

UNDERSTANDING TURKEY'S SECURITY DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This article aims at analyzing the main parameters of Turkey's security understanding. Special reference is made to its geographical location, as one of the main determiners of the country's security policy. It also focuses on Turkey's position in the European security architecture after the Cold War. This article discusses the reasons behind the increasing strategic importance of Turkey in the existing security environment, through giving examples of the current security challenges in Turkey's surrounding.

Introduction

As a country that is located at one of the most strategic places in the world, Turkey has always played a key role in contributing to the efforts of generating peace and stability not only in its region, but also on a global scale. Turkey's geographic location, historical background, long lasting ties with the West and relations with its neighbours necessitate a comprehensive approach in understanding Turkey's security discourse.

With the entry of the concept of security to a new phase at the end of the Cold War through the diversification of the risks and threats, the security agendas of the states have been affected in order to give better responses. This article attempts to analyze Turkey's official security discourse in the face of this new security environment, by making special reference to its geographical location and its enduring ties with the West concentrating on its relations with the security institutions in Europe. It argues that Turkey's strategic importance has increased after the end of the Cold War, through its multilateral and multifaceted approaches in security policy preferences. It also emphasizes the fact that Turkey's increasing strategic importance in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks has become even more visible.

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This article comprises three chapters. The first chapter analyzes the general parameters of Turkey's security perceptions. The second chapter is dedicated to its geographical location, as an important determiner of Turkey's security perceptions, and there Turkey's position with regard to the situation in Iraq, Iran's nuclear program and the relations with the Southern Caucasian countries are touched upon. Finally, the last chapter covers Turkey's position in the European security architecture and it also covers Turkey's position towards NATO's new Strategic Concept.

The main task of this analysis is to reveal the major factors shaping Turkey's security policies after the Cold War and to emphasize the fact that Turkey's security agenda and its responsibilities as a country located at the conflux of the issues concerning the entire international community, have broadened. It also discusses whether new features are appearing in the country's security understanding. This analysis is deemed important, right now, since Turkey is one of the countries that have come to the centre stage by the current global challenges and Turkish policies have been the focus of attention. As this article concentrates on Turkey's official security policies, the methodology applied here is to make use of official statements and notes of the relevant Turkish official institutions, press releases, the scholarly works of Turkish diplomats and statesmen, and to concentrate on the language practices of the state actors. The academic works of mainly Turkish scholars and others have also been benefited.

1. General Parameters of Turkish Security Perceptions

This section will attempt to shed light on the general aspects of security policy of the Republic of Turkey. Established in 1923, following a costly war of independence against the occupying powers, the security of the Republic of Turkey has been shaped by two main elements: geography and longstanding ties with the countries in its region. These two determinants make Turkey a key security player in Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions all at once. Turkey has faced the challenge of being located at the confluence of such conflict areas by basing its foreign policy on the motto: "Peace at home, Peace in the world" as laid down by Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic.¹

¹ *Turkey's Security Perspective, Historical and Conceptual Background*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/i_-turkey_s-security-perspective_-historical-and-conceptual-background_-turkey_s-contributions.en.mfa. Accessed on 24 December 2009

The Turkish General Staff summarizes the defence policy of Turkey, as preserving and protecting the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and vital interests of the country. Accordingly, in its National Defence Policy, Turkey considers the following targets:

- To be an element of power and stabilization in its region,
- To form a “peace and security zone” in its surroundings,
- To contribute to peace and security in its region and to spread it to a broader range,
- To be a nation that produces strategies and security that can influence all strategies regarding its region and beyond,
- To make use of every opportunity to be engaged in initiatives to develop cooperation aimed at having close and positive relations.

Turkish officials focus on terrorism, the threat of long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction, religious extremism and regional conflicts when analyzing the country’s basic security concerns.² In response to the uncertainty and instability of the new era, the Turkish armed forces plan to reorganize in order to add new capabilities by paying the utmost attention to the establishment of multifunctional units capable of conducting different tasks. Priority is given to small but flexible units that have sufficient capability, equipped with hi-tech weapons and systems, comprising sufficient command-control assets, precise and advance ammunition, early warning tools, and to also be able to conduct operations under any weather conditions³.

