opened a period of warm relationships[97].

While Turkey has demonstrated its ability to manage local tensions through mediation and the peace-building process, Somali politics, both internally and regionally, are more complicated. In order to ensure national reconciliation Turkey will need to address the interests and needs of both internal and external actors. The Somali case has showed how Turkey's position in terms of influence on security and political issues remains less powerful to that of traditional actors. Additionally, the destabilizing role of Al-Shabaab is only part of a greater issue. The weakness of Somalia's state structure and security forces continues to be an obstacle in establishing greater national security. As Turkey's influence in the region expanded, not only Somali movements but also other surrounding countries were discomforted by what they perceived as political competition. Turkey's support of SFG collides with the position of the two major states in the region, Ethiopia and Kenya, that are against a strong and established Somali central government.

Finally, a dilemma remains about the real autonomy of Turkish civil society and if its foreign activities often coincide with those of the state. It is still questionable whether civil society would support Turkey's foreign policy priorities and interests. During the last decade Turkish businessmen and NGOs affiliated either with the Gülen movement or close to the AK Party government have subsequently become the leading implementers of Turkey's public diplomacy. The consequences of the domestic political warfare between the ruling party and the Gülen movement may partly affect Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy. Moreover, Al-Shabaab attacks on Turkish offices and aid convoys nourish doubt among Turkey's public which could lead to a decrease in support for the mission in the near future. Turkey's humanitarianism requires constant negotiation between its humanitarian purposes and its concrete interests; Turkey needs to understand how long humanitarianism and its self-interest can coexist in a no trade-off situation.

In this chapter, I have shown that Turkey's current policy in Somalia represents an example of coordinated action between state and non-state actors, following Davutoğlu's principle of 'total performance'. It has been argued that the involvement of civil groups in Turkish foreign policy was crucial to gain the con-

fidence of Somali people on the ground, overcoming some of the obstacles encountered by other external players. 'Total performance' has been expressed by Turkey in Somalia through a balanced use of development assistance and wide mediation efforts both empowered by the use of strong humanitarian discourse. In Somalia, Turkey has understood that a coordinate partnership between state and non-state actors can lead to success in crisis situations and improve Turkey international image and appeal. The process of clarifying and institutionalizing Turkey's 'total performance' policy is ongoing but the integrate involvement of non-state actors distinguishes it as an original approach useful to Turkey's desire to become more autonomous as an international actor.

## Notes

1 In the traditional classification, non-state actors are divided into two categories: international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and transnational or international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The work refers to the second category of non-state actors. They are established not by nation-states, but by certain group of individuals, businessmen and other societal forces. This group has no legal bonds with nation-states; therefore, they are truly transnational. See Lynn Miller, (1994), *Global Order: Values and Power in International Politics*, Westview Press, Boulder; Brown, Seyom (1995), *New Forces, Old Forces, and the Future of World Politics. Post-Cold War Edition*, Harper Collins College Publishers, New York.

2 This study takes into account Davutoğlu's foreign policy doctrine, evaluate its relevance to current Turkish foreign policy-making, as well as its limitations. Without mixing Davutoğlu's academic theory with his actions as an advisor and Foreign Minister there are few doubts that the new course of Turkey's foreign policy has been strong influenced by his ideas. See Şaban Kardaş, (2010), "Turkey: Redrawing the Middle East map or building sandcastles?", in *Middle East Policy*, 17(1), pp. 115-136; Ziya Öniş, (2011), "Multiple Faces of the 'New' Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", in *Insight Turkey*, 13(1), pp. 47-65.

3 The 'zero problems with neighbours' policy allowed Turkey to adopt a constructive approach towards its neighbourhood, and provided it with new tools. The main aim of 'zero problems' was minimizing the troubles in Turkey neighboring regions. Bülent Aras, (2009), 'The Davutoğlu era in Turkish foreign policy', in *Insight Turkey*, 11(3) pp. 127-142. There are several works on the issue among which: Ömer Taşpınar, (2012), 'Turkey's strategic vision and Syria', in *Washington Quarterly*, 35(3), pp. 127-140; Tarık Oğuzlu, (2012), 'The Arab Spring and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's zero problems with neighbors Policy', in *SAM Paper*, (1); Sinan Ülgen, (2012), "A transformed Turkey: what is the role for Ankara as a regional power?", in *SAIS Review*, 32(2); Şaban Kardaş, (2012a), "From Zero Problems to leading the change: making sense of transformation in Turkey's regional policy", *TEPAV-ILPI Turkey Policy Brief Series*, 1(5); Robins, Philip (2013), 'Turkey: the foreign policy of a newly activist power', *International Affairs*, 89(2), pp. 381-397; Aras, Bülent (2014), 'Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy Revisited', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 16(4), pp. 404-418.

4 Taşpınar op. cit.; Ülgen op. cit.

5 Ahmet Davutoğlu, (2008), 'Turkey's New Foreign Policy Vision", in *Insight Turkey*, 10(1), pp. 77-96.

6 Jürgen Baudner, (2014), "The Evolution of Turkey's Foreign Policy under the AK Party Government", in *Insight Turkey*, 16(3), p. 87.

7 Şaban Kardaş, (2012), "From Zero Problems to leading the change: making sense of transformation in Turkey's regional policy", in *TEPAV-ILPI Turkey Policy Brief Series*, 1(5).

8 Ahmet Davutoğlu (2012), "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring", in *TEPAV-ILPI Turkey Policy Brief Series*, 1(3).

9 Fidan op. cit., pp. 91-92; Aras (2014) op. cit., p. 409.

10 Haşimi Cemalettin (2014), "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy and Development Cooperation", in *Insight Turkey*, 16(1), pp. 127-145.

11 Ahmet Davutoğlu (2013b), "Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy: objectives, challenges and prospects", in *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 41(6), pp. 865-870.

12 Minear Larry and Smith Hazel eds. (2007), *Humanitarian Diplomacy: Practitioners and Their Craft*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo; Christopher Lamb (2008), 'Humanitarian diplomacy', 26 June 2008, available at: http://www.

ifrc.info/en/newsand-media/opinions-and-positions/speeches/2008/humanitarian-diplomacy; Régnier Philippe (2011), The emerging concept of humanitarian diplomacy: identification of a community of practice
and prospects for international recognition", in *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93(884), pp. 1211-1237.

13 According to a research conducted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

14 Pınar Akpınar (2013), "Turkey's Peacebuilding in Somalia: The Limits of Humanitarian Diplomacy', in *Turkish Studies*, 14(4), pp. 735-757.

15 Davutoğlu (2013b) op. cit.

16 See the Final Declaration of the Fifth Annual Ambassadors Conference, URL:http://www.mfa.gov.tr/final_declaration_of_the_fifth_annual_ambassadors_conference.en.mfa

17 Davutoğlu (2013b) op. cit., p. 866.

18 Tabak Hüsrev, (2014), 'Nongovernmental humanitarianism in Turkey: The quest for internationalist virtue', 12 December 2014, http://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/2014/11/20/nongovernmental-humanitarianism-in-turkey-the-quest-for-internationalist-virtue

19 Cevik Senem, (2014), "*The Rise of NGOs: Islamic Faith Diplomacy*", 27 May 2014, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/rise-ngos-islamic-faith-diplomacy

20 According to the 2013 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, Turkey—with a budget of $1 billion for humanitarian assistance—ranked as the fourth-largest humanitarian aid donor of the Official development assistance (ODA) in 2012, after the United States, the EU, and the United Kingdom.

21 Andrea Binder, , Claudia Meier and Julia Steets (2010), "Humanitarian Assistance: Truly Universal? A Mapping Study of Non-Western Donors', *Global Public Policy Institute Research Paper*, (12).

22 Riva Krut, (1997), *Globalization and Civil Society: NGO Influence in International Decision-making*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva. See also: Charnovitz, Steve (1997), 'Two Centuries of Participation: NGOs and International Governance', *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 18(2), pp. 183-286; Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink (1998), 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', International Organization, 52(4), pp. 887-917;. Snyder, Richard C., H.W. Bruck, Burton Sapin and Valerie Hudson (2003), *Foreign Policy Decision-Making, Revisited*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

23 Davutoğlu argued that "there have been contributions from several of Turkey's public institutions and NGOs, ranging from Turkish Airlines to TIKA, Kızılay, TOKI and Emergency Disaster Management Presidency (AFAD)". Davutoğlu (2013b) op. cit., p.867.

24 Öniş op. cit., p.56.

25 Altay Atlı, (2011), "Businessman and diplomats" in *Insight Turkey*, 13(1), pp.109-128.

26 Solberg uses 'pro-Islamic' as an umbrella term for a variety of organizations and movements that are grounded in Islam and therefore can be distinguished from the dominant secularist ideology in Turkey. Some of them can be termed Islamist in the narrow sense of the word, but a majority of Islamic organizations and movements accepts the secular state and is rather seeking to exert influence at the social and cultural level. Anne Ross Solberg, (2007)," The role of Turkish Islamic Networks in the Western Balkans', in *Southeast Europe Journal of Politics and Society*, 55(4), p.432.

27 Ivi.

28 Rasim Dönmez, Özgur and Pinar Enneli eds. (2011), *Societal Peace and Ideal Citizenship for Turkey*, Lexington Books, Plymouth. See also: Yavuz, Hakan M. (2003), *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, New York.

29 Keyman, Fuat E. and Ahmet İçduygu (2003), "Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey: Actors, Boundaries and Discourses", in *Citizenship Studies*, 7(2), pp. 219-234.

30 AKP government assigned the status of 'public-service associations' to civil society organizations with several tax and administrative benefits.

31 Zeynep Atalay, (2013), "Civil Society as Soft Power: Islamic ONG and Turkish Foreign Policy'" in Riva Kastoryano (ed.), *Turkey between Nationalism and Globalization*, Routledge, New York.

32 Baunder, op. cit., p. 94.

33 İpek, Volkan and Gonca Biltekin (2013), 'Turkey's foreign policy implementation in sub-Saharan Africa: A post-international approach', *New Perspective on Turkey*, (49), pp. 121-156; Demirtaş, Birgül (2013), "Turkey and the Balkans: Overcoming Prejudices, Building Bridges and Constructing a Common Future", in *Perceptions*, 18(2), pp. 163-184.

34 Bülent Aras, (2012), "Turkey's Mediation and Friends of Mediation Initiative", in *TEPAV-ILPI Turkey Policy Brief Series*, (6), pp. 1-7.

35 Münevver Cebeci, ed. (2011), *Issues in EU and US Foreign Policy*, Lexington Books, Plymouth.

36 Ahmet Davutoğlu, (2001), *Stratejik Derinlik*, Küre, İstanbul, p. 83.

37 Aras (2009), op. cit., p. 137.

38 'Davutoğlu says civil society key in development of LDCs', *Sunday Zaman*, May 8, 2011, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-243200-davutoglu-says-civil-society-key-in-develop-

ment-of-ldcs.html

39  The visits of Turkey's officials on the field give a symbolic endorsement to the organizations.

40  Korkut, Umut and Ilke Civelekoglu (2013), "Becoming a Regional Power While Pursuing Material Gains: The Case of Turkish Interest in Africa", in *International Journal*, 68(1), p. 191.

41  Özkan Mehmet, (2012), "A New Actor or Passer-By? The Political Economy of Turkey's Engagement with Africa", in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14(1), pp. 113-133.

42  Birol Akgün, and Mehmet Özkan (2010), "Turkey's Opening to Africa", in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 48(4), pp. 525-546.

43  The number of Turkish embassies in Africa has risen from 12 of 2009 to 34 in 2013.

44  Mehmet Özkan, (2010), "What Drives Turkey's Involvement in Africa?", in *Review of African Political Economy*, 37(126), pp. 533–540.

45  The event ended with the signing of "The Istanbul Declaration on Turkey-Africa Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future'' and its annex ''Framework of Cooperation for Turkey-Africa Partnership''.

46  Nicolas Fait, (2013), "African migrations toward Turkey: beyond the stepping stone", *Ankara Üniverstesi SBF Dergisi*, 68(1), pp. 21-38.

47  Gökhan Bacik, and Isa Afacan (2013), "Turkey Discovers Sub-Saharan Africa: The Critical Role of Agents in the Construction of Turkish Foreign-Policy Discourse", in *Turkish Studies*, 14(3), pp. 483-502.

48  Until 2011 Turkey's engagement in Africa was included into the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) international strategies whose aim has been bringing development and stability through peacekeeping interventions under the auspices of UN.