Establishing and maintaining friendly relations with other countries; promoting regional and international cooperation through bilateral as well as multilateral schemes; resolving conflicts through peaceful means and enhancing regional and international peace, stability, and prosperity are the guiding principles of Turkish security and foreign policy. Developing good neighbourly relations; respect for sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity are its salient features.⁴ Turkish

²Turkish General Staff, http://www.tsk.tr/eng/genel_konular/savunmapolitikasi.htm. Accessed on 24 December 2009.

³ Turkish General Staff http://www.tsk.tr/eng/genel_konular/gorevi.htm Accessed on 24 December 2009.

⁴Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/i_-turkey_s-security-perspective_-historical-and-conceptual-background_-turkey_s-contributions.en.mfa, Accessed on 24 December 2009.

security discourse makes frequent references to cooperation and partnership and importance of sustainable peace and stability. Ankara shows strong preference for multilateral approach in handling crises of all sorts.

Turkey's geographic location, historical background, being adjacent to very volatile regions, effects of domestic factors, its long lasting ties with the West and relations with its neighbours necessitate a very comprehensive approach in terms of the country's security policy. Turkish decision makers concentrate on all factors while establishing security strategies and foreign policy priorities. Placing self-preservation and the protection of territorial integrity at the very core of its security strategy, Turkey pursues a very active diplomacy.

Ambassador Turan Morali, the then Director General of International Security Affairs at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, analyzes Turkey's security perspectives in terms of concentric circles. He places the Turkish domestic scene at the nucleus, followed by its immediate security environment comprised of its neighbours. The third circle is the broader geography consisting of regions and countries that Turkey has historical, cultural, or ethnic affinities. The fourth circle is the Euro-Atlantic and wider frameworks of security including NATO and EU. Finally, the UN completes the picture.⁵ Morali's building-blocks approach to security issues, starting at the immediate environment and moving on to a wider geo-strategic context through effective multilateralism well explains Turkey's security approach. A founding member of the UN, member of NATO, and all the leading European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, and a negotiating country for membership of the European Union, Turkey actively pursues a policy geared towards enhancing cooperation in its region and beyond.⁶

Ambassador Ugur Ziyal, the then Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, emphasizes that as a country with significant military capabilities and a growing civilian sector that is active in humanitarian efforts, Turkey is a net contributor to international peace and security. In addition to its activities in key international organizations, Turkey also makes considerable efforts through bilateral contributions. Turkey has always been committed to upholding the universal principles enshrined in the UN Charter. It has a formidable record in active con-

⁵ Morali T., *Turkey's Security Perspectives and Perceptions*, Turkish Policy Quarterly, Vol.1, No:4, Winter 2002, p.1-12

⁶ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/i_-turkey_s-security-perspective_-historical-and-conceptual-background_-turkey_s-contributions.en.mfa. Accessed on 26 December 2009.

tributions to the preservation of regional and global peace and stability. Turkey's commitment to international stabilization efforts dates back to the Korean War, where the services of Turkish troops are commemorated to this day. Currently, Turkey takes part in several UN peacekeeping operations.⁷

Having set a course towards the West, Turkey became an integral part of the Western alliance, a member of NATO, and a frontline state against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkey chose to be a part of Western Alliance and since the accession to NATO in 1952 the North Atlantic Alliance has become the main pillar of Turkish security policy.

Turkey's membership of NATO constituted a reconfirmation of Turkey's Western orientation. Turkey, with the second largest armed forces in the Alliance, has played a crucial role in the defence of the West even in the most delicate moments.⁸ Turkey remained a staunch member of NATO even at the height of the Cold War in a volatile region bordering the Eastern Bloc. It made a substantial contribution to the security and defence of the Alliance in general and of Western Europe in particular by guarding the Alliance's southern flank. Turkey, having the longest border with the former Soviet Union, was responsible for defending one-third of the Alliance's land frontiers against the Warsaw Pact. For a country with limited resources, this came at the expense of great sacrifices.⁹

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey's security responsibilities have considerably increased. Accordingly, with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities and standing up to the challenges of our times, Turkey has significantly broadened its contributions, both in hard and soft terms, in a vast geography ranging from the Balkans to Afghanistan. In this sense, Turkey's contributions to NATO's operations have been remarkable. Turkey has played a very active role in international peacekeeping operations. Turkey has participated in all operations led by NATO in the Balkans since 1995. It contributed to IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina, KFOR in Kosovo and Essential Harvest, Amber Fox, and Allied Harmony in Macedonia. Since NATO took over the International Security Assistance Force

⁷ Ziyal U., "Re-conceptualization of Soft Security and Turkey's Civilian Contributions to International Security", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 2004, 3(2), p. 31-40.