49  'Turkey and the Horn of Africa: Emerging Interests and Relations', *Africa Meeting Summary* at Chatham House, June 28, 2012, http://www.chathamhouse.org/events/view/183463.

50  Mehmet Özkan, (2013), "Turkey's Religious and Socio-Political Depth in Africa, Emerging Powers in Africa", in *LSE IDEAS Special Report*, (16), pp. 45-50.

51  The term has been quoting by former President Abdullah Gül during a visit in Africa. By "clean slate," Gül was presumably alluding to the crucial fact that Turkey has never been a colonizing power in the region. Abdirahman Ali, (2011), "Turkey's Foray into Africa: A New Humanitarian Power?", in *Insight Turkey*, 13(4), pp. 65-73.

52  Turkish leader emphasize these historical ties: "You are home, Turkey is your motherland, sixteenth century Ahmed Gurey fought occupying forces with Ottoman support". 'Ope-

ning Remarks by Foreign Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu', Somali Civil Society Gathering, Istanbul, 27 May 2012.

53  Abdihakim Aynte, 'Turkey's Role in Somalia: A New Ally?', CESRAN Analyses on Turkey and Neighborhood, 10 April, 2012, http://cesran.org/turkeys-role-in-somalia-a-new-ally.html

54  "Turkey has historical links with Somali dating back to the 16th century, the era of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. In some parts of Somalia, you can still see the heritage of the Ottoman Empire. The empire built water channels, castles and mosques". Interview Turkish ambassador to Somalia, Kani Torun, *Daily Sabah*, 9 June, 2014, http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2014/06/10/somalias-longlost-brother-turkey-is-here-to-rebuild-the-country

55  Özkan (2013), op. cit., p. 48.

56  Stephen Larrabee, F. (2007), 'Turkey Rediscovers the Middle East', *Foreign Affairs*, 86(4), pp. 103-114.

57  For further info about Dyanet Foundation and its aims see Ömer Turan,  (2008), "The Turkish Diyanet Foundation", in *The Muslim World*, 98(2-3), pp. 370-384.

58  Turkish religious school.

59  Özkan (2013), op. cit.,

60  Turkish humanitarian NGOs are faith-based organization, which means formal organization whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions. Berger, Julia (2003), "Religious Nongovernmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis", in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 14(1), pp 15-39.

61  Cevik, op. cit. For further information about humanitarianism in Muslim world see Mamoun Abuarqub, and Isabel Phillips (2009), *A Brief History of Humanitarism in the Muslim World*, Birmingham: Islamic Relief Worldwide.

62  Tom Wheeler,  (2011), "Ankara to Africa: Turkey's outreach since 2005", in *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 18(1), pp. 43-62.

63  The Arab world played a major role in contributing to the creation and diffusion of the Islamic NGOs in Africa

after the profits of the 1973 and 1979 oil crises began to be channelled into foreign policy also though Official

Development Assistance funds. For further information about the issue see Saggiomo, 2012.

64  Mohamed Salih,  (2004), "Islamic NGOs in Africa: the Promise and Peril of Islamic Voluntarism", in De Waal A. (ed.), *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, Shama Books, Addis Abeba; Stig Hansen, Jarle and Atle Mesøy (2009), *The Muslim Brotherhood in the wider Horn of Afri-*

ca, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Oslo.

65   According to the annual ranking by Foreign Policy and The Global Fund for Peace. URL: http://ffp.statesindex.org

66   Bradbury, Mark and Sally Healy (2010), 'Endless war a brief history of the Somali conflict', *Accord*, (21),pp.10-14.Initially international community intervened through two humanitarian operations (United Nations Operation in Somalia, UNOSOM I/II) led by US and approved by a UN Security Council Resolution n. 794. Following the battle of Mogadishu in 1993 there was the gradual withdrawal of the multinational forces and a long period of international isolation for Somalia began. Currently there is peacekeeping mission (African Union Mission to Somalia, AMISOM) operated by the African Union with UN approval in support of the SFG. For a critical analysis of international humanitarian intervention in Somalia see: Clarke, Walter C. and Jeffrey Herbst eds. (1997), *Learning from Somalia: the lessons of armed humanitarian intervention*, Westview Press, Oxford. For further info about AMISOM, see: http://amisom-au.org/

67   Jabril I. Abdulleh, (2008), "Civil Society in the Absence of a Somali State", in Heinrich Boll Foundation (ed.), *Somalia. Current Conflicts and New Chances for State Building*, Heinrich Boll Foundation, Berlin, pp. 70-87; Saggiomo, Valeria (2014), 'Rebuilding the State from Below: NGO Networks and the Politics of Civil Society in Somalia', in Luca Anceschi, Gennaro Gervasio and Andrea Teti (eds.), *Informal Power in the Greater Middle East: Hidden Geographies*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 129-142.

68   Interview with Serhat Orakçi, Africa Director, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, 29 May 2014.

69   Djibouti Agreement was signed by representatives of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia at the end of the peace conference held in Djibouti between May 31 and June 9, 2008 with the mediation of the UN Special Envoy to Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah.

70   Mehmet Özkan, (2014), *Turkey's Involvement in Somalia: Assesment of a State-Building in Progress*, SETA Publications, Ankara.

71   International Crisis Group, (2012, October 8). Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia. ICG Africa Briefing No. 92. Retrieved from http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/b092-assessing-turkeys-role-in-somalia.aspx.

72   Turkey reopened its Mogadishu Embassy in 2011.

73   In March 2012, Turkish Airlines launched flights to Mogadishu.

74   Davutoğlu (2013b), op. cit., p. 867

75   Somalis called Erdogan's visit an icebreaker and few months after Turkey's Prime Minister there was an official visit of UN's Secretary Ban Ki Moon. Erdogan brought Somali issue to the United Nations. See Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey Speech to the 66th UN General Assembly. New York, 22 September 2011, http://gadebate.un.org/66/turkey.

76   Currently there are lots self-governing regions in Somalia, such as: Ximan, Xeeb, Galmudug and Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a.

77   Matthew T. Gullo (2012), "Turkey's Somalia Adventure: The Quest for Soft Power and Regional Recognition", in *Research Turkey Policy Papers*, 01 June, 2012.

78   Mogadishu and southern Somalia are formally placed under control of the SFG which is internationally recognized as Somalia's official central authority. However, it remains a widespread anarchy and lawlessness with the threat of the al-Qaeda affiliated Islamic group Harakat al Shabaab (Al-Shabaab, 'the youth movement') that still controls the southern districts. About Al-Shabaab ideology and history see Stig Jarle Hansen (2012), *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

79   Puntland is a form of 'ethno-state' founded on the unity of the Harti clan. It includes the northern region of the country where an informal quasi-autonomous state, legally and politically similar to Iraqi Kurdistan was established in August 1998. Puntland recently has become internationally known as the home of Somali pirates. As non-secessionist state, Puntland embodies a 'building block' for a future federal Somali state.

80   Somaliland declared independence in 1991 as a Republic state and it includes semi-desert territory in North-West area on the coast of the Gulf of Aden. After 23 years of independence Somaliland has all the attributes of a sovereign state but it has still struggled to gaining diplomatic recognition as an independent state. Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. London: Progressio, 2008.

81   Turkey encouraging mediation talks between the parties and promote a set of indirect talks between the Transitional Federal Government and Islamic movements al Shabaab and direct talks between central government and the representatives institutions of Somaliland.

82   Ali, op. cit.

83   Hassan Abukar, M. 'The Istanbul Gathering of the Somali Civil Society', Wardheernews.com, 06 June, 2012, http://www.wardheernews.com/Articles_12/June/Abukar/06_The_Istanbul_Gathering_of_the_Somali_Civil_Society.html.

84  'Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia', *Policy Briefing - Africa Briefing*, No. 92, 10/2012.

85  From Davutoğlu's perspective a successful mediation effort has four dimensions: psychological, intellectual, ethical and methodological. See Ahmet Davutoğlu, (2013a), "Turkey's Mediation: Critical Reflections from the Field", *Middle East Policy,* 20(1), pp. 83-90.

86  From Somali perspective there are number of views as to why these attempts failure. Somali people often blame different external actors for: having their own agendas and interests (Ethiopia), lacking enough will for peacebuilding (US), arriving to late (UN) and lack of sufficient insight by mediators into the realities. The external interventions and their unwillingness to dialogue with all conflict parties has increased Somali dissent and distrust towards the international community. Ken Menkhaus, (2004), *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, Routledge, New York; Afyare Elmi, Abdi (2010), *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Islam and Peacebuilding*, Pluto Press, London.

87  Teri Murphy, and Auveen Woods, "Turkey's international development framework. Case study: Somalia", in *Istanbul Policy Center*, February 2014, http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SOMALIISBN1.pdf

88  Other international donors base themselves in Nairobi or in the heavily guarded ANISOM base in Mogadishu and rely on local but impersonal channels to send aid and provide assistance.

89  Some of the Turkish funds falls on the territory (purchases, rents) and boosting the local economy.

90  In Somalia TIKA's financed projects in Mogadishu include: drilling twenty boreholes, fencing and rehabilitating parts of Mogadishu airport, restoring some government buildings, and it also started rehabilitating Digfer Hospital. About TIKA activities see, http://www.tika.gov.tr/en

91  Erman Akilli (2015), "Turkey's Ever Expanding 'Helping Hand' over Latin America", in *Daily Sabah*, 6 January, 2015, http://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/2015/01/06/turkeys-ever-expanding-helping-hand-over-latin-america

92  The Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Scientific, the Ministry of National Education and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBİTAK).

93  One of Kızılay project is to clean up the streets and water channels, as the city was full of mountains of rubbish.

94  Turkey has built 86 kilometer-long roads - 22 kilometers of which have streetlights.

95  In 2012, Turkey spent $70 million on full scholarships to over 1,200 Somali students to study in Turkish universities.

96  Kieran E. Uchehara (2010), "Economic Cooperation and Scholarships to African Countries: The Case of Turkish Government Scholarships for African Countries", in *Istanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 9(17).

97  Abdurahman Jama, W. "Turkish Dissatisfaction with the Somali Federal Government (SFG) may lead to total withdrawal from Somalia", in *Wardheer News*, 19 May, 2014, http://www.wardheernews.com/turkish-dissatisfaction-somali-federal-government-sfg-may-lead-total-withdrawal-somalia/

# Turkey's foreign policy in Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era: a non-military approach

**Salih Doğan**

## Introduction

Turkey and Afghanistan have always enjoyed warm relations due to their strong cultural and historical connections. Immediately after Afghanistan gained its independence on 19 August 1919, under the leadership of Amanullah Khan, it established diplomatic contacts with Turkey – while Turkey's own Independence War (1919-1922) was still on going. Afghanistan was one of the first countries that officially recognized the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) and afterwards the Turkish Republic. The two countries signed the Turkey-Afghanistan Alliance Agreement, the first official agreement between the two states in Moscow on 1 March, 1921, before the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. After seven years, in May 1928, Amanullah Khan visited Turkey on the invitation of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and on the occasion a Treaty of Eternal Friendship was signed between Turkey and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, both countries opened embassies in each other's capitals. In 1934, Afghanistan became a member of the League of Nations with the support and diplomatic assistance of Turkey.[1] Both countries pursued similar strategies in terms of their foreign policy. Finally, Afghanistan was one of the parties to Saadabad (Nonaggression) Pact[2] – a non-aggression pact between Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan – that was signed on 8 July. The close relations both countries created at the time of their establishment and their first leaders (Ataturk and Amanullah Khan) had their ups and downs during their history but ultimately always preserved their strength.

Over the last 35 years Afghanistan has seen great tragedies, such as the Soviet invasion, civil war, a Taliban-led administration and the US-led NATO operations. Turkey has been one of the countries involved in the rebuilding of Afghanistan under NATO's scope in the post-2001 era. However, Turkey's relations with Afghanistan have not improved after these tragedies. The good relations between the two countries go back to the time of Turkey's War of Independence and Turkey's foreign aid to Afghanistan also started during that period. Perhaps the most important factors that have sustained healthy bilateral relations since then were the socio-cultural and religious similarities between the two countries.

Turkish-Afghan relations have gradually increased especially after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Being the only NATO member with a Muslim majority population back then, Turkey's presence in Afghanistan in the post-2001 era was of special importance. This sui generis position made Turkey an important actor in the eyes of the relevant regional and international powers on the Afghanistan issue.

In late 2001, when the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a multinational peace-keeping force established under NATO, started its operations, Turkey contributed by sending 300 soldiers[3].

Unlike other NATO member states, Turkey defined all of its soldiers as non-combatant forces.

Although Turkey has never sent combat troops to Afghanistan, the responsibilities that it took under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission have always been appreciated by the United States and other NATO countries. The civil initiatives that the non-combatant Turkish soldiers participated in and the activities of several Turkish non-governmental organizations were also praised and respected by the Afghan government and the Afghan people. At this point, the non-military or civil nature of Turkey's foreign policy in the region put Turkey in a unique position within the context of Afghanistan.

## Turkey's presence in Afghanistan in the post-2001 era

*Commandership of ISAF mission*
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which was founded at the Bonn Conference in December 2001, started its first mission in Kabul, maintaining the security of the city and its surroundings. However in October 2003, its domain of activity was extended to all of Afghanistan under the decision of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

NATO officially took the leadership of ISAF in Afghanistan on August 11, 2003, in accordance with the Bonn Conference held in December 2001 and UNSCR resolution 1386.[4] Before NATO assumed the command of the ISAF mission, Turkey headed the mission known as ISAF-II , under the leadership of Major General Hilmi Akin Zorlu, between 20 June 2002 and 10 February 2003. Turkey had 1400

non-combat troops when it led ISAF-II.[5] From 13 February 2005 to 5 August 2005, the term known as ISAF-VII and under the leadership of Lieutenant General Ethem Erdagi, Turkey also assumed the leadership of the ISAF mission and at the same time undertook responsibility for Kabul International Airport. Turkey deployed 1430 military personnel and three utility helicopters in Afghanistan during the ISAF-VII leadership.[6]

*Commandership of Kabul Regional Command Capital (RCC)[7]*
In 2007 Turkey took the role of Commander in Chief of Kabul Region for 8 months. Turkey's 1,800 soldier-strong military force assumed the same role and began operations on 31 October 2009, remaining for one year. Due to the special position of Afghanistan for Turkey and the central role the Kabul Regional Command was playing, in order to achieve security and stability in Afghanistan, Turkey was asked to extend its command for another year. On the 4 October 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) had decided to extend its command for another year starting from 1 November 2010.

Within the framework of NATO's unit operating in Afghanistan, namely ISAF, Turkey assumed this role from 1 November 2009, and continued to do so until 1 November 2013, based on the Turkish Security Forces' decision on 20 September 2012.[8]

A final decision taken in 2013 stated that Turkey's role as Commander-in-Chief of Kabul Region thus far extended for five terms in total, would continue until 31

December 2014, the date marking the end of the ISAT mission. The decisions to extend Turkey's leading role in those missions  can be related to the fact that Turkish Security Forces built a strong rapport with the Afghan people, through its communication skills which led to its great success in the implementation of the mission. This mission constitutes one of Turkey's contributions in the maintenance and sustainability of security and stability in Afghanistan. As of December 2014, 367 Turkish soldiers have been operating within ISAF missions; however, Turkey became the only country that increased the number of troops in Afghanistan after the end of the ISAF mission. Turkey currently has around 1000 troops in Afghanistan under the Resolute Support Mission.[9]

## Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

Apart from Turkey's contributions to the maintenance of peace and security in Afghanistan, its projects and efforts to improve the everyday life of ordinary Afghans are crucial. Turkey attaches great importance to these projects in the areas of education and health services and especially with regards to the betterment of governance in local governments concerned  with the reconstruction and social development of Afghanistan.[10]

Turkey has always argued that a purely military struggle is not enough to assure security and stability and consequentially its efforts are more focussed in the social and cultural spheres than on the military in Afghanistan. As a result Turkey has not sent a single combat soldier to Afghanistan and has made efforts to rebuild the country's infrastructure.

In this regard, Turkey established a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) on 12 November 2006. In addition to the PRT founded in the Vardak province, a second PRT was founded in Afghanistan's northern province, Jawzjan on 21 July 2010. By prioritizing such fields as education, health and agriculture in both of these provincial reconstruction teams, Turkish efforts have aimed at directly contributing to the quality of life  of the Afghan people.

The Turkish PRT based in Wardak, administered by a civilian diplomat, was the only provincial reconstruction team in the province, located 40 km west of Kabul. This team, consisted of 130 operatives and completed nearly 200 projects in four years with the help of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA). $30 million were spent and projects were primarily focused on education, health, and infrastructure areas that would develop the Afghans quality of life. Among them were also socio-cultural projects in which people could participate. The list of some of the projects was encouraging: in only 4 years, 68 schools have been established or restored, benefitting up to 65,000 students; nursing and midwifery education centres for women have been opened; a sport complex has been built at Kabul University; scholarships have been granted for education at foreign and national universities; 250 tons of humanitarian aid have been handed out across the country; clothing and school stationery has been donated; 17 hospitals and outpatient clinics have been built or reconstructed, benefiting nearly one mil-

lion Afghans; people living far away from urban centres have undergone medical check-ups; thousands of Afghan police officers and soldiers have been trained; education programs have been organized for judges, prosecutors and district governors; dozens of roads, bridges and drilling works have been completed.

In addition to the aid coming from the Turkish government, Turkish entrepreneurs have also completed projects worth nearly $2 billion between 2002 and 2010. During those eight years, 21 Turkish companies have made investments totalling nearly $200 million in Afghanistan.

The development of a second Turkish PRT aimed to improve the amount of investment and aid that could be given and to tailor it to the needs of the northern regions of the country. When the Afghan government announced its consent for the new team, the Jowzjan PRT was opened on 21 July, 2010 with the participation of the then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu. The head of the Jowzjan PRT, Afghanistan's 27th PRT, was again overseen by a civil diplomat assigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This PRT also included civilian agents from the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, TİKA, as well as a Police Special Operations Team and the Police Training and Mentor Team. The Jawzjan PRT was responsible for development and capacity-building projects in the northern provinces of Jawzjan and Sare Pol. With the Wardak PRT as a model, the aims of the second PRT were similar to the projects mentioned above.

By the end of the transition process, the powers of the PRTs were delegated from foreign countries to Afghan shareholders and some of them were shut down. In relation to this, Turkey ended the activities of the Vardar PRT on 12 August, 2013. Following the completion of the PRT, the campus used as its headquarters was turned into the Turkish-Afghan Friendship School and it was decided that it would be transferred to the Afghan authorities.[11] Wardak Province Turkish-Afghan Police Training Centre that operated within the same PRT was transferred to Wardak Governorate on 27 May, 2013. The PRT in Jawzjan continued its activities until 2013 and as of the end of 2014 it was transferred to Afghan shareholders.

Turkey's civilian efforts within the PRTs served as a good example for other countries that ran PRTs as well. For example, Turkey's assignment of a civilian as the head of its first PRT has been widely recognized by the international community and the demilitarization of PRTS has become one of the main topics in 2010, something that Turkey had implemented since 2006.[12] The demilitarization of PRTs was very significant because the mutual mistrust of NATO forces and Afghan civilians could only be solved by direct, mutual interaction. From a military perspective, the better the relations that armed forces have with locals, the easier it is to distinguish regular Afghans from Taliban militants.

# Turkey's mediation efforts for Afghanistan in the post-2001 era

*Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summits (2007-2014)*

In recent years, Turkey has been attempting to be an efficient actor in various international crises, making contributions incomparable to its position in the past. These attempts have not only been achieved by the state but also through NGOs taking on active roles. In this regard, the mediation efforts between Afghanistan and Pakistan are of great importance.

At the 'Workshop on International Trends on Mediation' held in Ankara on 6 November, 2013, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu noted that mediation has four dimensions and listed mediation initiatives as "within the country, between the countries, at regional level and at global level". [13] Davutoglu stated that Turkey's active foreign policy managed to achieve positive results in several mediation efforts. He considered the Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Summit within this framework and added, "we are organizing many mediation meetings in Istanbul. Now we are preparing to open a U.N. Mediation Center there". [14] This project can be seen as a means to deepen Turkey's role in this issue as well as to contribute to Turkey's reputation in the eyes of the UN.

The Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Summit process, which was started as an initiative by Ankara to contribute to mutual confidence building between Afghanistan and Pakistan, has been playing an important role since 2007. Several meetings have been held every year

and include the participation of various heads of states. The topics of each meeting have been moulded by the different events occurring every year. In addition the issues of dialogue, economic partnership, security, and education are regularly brought to the fore.

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have been accusing each other over their different approaches to the fight against terrorism especially after the increasing attacks of the Taliban militants in the post-2005 era. Tensions between the two countries reached a climax when they exchanged fire across their border. The then Afghan President Hamid Karzai accused the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, saying that the ISI has been aiding the Taliban militants and hiding the leader of Taliban Mullah Omar in Pakistan. [15] It was indispensable that a third-party mediation was needed for the two neighbouring countries to resolve their differences and disagreements in order to provide regional stability and security. It was in this difficult moment that Turkey launched an initiative to bring the leaders of two countries together.

The presidents of Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan met for the first time on April 29 and 30, 2007, in Ankara. The first summit was hosted by the then Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, with both the Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in attendance. [16] At the end of the first Trilateral Summit, the Ankara Declaration was released which expressed the leaders' strong will to maintain dialogue and respect each other's territorial integrity. [17] The declaration was important due

to the fact that it was the first joint statement signed by the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan, who also agreed to improve relations and not to intervene in each other's domestic affairs. Joint working groups were also established as part of the Trilateral Summit process in order to supervise the developments and keep the officials from both countries coordinated in establishing confidence building measures.[18]

The second Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit was held on December 5, 2008 in Istanbul with the participation of the newly elected President of Turkey Abdullah Gul, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari who replaced Pervez Musharraf on August 18, 2008.[19] The three presidents reinforced their commitment to collaborate on "promoting security, stability, peace, and economic development in the region".[20] It was agreed to develop security cooperation between the two countries at the end of the second summit as well. The fight against terrorism and drug smuggling were among the matters both parties had consensus on. An important step was taken in the business sector with the participation of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and its counterpart bodies from both countries, namely the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Pakistan, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Afghanistan, and the Istanbul Forum. This collaboration continued during the following summits, and was formed to gather, in addition ,the representatives of business world from the three countries.[21]

The third summit was held in Ankara on 01 April 2009, and the then Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended along with the presidents of the three participant countries. For the first time, the leaders were also accompanied by the highest-ranking intelligence officials of their countries, the General Chiefs of Staff and Army Staff, and was seen as a fruitful result of the former summits. Security, stability and the war against terrorism were among the top issues at the Summit. It was agreed that the above-mentioned authorities of the countries would continue to preserve trilateral talks at different levels. The three Foreign Affairs Ministers held a separate meeting during the Summit as well.[22]

With the Fourth Summit, held in Istanbul on 25 January 2010, concrete steps were taken on a wider spectrum of topics. The Ministers of Education of the three countries held a meeting before the Summit and agreed to cooperate in many fields such as the development of female education, cooperation between higher education institutions, exchange programs and school partnerships. The Fourth Summit proved that this initiative of Turkey had turned into an efficient platform for both countries to discuss the issues that could lead a secure and stable region. Immediately after the Fourth Summit, on 26 January, 2010, Turkey hosted Afghanistan's neighbours at the Istanbul Summit on Friendship and Cooperation in the heart of Asia. These efforts sought to prevent the isolation of Afghanistan within the region and create permanent and multilateral solutions for security and stability.

The Fifth Summit was held in Istanbul

on December 24, 2010, a year that witnessed two Trilateral Summits. The Ministers of the Interior of the three countries held trilateral meetings for the first time. The Directors of the Intelligence Services, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and high-level military officials held parallel trilateral meetings and presented the results to their respective Presidents during the Summit. The Sixth Summit was held in Istanbul on November 1, 2011. Before the trilateral summit of the Presidents, the Ministers of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, the Chiefs of Intelligence and Army Chiefs of Staff of the three countries held trilateral meetings, a practice that became quite regular as it clearly aided better and more in-depth communication between the authorities. It was also noted in the Sixth Summit that, in accordance with the decisions taken during the fifth one, the Urban Military Warfare Exercise was successfully conducted with the participation of Afghan and Pakistani military authorities in Istanbul in March 2011.[23] One day after the Sixth Summit, on November 2, 2011, a conference entitled 'Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan' was hosted by Turkey and held in Istanbul under the leadership of the then Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the then Turkish President Abdullah Gül. Afghanistan's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, support for the stability and peace in Afghanistan, and constructive and supportive relationship between countries of the region were among the topics which ranged from education to security, from economy to development challenges, and from the fight against terrorism

to drug trafficking.[24]

Ankara hosted the Seventh Trilateral Summit on December 11-12, 2012. Following the summit meetings, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari re-affirmed the value of Turkey's leadership for the constructive role that it plays in the vision of regional security, peace and stability. President Zardari also added that, "peace and stability in Afghanistan is in Pakistan's own best interest and, therefore, his country supports all efforts to this end".[25] The leaders also met with the then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who asserted that Turkey would continue to contribute towards a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and region. During the Summit, the Ministers of the three countries responsible for Transportation came together and discussed possible areas for cooperation. As a result, Afghanistan agreed to join a railway project called the Gul Train, named after Turkish President Abdullah Gül, which began services in 2009, and already connects Istanbul, Tehran and Islamabad. Chairman of the High Peace Council of Afghanistan Salahuddin Rabbani attended the trilateral Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting to discuss the Afghan-led and owned peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan.[26]

The Eighth Summit was initially planned for late 2013 but was subsequently postponed until February 2014. Although a summit was not held in 2013, agreements were signed as a reflection of the Seventh Summit during reciprocal visits and collaborations in education, health, economy and security were established. The Eighth Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit hosted by Turkish

President Abdullah Gul was held on February 12-13, 2014 in Ankara. This was the last summit for Turkish President Gul and Afghan President Hamid Karzai since both countries had presidential elections later in 2014 and neither were candidates. Pakistan was represented at the Prime Ministry level for the first time in the trilateral summits and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the summit. The theme of the Eighth Summit was 'Sustainable Peace in the Heart of Asia'. It was stressed in the summit that the post-2014 era will be important for both Afghanistan and the wider region and encouraged the international community to resume its backing for Afghanistan's socio-economic progress beyond 2014. Speaking at the joint press conference the then Turkish president Gül said, "We hold open, sincere and fruitful meetings concerning establishing peace in Asia, accelerating the Afghan peace process and reflecting the notion of working together between Afghanistan and Pakistan to all the institutions".[27]

It is worth recalling that before the Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summits, the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan were reluctant even to pose together in front of the cameras, let alone to gather around the same table. The first summits aimed at establishing an environment of mutual trust between Afghan and Pakistani leaders. The positive momentum in the bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan is a promising one for the future. There have been incidents that could potentially lead to bigger disagreements between the two countries; however, the ongoing summits and the trilateral and bilateral meetings between the authorities of several ministries, intelligence services, general staff and army staff have helped to ease the tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Turkey's Pakistan policy, as with its Afghanistan policy, is built upon establishing and maintaining regional stability and peace, in which Pakistan has an important role. This is one of the reasons that Turkey wanted to have Pakistan in this initiative. Turkey provides substantial support to Pakistan in strengthening its developing democracy; in its struggle with terrorism and radical movements; and in its efforts concerning socio-economic progress, which explain Turkey's regional approach in Afghanistan.

*Istanbul Process (Heart of Asia)*
Turkey has been successful in bringing the representatives of the two countries together via trilateral summits several times thanks to its good relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Concerning the trilateral summit process, President Abdullah Gül in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly opening session stated that: "Our goal is to create an atmosphere of dialogue, trust, mutual understanding and consensus. We all have our interests in a secure, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan,' adding that 'regional cooperation and support is essential. For this reason, I have personally initiated and led the efforts to establish the Trilateral Summit Process between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey. Since 2007, it has proven a real success, and I am confident that more success will follow".[28]

Aside from the trilateral summit process, Gül cites the 'Istanbul Conference

for Afghanistan' as another of the most efficient examples of this regional cooperation, co-chaired by the then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and his Afghani counterpart Zalmay Rassoul on November 2, 2011. After the first conference, the document entitled 'Istanbul Process for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan Regarding Regional Security and Cooperation' was adopted and the framework of the Istanbul process was shaped. The process aims to improve the political dialogue among participatory regional countries and supporting countries, implementation of Confidence Building Measures (CBM) and to improve regional cooperation focusing on Afghanistan.

One of the most important elements of the Istanbul process is that even though Turkey initiated the process, it is led by Afghanistan. In the Istanbul Process, there are also 14 participating countries[29] including Afghanistan and 16 supporting countries[30].

The second Ministers Conference was held in Kabul on 14 January, 2012. Turkey took part in all of the six CBM to be developed after the conference; namely counter terrorism, counter narcotics, disaster management, trade, commerce and investment opportunities, regional infrastructure, and education. Moreover, in the CBM regarding the counter terrorism, Turkey became a co-chair country in addition to United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan. After September 2012, relevant experts from participating countries held technical group meetings and made preparations for the implementation of CBM. In addition, since January 2012, there have been 10 Senior Officials Meetings (SOM), 11 Ambassador Level Meetings (ALM), and 19 CBM meetings. Senior Officials Meetings are one of the most significant efforts that demonstrate regional cooperation and support. At the first of these two-session meetings, regional countries make decisions on the process while at the second supporting countries are provided with these decisions for their consideration.[31]

The third Ministers Conference regarding the Istanbul Process was held in Kazakhstan's former capital Almaty on 26 April, 2013. The theme of the conference was 'Stability and Prosperity in the Heart of Asia through Building Confidence and Shared Regional Interests'. The meeting was co-chaired by the foreign ministers of Afghanistan and Kazakhstan and the implementation plan for the six confidence building measures developed during this process were adopted. Under the leadership of Afghanistan and the support of the regional countries, there has been serious progress in the process. With the third Ministers Conference, the Istanbul Process, launched by the government of Turkey, has completed its first step by adopting the Implementation Plans of the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) endorsed at the senior officials meetings of Baku, Kabul and Almaty. It was also committed to taking the Istanbul Process to the next level by delivering 'concrete results through implementation of CBMs and the consolidation of common interests through political consultations and dialogue.'[32]

The fourth Ministers meeting was held in Beijing, China and Turkey supported China's role to co-chair the process along with Afghanistan. The final declaration of the Beijing meeting is named 'Istanbul

Process: Deepening Cooperation for Sustainable Security and Prosperity of the 'Heart of Asia' Region'. There were  delegates from around 30 nations and regional organisations  at the Beijing meeting. The newly elected Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's participation to the meeting showed the importance of the Istanbul Summit for the future of Afghanistan and  regional cooperation.

In addition, in the Final Declaration of the Third Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States,  held in Azerbaijan on August 16, 2013 and including the participation of President Abdullah Gül , the heads of states of the countries present[33] declared that,

"They are emphasizing their support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan and expressing their readiness to further contribute to security, stability and development of the country through initiatives such as the Istanbul Process, for enhancement of regional cooperation not only during the transition period of pre-2014 but also during the transformation decade of 2015-2024; urged the Secretariat of the Turkic Council to identify modes of cooperation to take on a more active role as a supporting international organization of the Istanbul Process and follow up the issue in the meetings of security consultations."[34]

## Turkey's role in the post-2014 Afghanistan
*Resolute Support Mission (2015 - ...)*
The mission of NATO troops were transferred from combat to a supporting role with the beginning of the fifth and last phase of the Transition Process, which was the transfer of the security responsibilities of Afghanistan from ISAF to the Afghan National Security Forces, on June 18, 2013.[35] As a result of this change in mission,  the number of  international troops in Afghanistan fell  to under 100,000.  By the end of  2014, the Transition Process had been completed and the ISAF mission came to an end.

The end of the ISAF mission didn't mean that the NATO's presence in Afghanistan came to an end as well. NATO's new mission, Resolute Support Mission, became operative at the  beginning of  2015. Turkey has participated in this mission as one of the framework nations along with the United States, Germany and Italy.

In this context, Turkey supported the new Afghan government to sign off the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States and the Status of Forces Agreement with NATO, which would allow  the  international  powers  to  have troops in Afghanistan in the post-2014 era.

*NATO senior civilian representative in Afghanistan*
The most important factors enabling Turkey to be  active in Afghanistan are Turkey's unique status as a Muslim-majority NATO member state as well as its close diplomatic ties with Afghanistan. One example of such diplomatic ties is the NATO's Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) position in Afghanistan, which was initially created in October 2003 when NATO took the lead of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.[36] The SCR plays an important role in building bridges be-

tween NATO, the international community, neighbouring countries, the Afghan government, and civil society. While promoting NATO's political and military objectives in Afghanistan, the SCR formally represents the political leadership of the Alliance .

Following the establishment of the position, former Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin was appointed as the first NATO Senior Civilian Representative on 19 November, 2003. Hikmet Cetin served two terms as NATO SCR from January 2004 to August 2006 and his achievements won Turkey more support from Afghanistan and increased world public opinion in general.

On 17 November 2014, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg appointed Turkey's Ambassador to Afghanistan Ismail Aramaz as the next senior civilian representative (SCR) in Afghanistan and he took up his post with the beginning of NATO's Resolute Support Mission in early January 2015. A statement released by Turkey's foreign ministry underlined that Turkey firstly proposed Aramaz's appointment and his confirmation shows Turkey's leading role in NATO's operations.[37]

In a recent interview with Menekse Tokyay from SES Türkiye, Hikmet Cetin said "the appointment of Aramaz is a timely decision both for NATO's new mission and the stability of the region... A new page is turning in Afghanistan with the inauguration of the new mission when the foreign soldiers will be withdrawn to hand over control to the new Afghan government led by President Ashraf Ghani. Mr. Aramaz, along with the international community's assistance, will contribute a lot for the success of the implementation process of this new period".[38] According to Cetin, NATO's appointment of a Turkish diplomat to this strategic position also means that "NATO wants to show soft power in the new period, both in military and civilian terms, by using the deep-seated cordial ties between Turkey and Afghanistan".[39]

This appointment of Aramaz as NATO SCR in Afghanistan, especially in the challenging post-2014 era, is clearly important for Turkey. The status of being a Framework Nation, combined with Ambassador Aramaz's appointment as the new NATO SCR, show the importance, trustworthiness and necessity of Turkey for NATO with respect to Afghanistan.

## Incidents in Afghanistan that involved Turkish nationals since 2001

*The kidnapping of Turkish citizens in Afghanistan*

In a recent incident, on 22 April 2013, the Taliban took eight Turkish engineers hostage in the Azra region of Eastern Afghanistan's Logar province after a helicopter carrying the group was forced to make an emergency landing.[40] Since 2003 there have been 6 previous hostage takings by the Taliban of Turkish workers and engineers though thankfully these hostages were released.[41] Soon after being informed of the hostage situation, Turkey shared information on the wellbeing of the hostages by making endeavours through the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Taliban Spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who had confirmed the information that they had the hostages, also announced

that the hostages were well and that the Taliban leadership had not made a decision concerning the Turkish hostages.[42]

Head of Logar Province Council Abdulveli Vekil made a statement saying that the Taliban brought the hostages to a secure region, "I have been in contact with Taliban since this situation occurred. When I heard there were Turks among them, I left all my work and focused on this. From now on I will do my best until my Turkish brothers are released."[43] Both the National Intelligence Organisation and the efforts of the Afghan authorities resulted in the Taliban releasing four people on 12 May, 2013[44], and another four two days later.. Taliban Spokesman Mujahid in the meantime noted in his press release via email that all the hostages were released as a gesture of good will, stating , "Taliban wants to develop good relationships with the Turkish public and the Turkish government. The rest of the Turks, four of whom were released previously, were handed over to the competent authorities. Our friend and brother Turkey's being a Muslim country was the biggest factor in the release of these Turkish citizens."[45]

Additionally, as a result of the long-term efforts of the National Intelligence Services, construction technician Sertaç Dikilitaş, having been taken hostage by the Taliban on 9 December 2011, was released on 30 March 2013 after being held for more than fifteen months.[46] Truck driver Kerim Yeşil, kidnapped on 16 April 2013, was released on 14 July 2013 following the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoglu's efforts.[47] The releases of these Turkish citizens unharmed demonstrate Turkey's presence in the re-gion as well as showing how effective it's soothing power is on every side. Having only non-combatant soldiers in Afghanistan also plays an important role in such incidents.

*February 26 suicide attack on Turkish convoy in Kabul*
On 26 February 2015, a suicide bomber targeted a Turkish Embassy vehicle in Kabul, Afghanistan. One Turkish soldier and one Afghan passer-by were killed in the attack that happened in an area close to several embassies. The attack suddenly made one think about if Turkey, one of the four framework nations that serve in Afghanistan within the NATO Resolute Support Mission, was a target of the Taliban.

There should be a cautious approach to such incidents, which lead to the questioning of Turkey's presence in Afghanistan. The Afghan Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, which is the first one directed at a Turkish target since the beginning of the NATO mission in Afghanistan in 2001. There have been some accidents before that where Turkey has lost lives in Afghanistan but there were never as a result of a direct attack.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for Taliban, told the media that the target of the attack was a convoy of vehicles containing foreigners. However, when it was disclosed later that the vehicle belonged to Turkish diplomats, Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted that there had been a mistake and said 'the purpose of today's attack in Kabul was a convoy of US troops. The embassy or any other country nationals were not objective.' It was also stated that the Taliban had no hostility

towards Turkey and the Turkish people in Afghanistan. This statement is almost the same as the earlier responses that the Taliban gave following the similar incidents that happened between Turkey and the Taliban in Afghanistan. As it was noted earlier, the Taliban had released all the hostages without harming them when they learned that they were Turkish citizens in several hostage-taking incidents that took place in Afghanistan since 2003.

It needs to be questioned whether the Taliban would consciously target a Turkish convoy given that the country has won the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Turkey is pursuing a very transparent foreign policy in Afghanistan. The proximity between the two countries has reached the level of friendship and brotherhood, witnessed by the fact that Turkey maintains its presence in Afghanistan as a result of these good bilateral relations. Besides, Turkey, without a hidden agenda, pursues its contribution to Afghanistan by continuing to take part in projects that positively affect the daily lives of ordinary Afghans.

As of January 2015, there are only four framework nations left in Afghanistan who still have soldiers in the country, the United States, Germany, Italy and Turkey. Among them, Turkey was the only country that increased the number of troops in the post-2014 era. One of the reasons that Turkey increased its number of troops in Afghanistan is their enhanced security responsibility in Kabul and surrounding areas. Yet, Turkish troops remain non-combatant as they were in the missions from 2001 to 2014. During these 13 years, all those non-combatant troops served in the projects carried out on behalf of Turkey. In these circumstances and once it was discussed that Turkey might host the peace negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan administration, it is not likely that Turkey could be a direct target of the Taliban. Having been a more prominent actor in Afghanistan since the beginning of 2015 would not also trigger a Taliban attack against Turkish diplomats and soldiers in Afghanistan.

## Conclusion

Afghanistan has occupied an important place in world politics especially in the post-2001 era and Turkey has pursued a pro-active foreign policy toward Afghanistan during this period. Arguably, Turkey's relations with Afghanistan have been different from those of other countries. Historical, political and cultural links between Turkey and Afghanistan make it much easier and faster for contemporary relations to be built between them.

Turkey's perspective to take regional cooperation as a solution to the security and instability problems of Afghanistan, which was named as the 'heart of Asia' by the great Pakistani philosopher, poet and politician Muhammad Iqbal, has been the major influence on Turkey's approach to Afghanistan and other regional countries especially in the post-2001 era. Turkey has been advocating the importance of a civilian approach to Afghanistan and the involvement of Pakistan in order to resolve the main issues like terrorism and radical movements, thus Turkey has not taken different approaches to the regional countries because it would not help its cause.

The fact that Turkey did not take a different approach in its policies towards Afghanistan and Pakistan gave birth to the fact that these two neighbouring Muslim countries improved their relationship and that they built a close dialogue. At this point, Turkey attempted to preserve its friendly relations with these two countries. Additionally, Turkey has made and is still making great efforts to put an end to the distrust and enmity between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Being a NATO member and a Muslim majority country makes Turkey a key player in the eyes of many local and international actors regarding the Afghanistan issue. Although Turkey has not taken a role of engaging in active fighting, the NATO members, primarily the United States, have appreciated the duties that Turkey undertook in the ISAF mission and Afghan authorities have respected the civic initiatives in which Turkish soldiers also took part. Therefore, Turkey's civic foreign policy towards Afghanistan and the region makes Turkey an important actor for Afghanistan.

2014 was very important for the future of Afghanistan and the region. The two round presidential elections in Afghanistan, held in April and July 2014, was significant in the sense that for the first time an elected president has left his post to another elected president, which was a great step towards the democratisation of the country.[48] Therefore, the next few years are vital for the reinforcement of the progress made after 2001. In the post-2001 era, Turkey went on playing an active role in the prevention of the rise of violence, maintenance of security and stability and prevention of radical

thoughts and movements, and the creation of a strong security unit and good governance in Afghanistan.

With the Transition Period in Afghanistan at an end, the country's importance and interest in international public opinion has been a hot topic. It is possible for the interest in Afghanistan to decline, especially with the withdrawal of troops by the countries within NATO due to their losses. Turkey on the other hand still takes as determined steps concerning this situation as before and adopts a political approach towards enriching and developing its cooperation with Afghanistan. At the same time, Turkey stresses the importance of regional and global actors' involvement in the stability and peace process regarding the solution to the problems in Afghanistan, and stay in close contact particularly with Pakistan on this issue.

Afghanistan will need significant economic support from the international public during the Transformation Decade, which started at the beginning of 2015. In order to meet this need ,Turkey will be increasing its economic relationship with Afghanistan by making investments through both government , NGOs, and private institutions; carrying out projects that could positively affect the daily lives of the Afghan people.

Afghanistan has entered a critical period with the end of the transition process. 2014 has been the bloodiest year in Afghanistan since the beginning of the Afghan war following the September 11 terrorist attacks on US soil. The casualties of civilians and Afghan National Security Forces are at their highest level. Even during the time when the possibili-

ty of the international community losing interest in the country was talked about, the highest-ranking officials of Turkey stated that Ankara would continue to take decisive steps and contribute to the future of Afghanistan. The appointment of Turkey's ambassador to Kabul as the new NATO SCR is one of the many developments that show the commitment of Turkey on this issue. Indeed, Turkey's continued presence in Afghanistan after 2014 is based on this basic policy line, as said by Turkey's Permanent Representative in the United Nations Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan: "As long as Afghanistan continues its efforts to build a peaceful, safe and democratic country, Turkey will continue to help the Afghan nation reach that goal".[49]

## Notes

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# Enemies at the doors: Turkish foreign policy between Syria and Georgia

**Alessia Chiriatti**

## Introduction

"Asking who won a given war, someone has said, is like asking who won the San Francisco earthquake"[1].

This is a story about two different wars, fought in two countries for different reasons, but with one characteristic in common: the borders and the state in the middle. Everything starts from two points : two conflicts have exploded in neighbouring regions with which Turkey is intertwined for political and geographic reasons. "But are wars also akin to earthquake in being natural occurrences whose control or elimination is beyond the wit of man?"[2]. The question is resolving: the man in that case could be probably the former Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, otherwise the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Rarely has a state's foreign policy undergone such an intense transformation as Turkeys in the twenty-first century. When the AK Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*[3]) came to power, the precedent perception of a Westernized subjectivity, which characterized Turkish alignment since 2002, was substituted by a new individuality. The change started from the domestic policy, oriented by the 'Central Power Theory' and the 'Strategic Depth' theories, and had consequences on regional and international strategies:

the Turkish case is in this sense the real example of a multi-directional interconnectivity and penetration between these different systems of analysis. Turkey's involvement in a wider region since the 1990s, stretching from the Balkans to Africa, has to face a security dilemma within a realist understanding[4] of the balance of power: even if Ankara had tried to stipulate partnerships and cooperation with neighbouring countries, tensions have prevailed both for endogenous as for exogenous factors, remembering the disease of encirclement and dismemberment commonly known as Sèvres syndrome[5] that affected the policies aimed at maintaining the status quo through prudent behaviour at the international level[6]. The South Ossetia war in 2008 and Syrian uprising in 2011 were two contingent tests for Ankara, that have in a certain way arrested the enthusiasm for the emergence of a new Turkish model, in which the state has proven two different foreign approaches in order to demonstrate its prevention, and especially its reaction, to tectonic external forces. This paper is a study to explain how a "pivotal State"[7] could react to shocks and aftershocks in the structure of the regional system. The principal aim of this research is to respond to the following questions: how has Turkey reacted to the South Ossetia war in 2008 and the Syrian uprising in 2011? Firstly it will analyse the 'shift of axis' which corresponded to the AK Party's arrival at the government; secondly it will consider the two cases of war at the Turkish borders.

## Changes in Domestic Politics and the New Orientation of AK Party: a "shift of axis"?

During the election of November 2002, the AK Party won with 34% of votes, gaining the absolute majority in Parliament. This victory for the AK Party demonstrates that Turkish politics has undergone many changes , having swung during the previous decade between right-wing nationalism and religious revivalism[8]. It is now promoting principles rooted in the rhetoric of democracy, liberty and human rights. This metamorphosis should not be considered simply a top-down process of adaptation determined by the military intervention, but also the product of the urban middle-class basis in which the networks are mobilized to define the party as representative of the political core[9]. Erdoğan 's party was the expression not only of the traditional Islamist movement, but also based on a complex social framework, of which only one part was motivated by religion.. The following government, formed only by the AK Party and guided by Erdoğan from the start of the following year, governed Turkey from 2002 to the present with a high electoral turnout resulting 46% of the voting going to Erdoğan . It has maintained the promises made to Europe , and has had a tense relationship with the military. The AK Party[10] did not emerge from thin air: it grew out of a series of Islamist movements and parties in Turkey that evolved, learned and changed over a thirty-five year period. Founded in August 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan , the former mayor of Istanbul, the AK Party has been more skilful in managing foreign policy, the economy and reform issues than almost all other mainstream Turkish parties in recent decades.. Since 2002, Turkish foreign policy is structured entirely according to the ideas of of Ahmet Davutoğlu. He was one of the few academics who joined the AK Party. Developing his strategic vision and reconstruction of the idea of Ottomanism, his doctrine in foreign policy was briefly referred to as 'neo-Ottomanism' to characterize the overtures of Turgut Özal in the late 1980s. In his book 'Strategic Depth', published in 2001, Davutoğlu elaborates on his strategic vision about Turkey. He argues that Turkey possesses a strategic depth , due to its history and geographic position, and lists Turkey among a small group of countries, which he has called "central power". His theory has been founded on five principles of foreign policy and Davutoğlu's vision cannot but have an impact on the country's foreign policy activity[11]. "The originality of Davutoğlu's doctrine is important, but is not an asset per se. Any attempt of homegrown theorizing in international relations, especially if expressed in geopolitical terms, comes across as eccentric and sounds strange in Western academia"[12].

Turkey should not be content with a regional role in the Balkans or the Middle East, because it is not a regional but a central power. Hence, it should aspire to play a leading role in several regions, which could award it global strategic significance. In this view, Turkey could exercise its influence in Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf and Black Sea countries. Davutoğlu seems to reject the perception of Turkey as a bridge

between Islam and the West, as this would relegate Turkey to being an instrument for the promotion of the strategic interests of other countries. In this sense, there is an obvious and serious contradiction in relegating Turkey's EU membership ambitions to simply one of Turkish strategic priorities. According to Davutoğlu's view, Turkey's EU membership is important and desirable, but it is not considered Turkey's unique strategic orientation. On the contrary, it is put into context with Turkey's multiple strategic alternatives. Thus, it is in foreign policy, and particularly in the attempt to form a regional network accelerated by the explosion of the so-called Arab Spring, that AK Party's policy shows its concrete and problematic expression. Since the beginning the Turkish government, has not only opened more mediation with Syria but has also used soft power with Afghanistan and Pakistan[13]. In addition to Erdoğan , Ahmet Davutoğlu and his ideology on foreign policy and attempt to make Turkey a Great Regional Power, has sought to restore Turkey's role in the Eastern part with its position in the West: in other words, to promote Turkey as a real bridge and to abandon any kind of defensive definition.

One of the most important statements in Turkish foreign policy is "peace at home, peace in the world", promulgated by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk: it is only an attempt to defend Turkey from the foreign enemies, which are its neighbour. "The idea that Turkey is surrounded by its enemies has determined not only the paradigm but also the habitus of Turkish foreign relationship. A Turk has no friend other than a Turk"[14]. Besides, the Turkish dream to become a regional power in the Middle East was cultivated from Ataturk's empire. Davutoğlu, in his Strategic Depth, had shown his perspective on the return of Turkey in foreign policy: he stated that "Turkey should not be imprisoned within limits of geography surrounded by enemies on all sides"[15]. For this, ano zero sum approach is the most preferable for Turkish foreign policy:

"especially when the formula is applied to threefold relationships such as Turkey – Iran – United States or Turkey – Syria – Israel maintaining a relationship with Israel does not have to work against third parties such as Palestine, Iran on the Arab World, or vice versa. Maintaining relationship with all parties could alternatively be considered an opportunity for transforming a poor situation into alternative policies. Maintaining bridges is the best channel for the political itself"[16].

Bülent Aras states,[17]:

"Davutoğlu developed his foreign policy on the basis of a novel geographic imagination, which put an end to what he calls the alienation of Turkey's neighbouring countries. One essential component of Davutoğlu's vision is to make negative images and prejudices, particularly those pertaining to the Middle East, a matter of the past. This shift has enabled Turkey to completely foreign policy from chains of the domestic considerations".

Linked to the regional and geographical dimensions, we can moreover place Turkey within the so-called Strategic Medium Power (SMP): it holds a geostrategic position, influencing, even marginally, the international system, resisting pressures coming from major powers, bargaining with them. Like Israel, Iran

and Egypt in some cases, it is a "regional power under threat from a major power that can either resort to the balance of power by playing one major power against another or seek protection within an alliance"[18]. It depends on the nature of the international system: in a rigid bipolar system, a SMP easily has to adhere to one part, especially if its geostrategic position is considered as critical by the others. A SMP can be classified under two maincharacteristics: economic and military-strategic.

"A SMP must have a certain economic size and strength. The economy is already important per se; it is also the basis of military power, which is necessary for defence and to make a country's voice heard in international circles. An economy is never completely trouble free. If it is chronically in trouble, however, then a country will have to compensate by emphasizing the military and geostrategic dimension in order to preserve its strategic medium-power state"[19].

At the same time, Turkey has never masked its desire to control the South Caucasus: as a columnist of the Turkish newspaper *Today's Zaman*, Mümtazer Türköne, wrote on May 22, 2009, arguing that the Turkish Army played a decisive role in determining the current borders of Azerbaijan. Moreover, , during the Nagorno-Karabakh war in the early 1990's, Turkey tried to put Armenia under pressure by moving its troops close to the Armenian borders several times. Furthermore, Ankara has always been seen as a corridor for Turkic countries of Central Asia[20]. The variable that prevails in this case, as we can see in the Georgian case, is the economic one, linked to the control of natural resources and the commercial routes through and from the East to the West.

In a global sense, the rhetoric about Islam and democracy in Turkey could be aligned to that between East and West: the new strategic activism operated by Ankara has stimulated the idea that Turkey is formulating a foreign policy with a Neo-Ottoman breath, seeking to have a hegemonic leadership role in the region, becoming an independent actor in a multipolar world. Certainly, Ankara's new interest in Europe, the Middle East, Black Sea and South Africa are testimony to the AK Party's attempt to normalize the critical relationship with its neighbouring countries, adapting the need of the society to the requests of a multipolar world, thus demonstrating a huge fracture with the Kemalist isolationism. The proximity to Syria and Iran, together with the other Middle Eastern countries, helped the diffusion of shared emotional feeling, but Turkey is interested in the Western world in order to define a proper regional and independent position, without links with the international community. In other words, in this new era, characterized by Davutoğlu's activism, Turkey is seeking to conduct a sum-zero foreign policy, developing economic interactions and commercial exchanges between the regions, attempting to resolve the problems with neighbours and diversifying its options in the international arena. However its role of regional peacemaker becomes more and more difficult. It is moreover important to underline the importance of the soft power exerted by Erdoğan 's party, in a mutable and complex setting that collocates a

number of crucial issues:

"the role of Islamic movements and compatibility between Islam and democracy; the emergence and radicalization of new regional conflicts; Islamic extremism and the instability of the entire Middle Eastern region; and finally, economic and social change and the emergence of a new civil-society-more demanding, globalized, and modern-in the Arab world"[21].

Considering these aspects, Turkeys role in its regional neighbourhood is enriched of another façade: together with the role of pivotal state, or of the bridge, it could be intended as a trading state in close cooperation with the community, the society, the states and the institutions.

## South Ossetian frozen conflict and Turkish intervention

In front of this prelude, composed also by new interests involved and several contrasting in the wider Black Sea region for Ankara, the five-days war that devastated South Ossetia in August 2008 was intended as a red light in the cooperation and integration between Turkey and Georgia.

To briefly retrace and historicize the situation in this *de facto* independent state, South Ossetia is now a partially recognized republic in South Caucasus, like Abkhazia. Only Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Transnistria and Nagorno – Karabakh have accepted the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia, following the war occurred in 2008. Georgia affirms that they are still part of its territory. South Ossetia, in particular, is lo-

cated in the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast (i.e. a district) within the former Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic in the USSR. It covers an area of about 3900 square kilometres , and it is located on the southern side of the Caucasus. It is separated from Russia by the mountains , extending southwards almost to the Mtkvari River in Georgia. The population, according to the last Soviet census, is about 98,000 people: it is composed of 66.61% Ossetian and 29.44% Georgians. Most Ossetians are Orthodox Christians, but there is also a Muslim minority. For historical reasons, the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast was within Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia since 1922. Tensions between Georgia and South Ossetia started in 1988, when measures were taken by Tblisi to promote the Georgian language. Freedom and democracy in Georgia are still compromised for ethnic minorities: representation in Parliament is not guaranteed. Nationalist organizations like Ademon Nykhas, started campaigning for the unification with the North Caucasus autonomous republic, which is part of Russia. The figure of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a former dissident and opposition leader, was crucial in this period: he defended the Georgian population, organizing a march on Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia. Ossetian alienation was particularly reinforced: on 9 December 1990, elections took place in South Ossetia, but which were not recognised by Tblisi. Fighting exploded in 1991 and continued until June 1992, when an agreement on the deployment of Georgian, South Ossetian and Russian peacekeepers was reached. During this war, 1000 people were killed, 60,000 Os-

setians were forced to flee Georgia and found refuge in South and North Ossetia, as well as 10,000 Georgians from South Ossetia. Some Georgian populated villages remained under the control of Tblisi. After this episode, Shevardnadze's presidency started a long process of negotiation with the breakaway republic, but without success. In 2003, the Rose Revolution ended with Mikhail Saakashvili in power, who openly declared his intention to establish pro – Western foreign policy. In 2005, the Saakashvili government presented a Peace Initiative for resolving the South Ossetian conflict at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe session in Strasbourg: it included increased rights and reconstruction of the local economy. In March 2006, the relationship between Georgia and South Ossetia started to get worse, while Saakashvili affirmed that Georgia should enter in NATO.

The situation arrived at a turning point in April 2008, resulting in a short, but fierce war over South Ossetia. "A Russian warplane shot down a Georgian unmanned airborne vehicle flying over Abkhazia"[22]. Until July, the two countries conducted military exercises, but shooting incidents along the ceasefire line were frequent into the first week of August, leading to the evacuation of South Ossetian civilians to Russia. On 7 August, the Georgian government declared a unilateral ceasefire, but it held for only a few hours. On the morning of 8 August the Georgians launched an attack against Tskhinvali. Moscow responded after only 12 hours by sending Russian troops across the Caucasus Mountains and into battle with Georgian troops. The war

ended on 12 August, although Moscow attacked the Georgian city of Gori on the 13th but, withdrew on 22 August. On 26 August, Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as de jure independent.

During this brief war, hundreds of people were killed and thousand were forced to flee their homes. The Russian intervention was intended as an attack by a Great Power against a former state of its own federation: it was furthermore a war after the end of the Cold War. Others reports, like one by the EU published in 2009, stated that Georgia attacked South Ossetia, and the Russia responded to the attack in order to defend independent states against instances of Georgian oppression. The details of the war still remain foggy, but what is evident is that Georgia is now looking for new alliances in the region, in order to face the Russian power. Turkey and the Black Sea countries are two clear possibilities, particularly for a geographic reasons. During the last few years, scholars have shown increasing interest in this subject , in order to better understand the Russian behaviour in the South Ossetian crisis[23].

The explosion of the South Ossetia War in 2008 demonstrated the cost of Ankara's often confused attempt to balance the situation in the South Caucasus, trying to became a regional player in the wider Black Sea region, whilst maintaining a working relationship with Moscow. Many Turkish people trace their origin to those who arrived in Anatolia from the Caucasus during the Ottoman Empire period, and, since the collapse of the Soviet union, a sense of ethnic affiliation has been further fuelled by Turkey's ambition to become a transit hub for the

import and export in the Caspian and Central Asia. For this reason, the sympathy for the separatists aspirations of the various ethnic minorities in the Caucasus from Turkey has always always challenging. Thus the outbreak of fighting on August 7 caught Turkey completely unprepared[24]. Initially Ali Babacan antagonized Georgia, by issuing a statement calling for an end to the fighting between "Georgian and South Ossetians" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statement, 2008[25]). Erdoğan mollified however with another statement the Georgians, accompanied by an appeal for an end to hostilities with a call for both sides to respect Georgia's integrity, thus implicitly supporting Tblisi. Erdoğan moreover spoke with Saakashvili, but he was less successful in contacting Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin[26]. As a NATO member, Turkey has shown several and marked attempts with its diplomatic activities in the approach with the South Ossetian war, including the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Pact initiative, proposed as early as 11 August. Moreover Turkey also exercised its right to regulate traffic through the Bosphorus in a way that helped prevent the escalation of the military situation beyond Georgia. Much will depend on the geographical positions of the single states in the region and of the superpowers intervention. Russia and the West both have strategic interests and so far, Moscow and Washington have been encouraging Ankara. Sergej Lavrov said to Davutoğlu that Turkey has an important and active role in South Caucasus.

Summarizing the Turkish role in the post-South Ossetia war, and generally in the relationship with Georgia, we can conclude that:

i)Turkey has tried to become the bridge for the EU towards the Caucasus with the attempt to de-isolate Georgian minorities[27].

ii)the second vector is the possibility of a disruption of the balance in the region, that would obviously pose a real threat to the deepening of Russian-Turkish relations;

iii) the third is the active Turkish participation in all significant regional economic projects, particularly, as I have described, in the development of the oil, gas and railways projects;

All these elements, described from the international to regional level, have to come face to face with the local ones, characterized by the dangerous role of the ethnic minorities and of the smuggling groups acting on the borders. Yet again, as in the Syrian case, the question is related to the geopolitical representation of Turkey in a long-lasting conflict, in which the actors involved are distributed on different levels and defend fighting interests.

## The ongoing situation and Syrian uprising: Turkey from the economic expansion to the hard power application

On March 6th 2011, in the rural city of Daraa, nearly a dozen boys under 15 years old were arrested for writing the graffiti: "the people wanted to topple the regime", a common slogan of Arab-uprising. It was a clear sign of defiance of the heavily censored Syrian policy state. After a few days, on 15th March, a Facebook page named Syrian Revolution

2011 called for a protest Day of Rage. Meanwhile, protest spread in al-Hasakah, Daraa, Deir ez-Zor, and Hama, with smaller demonstrations in Damascus and with the chant of "God, Syria, Freedom".

The explosion of Syrian conflict differs from the others of the so – called Arab Spring because the first centres that were involved in the tensions weren't the big cities and Damascus, where only intellectuals and families of detained politicians participated in revolts, but the agricultural and peripheral ones in the south, where tribes ave the power on local affairs. In time the rebellions extended to the rest of the country: in the north – east at Qamishli e Dayr az Zor; in the north – west at Baniyas and Latakia; in the centre, at Damascus and in its suburbs like Duma and in the south at Quneitra and Daraa.[28]. Latakia was involved in the conflict: the family of Assad and of Makhluf, who manage the majority of the Syrian public and private affairs, come from this country town of the Alawi region.

When protests reached Deraa in March 2011, the population asked Assad to make reforms, but faith in their leader soon evaporated. The Syrian leader approved reforms that dealt with the end of the monopoly of the Baath Party, and with the abolition of the state of national emergency that is in force in the country since 1963, but he then accused the United States of being involved in a Zionist protest in order to destabilize the region. This accusation also extended to the Muslim Brotherhood although there isn't direct proof of their real participation in the conflict. After the first revolts, state security forces responded to protests killing hundred in Deraa and elsewhere, while the president offered only piecemeal reforms. Armed criminal gangs divided the population in Syria, and sectarianism increased heavily. The opposition, both within Syria and among exiles abroad, has unsuccesfully tried to awaken the Syrian population and to respond to the attack. The international community is stuck between intervention and non-violent action. Kofi Annan didn't have success in his attempts at negotiation and resigned from his duty. In the meantime, Russia, China and Iran continue to explicitly or implicitly back Assad. After a year of violence, the conflict has become a bloodbath between a regime and a poorly armed but determined opposition, and it could continue to transform itself in a powder keg for the entire Middle East.

When civil war reached Damascus, the event flowed fast, but the actions from the regional and international actors involved weren't so immediate. The UN had a sort of structural delay, probably caused by the mechanisms of the decision – making process of the Security Council. Russia and China stopped every resolution or sanction provided for by chapter VII of the UN Charter, while the USA tried to give more responsibility to regional actors, like Turkey and the Gulf Arab states. To attract the international attention, Davutoğlu, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, determinedly invoked the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect[29], placing that responsibility in the hands of the international community rather than in Turkish ones. Resolution 2043 of April 21th was obsolete for the prosecution of the event, because it stated to organize an observatory mis-

sion (UNSMIS) in order to verify whether the cease – fire under the Annan Plan was being respected, which it turned out was not. 300 UN observers were directly threatened and compelled to leave the most violent zones. Meanwhile , there is a radical division inside the government since Easter, when three deputies of Parliament of Damascus, all from the south of the country, were dismissed. In addition, the Muftì Rizk Abdel Rachman Abasid, the most important Sunni authority from Deraa, was nominated by Minister for Religious Affairs.

Since the explosion of the revolt, Ankara has been faced with a scenario of a regional crisis that could have a huge impact on its own internal security. With the escalation of violence, Turkey has expelled Syrian diplomatists from its territory, and the USA, Japan, Canada, Australia and many other European countries have done the same. The international community has been shocked by the massacre of civilians during the conflict, while Assad's regime uses the term 'terrorist' to define the rebels who want to overthrow the government.

The worsening of the situation in Syria pushed CHP, the most important party in the Turkish opposition, to press government for more active diplomatic action. The AK Party and its leader Erdoğan are in a difficult position: Davutoğlu had invested much of his credibility on a peaceful relationship with Syria.

More than ten years from the Adana Accords, the relationship between Damascus and Ankara is unstable in a manner never before seen.: One of the reasons could be found in the fact that Ankara hosts and supports the Syrian National Council and also the Free Syrian Army, the soldiers of Syrian revolt, born in 2001 from deserters of Syria's regular army. On the other side, Cemal Bayik, the leader of the PKK guerrilla, say that if Turkey engaged in war against Syria, PKK would not hesitate to side with Damascus. According to Zaman, a Turkish newspaper, there is a group of guerrilla fighters in the province of Ras al - 'Ayn, in the territory of Hasakah, a zone largely populated by Kurdish. The PKK's threat could disappear only with a serious intervention from the international community: with this decision, Assad couldn't do anything, while Turkey would support a new ally government. The long-running conflict with the PKK has escalated with the ongoing Syrian civil war: at least 870 people have been killed since June 2011 - 298 soldiers, police and village guards, 491 PKK fighters and 89 civilians. The empowerment of Syria's Kurds might strengthen both armed Kurds and Kurdish political group calling for more political autonomy on Turkey's side of the border. The intensification of the fight with the PKK, according to Turkey, has to be attributed to events within Syria[30]. The Assad government intentionally ceded key areas to Kurdish control and sustained the PYD (Democratic Union Party), an old group affiliated with the PKK to which Assad gave control over the north of his country: in doing so, its aim was also to formerly attack Turkey for its alliance in fashioning the rebel Free Syrian Army. These facts constitute a problem for Turkey, as there is also the presence of Iranian Kurdish group, the party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). Ankara fears i that the PKK could con-

struct a sort of trust of the Pan-Kurdish movement in the cross-border territories, thus facilitating a northward flow of arms and encouraging Turkish Kurds eager for their own cultural and political autonomy from the central state.

It's important to remember that Syria has a deeply fragmented society, and not a strong history of peaceful compromise: the Alawi are Shiite and control the power. They are less than the 15% of the population, and the majority are Sunni, while the Kurdish and Christians are on the whole both minorities. The most serious risk is that the Muslim Brotherhood comes to power, whose political agenda is probably more influenced by extremist wings. Real conflict resolution has to consider this religious and sectarian fragmentation of society: peace couldn't dismantle the entire Alawi class now in the power, if regional and international security has to be guaranteed. The struggle, in fact, involves several ethnic and religious factions. The regional context in which the Syrian conflict is occurring could be summarized as a triangular geopolitical milieu, where Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey struggle for dominance, and ancient rivalry between Sunni and Shia factions of Islam are continuously cultivated. Turkey is a fundamental key player in the Syrian conflict. As the violence in Syria escalated, the conservative Sunni party in Turkey didn't just accept the massacre of the Sunni insurgents and civilians committed by mostly Alawi. Ankara has provided aid and funds to the insurgents and has opened sanctuaries inside Turkey for the Free Syrian Army. Davutoğlu was optimistic in this sense, when he said that "a new Middle East is born" and that Ankara "will be the owner, pioneer and servant" of that new Middle East (quoted in an article by *Hürriyet*, on 27 April 2012[31]). However, the most important consideration for Turkey is that the Syrian conflict isn't merely a civil war, but the main scenario in a very dangerous regional struggle that could involve borders between Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey, creating new dynamics and questions in an already complex contest.

As the situation in Syria continues without a resolution, some lessons could be observed over Turkish involvement:

i) first, the Westernization process seems to be the last anchor for Turkey, cause the response from the international community. NATO remains in fact the ultimate backstop for Turkish security. Even if it is difficult that a middle power could entangle more powerful allies in its security alliance, Turkey has been functioned in past decades as a buck-passer, or as a pivotal state for Western powers (namely EU and USA). Now this latters seem not to have a desire to control the situation, and have shrunk from helping Turkey to do so. But "Turkey no longer represents a Cold War bulwark or a bridge for the projection of Western interests"[32]. It is also a response to the more proactive foreign policy from Ankara;

ii) second, it is important to understand that the Turkish security policy is applied also towards the domestic sphere. The government has assimilated the 'responsibility to protect doctrine' into its narrative of the crisis due to a sense of obligation on the part of the Turkish leadership: Erdoğan has claimed that the AK Party's leadership has reinforced Turkish democratic institutions and,

consequently, the Turkish state has the responsibility to diffuse the democratic change in the region;

iii) third, Ankara seeks to obtain a more independent foreign policy that confirms the idea of Turkish soft power. This includes the need to modernise the country's armed forces;

iv) fourth, the Syrian crisis will not stop Turkeys intention to play a prominent role in the Middle East. The difference however stays in the choice of the allies, particularly where the Turkish security dilemma is directly at stake.

## The geopolitical key

Starting from these two cases of study, I have underlined that for every issue there seems to be a complex set of choices and a competing set of philosophies advocating opposite resolutions. The complexity of Turkeys foreign policy challenges and apparent irreconcilability of the competing philosophies jeopardizes Turkey's chances of realizing its future potential. The challenges of the future of Turkish foreign policy, as for its multidimensional and multidirectional approach, are multiple: first, one dimension in this matrix consists of the philosophical explanation for policymaking: we are in fact in front of a spectrum of world-views, symbolized by one part who maintain a conservative interpretation of the Kemalist tradition, and another that is composed by the proponents of change[33]. However, these opposing philosophies don't necessarily coincide with the boundaries defining Turkey's political actors or elites. AK Party has its roots in the conservative Islamist tradition represented by its predecessor, the Welfare Party, which

was opposed to the European integration and Westernization. Contrarily, Erdoğan 's party endorses, particularly at a first step, the European integration. This promotes the decreasing of the involvement of the military in Turkish politics as well as human rights reforms. The Turkish military were also divided by European integration, one faction opposing the approach and advocating the pursuit of Turkish alignments in Asia.

The second dimension is the result of the influence of domestic policy on foreign policymaking, underlying the interdependence of these two spheres. The domestic political opposition to the conservative Kemalist tradition (from Islamists who challenge its principle of secularism and from Kurds which are against the national homogeneity) acquires foreign political encouragement. Whichever of the philosophical traditions most strongly influences the direction of Turkish domestic politics, there will be repercussions on its geopolitical position.

The third dimension regards Turkey's foreign policy affairs and geostrategic interests. Considering the geographical point of view, "if Turkey was a small state located in Antarctica or the South Sea Island, these changes might matter little"[34]. This affirmation is central to reintroduce the pivotal position of the mentioned country. However, even in the middle of the Balkans, Europe, the Middle East, the Mediterranean Sea and Central Asia, what is important to consider is the 'quality of a pivot state', that is the capacity to affect regional and international stability. Turkey, by this measure, could be clearly compared to such states as Mexico, Brazil, Algeria, Egypt, India and

Indonesia. This third dimension can be analysed from several directions: looking west, Turkey promotes its national interests carefully balancing good relations, using defence from NATO. Moreover Turkey maintains strong economic and political ties to the West, including membership in the OECD and NATO, a Customs Union with the European Union, while occupying a position as a leading Muslim nation. As for the USA, Washington hoped that Turkey, together with some pro – Western former Soviet Republic States, would keep Russia in check. In addition, Turkey has historical and linguistic ties to Turkic and Muslim peoples of the former Soviet Union. The combination of all these factors places Turkey in a unique position as a pivotal state in Eurasia[35].

Looking north and east, Turkey seeks simultaneously to compete with Russia for the control of the Caucasus and Central Asia, while at the same time to cooperate with it, particularly for economic reasons. From the Turkish point of view, the Russian demise will also mean the possibility to gain a powerful position in the wider Black Sea region, in particular with the three smaller states of the region, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, Turkey continues to fear that the ethics instabilities could exacerbate its security. Kemal Kirisci argued that Ankara and Washington started cooperating in order to manage ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus[36]. From the other hand, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey has continued to assert its important role in this region, as a great opportunity to reassert its historical position as a bridge between Europe, Eurasia and Middle East. After the 1990s, in terms of security policy, while promoting regional stability, Ankara is concerned with preventing an increase of refugees from various areas of conflict; restricting the growth of Islamic extremism; and combating organized crime and drug trafficking. Economically, Ankara is interested in an unfettered access to regional markets and the securing of access to Azerbaijan's energy resources. In line with this policy, Turkey has been strengthening its relations with Georgia through economic cooperation and joint action in the fields of oil transportation and security. Turkey is now becoming important in Caucasus, and in particular in South Ossetia: it is clear that , during the 1990s, the USA passed the buck to Ankara to contain Russian influence in the South Caucasus. In this panorama, Great Power's influence enters in the geopolitical game: during the 2000s, the relationships between Ankara and Moscow improved , and the USA decided to use NATO's expansion, to step in as an offshore balancer. In addition the Bush administration opted for the decision to support Georgian candidacy for NATO membership and Georgia's ill – fated attempt to seize South Ossetia.

Looking to the south and east, Turkey has had to face the Middle East, and particularly with Syria, Israel and Iran, in specific to the strategic threats from Teheran and Damascus of their interests in developing weapons of mass destruction. The explosion of the so-called Arab Spring has complicated the situation. Moreover, Kurd and Islamists challenge the Turkish regime. Besides, Turkish access to water resources and its geostrategic location gives it a valuable position

as bridge for oil and gas, destined for Europe from the Caucasus and Central Asia. Any of these events would have a major impact on the prolongation of Turkish geopolitical importance as well as on its ability to obtain critical oil supplies and transit fees.

The multi-valence of its role gives Ankara the possibility to be the vector for the two seas, on which the interests of the Great Power's are still concentrated. The explanation of this affirmation can be seen  for example in the Russian attempt to control the Tartus' harbour in Syria, which is the only dock for Moscow in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the concerns about the Straits[37].  The Sea constitutes still now, even in the era of cyberspace, one of the fundamental geopolitical dimensions to which a single country seeks to have access. Turkey has two gates in this sense, thus multiplying its relations, its interests and its possibility to play a more active role. As for the continental side, Turkey opens its doors on the Middle East and Central Asia. It implies that the perception of the challenges is related to the Russian side, on the north, and to US ones, on the south, mainly for Israeli, Iraqi and Iranian threats.

## Conclusion

The two case studies dealt in this research are an instrument for  a better comprehension of  Turkish foreign policy: partly because they are strictly at the borders with Turkey; partly for the difference between them; partly for the regional dimension and international actors eventually involved; but mainly for the wars that happened inside the two countries' borders. They are the two earthquakes mentioned by Waltz: they constitute the test for Turkish foreign policy, which prove if it fits and works with the surrounding panorama. Besides the strategic variables, in which, in a Realist perception, the war is the instrument to verify the power of a state and the instrument to affirm itself, the most important factor that has to be stressed is the economic one: it closes the geopolitical circle in which the geo-cultural and the geo-strategic dimension are already included. The geo-economic factor could be used in the long term  to restructure the social and political life, as to implement universal liberal values. Each country must decide on its own political, and possible  democratic process: the reformation movement, in states like Syria and Georgia, is painful and unclear  in its economic and political consequences. If a model is needed, they can adopt the democratic values and institutions from outside, and Turkey could be one way, but it is still argued if Turkey could be considered as a model to be applied in such different and conflictual countries. However, the economic integration with the EU and with the new economic powers, like China, could give Turkey the possibility to provide a serious alternative for the development of the neighbouring countries. But economy, and its power derived, remains in the inner circle of the causes of conflict, as also this research explains: the negotiation between the three dimensions of geo-cultural, geo-economy and geo-strategy are in this sense the scale on which the measure of the balance of power has to be evaluated.

## Notes

1 Kenneth Waltz (1954), *Man, the State and War,* Columbia University Press, New York, p.1

2 Ivi, p. 1

3 The Republic On 12th June 2011, the AK Party won the elections as the first party in the Turkish Parliament, almost with the absolute majority of the votes (49,9%), replaying the results of 2002 and 2007. In 2002 in fact it astonishingly triumphed with 34.2 percent of popular vote, while in 2007 it gained 341 seats with 46.66 percent.

4 John Hertz (1950), "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", in *World Politics*, 2(2), pp. 157 – 80.

5 To describe the "Sèvres syndrome", it needs to make reference firstly to the Treaty of Sèvres, signed on 1920, after which Turkey lost the most part of its empire, excepting the Anatolia, and secondly to the Turkish reaction. It became a nationalist paranoid from public opinion and political class, nourished by the fear of disaggregation of the state. A complex of encirclement, persecution, inferiority and need to defense itself against the enemy in fact gripped its population. Under the AK Party government, "Sèvres syndrome" has been reinterpreted in a positive way, and has become no longer a reason to disregard the affairs of the former Ottoman provinces but as leverage to regain influence in those same areas. The term, which is also declined in "Sevres – phobia" or "fear of dismemberment", derived from the consequences of the Treaty of Sevres, that defined the borders of Turkey, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, under decision of Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan.

6 Michelangelo Guida, (2008), "The Sèvres Syndrome and "Komplo" Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press", in *Turkish Studies* 9(1), pp. 37-52.

7 Robert Chase, Emily Hill, Kennedy Paul, (2000) *The Pivotal States:* "A New Framework for U.S. Policy in the Developing World", in *Foreign Affairs*, 79(3), p. 36.

8 Birol Akgun (2002), "Twins or enemies: comparing nationalist and Islamist traditions in Turkish politics"*,* in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 6(1), pp. 17-35.

9 William Hale, (1994), *Turkish Politics and the Military*, Routledge, London & NY.

10 AK Party could be in fact considered as a party with Islamist roots, which claims a conservative democratic orientation.

11 The Turkish Strategic Depth, as stated by William Hale, derived from its geographical position, had hitherto failed to exploit, while should develop an active engagement in the regional political system, in the three area comprehended in Middle East, Asia, the Balkans and Transcaucasia

(Hale, 2009).

12 Emidio Diodato, (2014) *Turkey in progress. Foreign policy, geopolitics and democracy,* in Cengiz, F. and Hoffmann, L. (eds.), *Turkey and the European Union, Facing New Challenges and Opportunities,* Routledge, London, pp. 86-87.

13 Eleni Fotiou, Dimitri Triantaphyllou (2010), "The EU and Turkey in Energy Diplomacy", in *Insight Turkey*, 12(3), pp. 55-62.

14 Aktay Yasin (2010), "Politics At Home, Politics in the World: The Return of the Political in Turkish Foreign Policy", in *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 21(1), pp. 63.

15 Ivi, p. 64.

16 Ivi, pp. 65-66.

17 Bulent Aras, (2009), "Turkey's Rise in the Greater Middle East: Peace-Building in the Periphery", in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 11(1), p. 87.

18 Baskin Oran(2010), *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1919-2006, Facts and Analyses with Documents,* University of Utah Press, Sal Lake City. p. 9.

19 Ivi, p. 10.

20 Torosyan Tigran (2009), "The Return of Turkey, Ankara in the South Caucasus after the Russian-Georgian War", in *Russia in Global Affairs*, 7(3).

21 Carola Cerami, (2013), "Rethinking Turkey's Soft Power in the Arab World: Islam, Secularism and Democracy", in *Journal of Levantine Studies,* 3(2), p. 145.

22 Emmanuel Karaggianis, (2004), "The Turkish – Georgian partnership and the pipeline factor," in J*ournal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, 6(1), p. 13.

23 See: Allison Roy (2008), "Russia resurgent? Moscow's campaign to coerce Georgia to peace", in *International affairs*, 84 (6), pp. 1145-1171; Cornell Svante et al. (2009), *The guns of August 2008: Russia's war in Georgia*, M. E. Sharpe, New York; Niedermaier (2008), *Countdown to war in Georgia, Russia's foreign policy and media coverage of the conflict in South Ossetia and Abkhazia*, East View Press, Minneapolis; Broers Lawrence (2009), *'David and Goliath' and 'Georgians in the Kremlin': a post-colonial perspective on conflict in post-soviet Georgia*, in "Central Asian survey", 28 (2), pp. 99-118; Cheterian Vicken (2009), *The August 2008 War in Georgia: from ethnic conflict to border wars*, in "Central Asian survey", 28 (2), pp. 155-170; Lucas Edward (2009), *The new cold war: Putin's Russia and the threat to the west*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York; Rasizade Alec (2009), "A propos of the Georgian war: reflections on Russia's revanchism in its near abroad", in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 11(1), pp. 9-27; Asmus Ronald (2010), *A little war that shook the world: Georgia, Russia and the future of the West*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

24 Keith Jenkis (2003), *Re-thinking History,* Routledge, London.

25 It is available on the n. 141 of 8 August 2008, and at the link below: http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=33879#.U_9g9EjWBuk. Last seen on 9 August 2013.

26 On August 8, 2008, the Turkish media reported that Erdoğan had attempted to telephone Putin in Beijing, where he was attending to the Olympic Games, but he Russian counterparts emanated a negative response. Erdoğan tried again on August 9, when he heard that Putin had flown to North Ossetia, but again the request failed to elicit a reply (Radikal, Milliyet, Yeni Safak, Zaman, August 11 2008). Finally the Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan spoke with the Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and then only to repeat Russia's official position that it was engaged in an operation to counter Georgian aggression (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statement N. 144 of 10 August 2008, available on the web site of MFA).

27 Eris Eissler (2013), "Can Turkey De-Isolate Abkhazia?", in *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 12(3), pp. 125-135.

28 Jim Stavridis (2012), *Defending NATO*, United States European Command, eucom.mil, 14 December 2012.

29 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) could be defined as norm linked to international security and humanitarian law that could intervene in order to address the international community's failure to prevent and stop genocides, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. World Summit Outcome Document agreed in 2005 that the norm doesn't consider a unilateral military response but has to be authorized by Security Council.

30 Van Wladimir Wilgenburg, (2010), "Is Syria Cooperating Militarily with Turkey Against the PKK?", in *Terrorism Monitor Volume*, 8(35), pp. 3-5.

31 The article is available at http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-owns-leads-serves-to-new-mideast-Davutoğlu,

32 Nathalie Tocci, Ahmet Evin, Kemal Kirisci, Thomas Straubhaar, Joshua Walker (2012), *Turkey and Its Neighbors: Foreign Relations in Transition*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder.

33. The most important debate about this is between Cengiz Çandar who urges reform and Mümtaz Soysal, who endorses a very conservative approach. Others scholars involved in this discussion are Kemal Kirişci's counterpoising of the conservative and liberal views on the Kurdish question: another question posed deals with human rights reforms described by Elizabeth Andersen (Martin and Keridis, 2004).

34 Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, (2003), *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, Rand, Santa Monica, p. 2.

35 Robert Chase, Emily Hill, Paul Kennedy, (2000), op.cit.

36 Kemal Kirisci (2009), "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State", in *New Perspectives on Turkey,* 40, pp. 29–57.

37 Turkish Straits are controlled since the signing of the 1936 by the Montreaux Convention. Accordingly, Ankara is responsible for ensuring free and safe passage of merchant ships in and out of the Black Sea. It is estimated that an average of 150 ships traverse the Straits every day. With the effort to limit tanker traffic in the increasingly crowded Straits, Turkey has sought the construction of oil pipeline routes that bypass the waterway.

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# Biographical notes

**Bahri Yilmaz** is the owner of the Jean Monnet Chair at Sabancı University in Istanbul. He was a visiting fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge and at the Center for European Studies Harvard University. In addition to his academic experience, he has worked as the Chief Advisor to the Ministry of State for European Union Affairs in Ankara (1997-2002). His main field of research and teaching interest focuses on European Union, International Political Economy, the newly emerging markets, and globalization.

**Emidio Diodato** is Associate Professor of Political Science and International Politics at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. He is also President of Postgraduate Course of Studies in International Relations and Development Cooperation, and Director of the International Master in Management and Communication for Tourism. Diodato teaches regularly at the University of Florence. He has been Adjunct Professor at the University of Bologna and he has been occasional lecturer at the Scuola Superiore di perfezionamento Sant'Anna, Pisa; La Sapienza University, Rome; Air Force War College, Florence; University of Damascus, Damascus; Richmond University in Florence; Boğaziçi University, Istanbul; Univesidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza; BT Cottbus, Cottbus. Among his research interests: geopolitics, theory of international relations, Italian and Turkish foreign politics, intercultural communication.

**Federico Donelli** (Department of Political Science - DISPO) is a PhD candidate in "History, political and languages of intercultural relations" in the Department of Political Science at the University of Genoa, Italy. His research fields are Contemporary History and Turkish Foreign Policy with particular focus to Davutoğlu's doctrine and Turkey's opening to Africa. He is the author of many articles on 'new' Turkey's pro-active and multi-tracks approach, focusing on the gradual involvement of civil society's organizations.

**Salih Doğan** is a PhD candidate within the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRE) at Keele University, United Kingdom. His main fields of interest are Security Studies, Eurasia and South Asia, with particular reference to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asian countries, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, International Security and Terrorism. He also has a keen interest in Turkish Politics, Turkish Foreign Policy, Kurdish Issue, and the PKK. He worked at the Center for Security Studies and Center for Eurasian Studies at the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), an Ankara-based Turkish think-tank, for more than two years between 2008 and 2010. He also holds a Research Assistant position in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Turgut Özal University in Ankara.

**Alessia Chiriatti** obtained her PhD in Cooperation for Peace and Development at University for Foreigners of Perugia in September 2014, where she also obtained her MA degree in International Relations. She also studied International Relations at University of Bologna. Her

main interests of research are Turkish foreign policy, with a particular attention to Georgia, Syria and Libya; Security and Regional Studies. Accordingly, she expe- rienced a fieldwork in Istanbul, and she has published some articles on her issues and has participated to several interna- tional conferences.

"This book is conceived as a spin-off of activities and research developed within the PhD program in Cooperation for Peace and Development at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. The academic program has given rise to a wide range of opportunities for several researchers, international experts and scholars. The two most important events were a conference entitled Wars at the borders of the Europe: uncertainties and perspective in the Mediterranean, organized in October 2013, and a special session devoted to Turkish foreign policy during the Annual Conference of the Italian Society of Political Science, held in September 2014. A whole section looking at Turkey's foreign policy was the main focus of the conference.

The idea to gain a clearer picture of the "geopolitical depth" of Turkish foreign policy emerged during these two conferences, and inspired the composition of this book. After decades of neutralist foreign policy, and retracing the ancient history of the Ottoman Empire, over the past years Ankara, under the rule of the AK Party has started an assertive and emphatic approach modifying its international agenda. Turkish action in its extended neighborhood followed the architecture of the "strategic depth" doctrine outlined by the current prime minister Davutoglu. This doctrine was based on the so called "zero-problems with neighbors" approach. But the idea of "geopolitical depth" finds its roots in a more complex process of re-imagination of the state as a central power in the age of globalization. This book aims to illustrate the types of approaches Turkey has followed to expand its action in the last decades".