⁸ Demirel S., *Turkey and NATO At the Threshold of A New Century*, Perceptions. March-May 1999, Vol. IV. No:1

⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/i_-turkey_s-security-perspective_-historical-and-conceptual-background_-turkey_s-contributions.en.mfa, accessed on 25 January 2010.

(ISAF) Operation on 10 August 2003, Turkey assumed the command of the operation twice and has continuously contributed troops since the beginning of ISAF. Historical ties with Afghanistan and the importance attached to NATO's eventual success are the primary drivers of Turkish contributions. H.E. the then Minister Hikmet Çetin served as a NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan (Jan 2004–Aug 2006) and through its Provincial Reconstruction Team in Wardak province on 12 November 2006, Turkey has further extended the scope of its contributions to reconstruction and development in Afghanistan.¹⁰

Contrary to initial and premature arguments levelled by some circles that Turkey's geo-strategic relevance would diminish, Turkey has found itself at the epicentre of international security issues after the Cold War. The conflicts of the 1990s in the Balkans, as well as both Gulf crises had direct implications for Turkey. However, it constructively cooperated with relevant security organizations and third parties in order to re-institute peace and stability. Through its proactive and cooperative approach, Turkey has emerged as a key actor in the international era. This approach required to deal with security issues, as well as the horrible spectre of terrorism, present new obligations and duties for every responsible member of the international community. Turkey has been a net contributor to efforts in this vein within the UN, NATO, the EU, and the OSCE, and will continue to do so within its means and capabilities.¹¹

Traditionally, the analysis of national security has concentrated on the hard security dimension and, therefore, has been criticized as limited in focus and 'too narrowly founded'. The end of the Cold War has brought a new state of affairs in terms of security. Issues such as economic and social conditions, environmental damage, ethnic and religious based communal conflict, terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking have increasingly gained importance alongside the more familiar matters of military attack and defence capabilities. As Drorian argues, it is clear that the end of the Cold War has brought about a significant modification in national security agendas, especially in western states.¹² In this new uncertain security environment, the nature of the "threat" has also been subject to dramatic changes, including, inter alia, international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human and weapons trafficking, illegal immigration, illicit drug trafficking, money launder-

¹⁰ Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations, <http://www.un.int/turkey/page198.html>

¹¹ Ziyal, op.cit.p.40

¹² Drorian S., *Security, State and Society in Troubled Times*, European Security, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 2005, p.255-275

ing, and cyber terror. Turkey also has responded to this new security environment by adopting its security discourse to be able to meet the new challenges. Keeping the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and vital interests of the country as main pillars of the defence policy, the new threats such as terrorism, the threat of long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction, religious extremism, and regional conflicts have been focused on. New actors such as media and non-state actors have been more vocal regarding the security and foreign policy making process. Media and public opinion have occupied bigger roles in the current Turkish security discourse. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is at the moment in the process of reconstructing the public diplomacy mechanism and a more effective communication strategy. While geography and ties with the countries in its region have still been the main determiners of Turkey's security policy, Turkey's security agenda has broadened by globalised security challenges. The process of accession to the European Union was also another factor influencing Turkey's security thinking.

2. Turkey's Geographical Location as One the Determiners of its Security Perceptions

The Turkish Ministry of Defence summarizes the geographical location of Turkey as the follows:

- 'The Middle East and the Caspian Basin, which have the most important oil reserves in the world,
- The Mediterranean Basin, which is at the intersection of important sea lines of communication,
- The Black Sea Basin and the Turkish Straits, which have always maintained their importance in history,
- The Balkans, which have undergone structural changes as the result of the breakup of the USSR and Yugoslavia, and
- The centre of the geography composed of Caucasia, which has abundant natural resources, as well as ethnic conflicts, and Central Asia.'¹³

¹³ Ministry of National Defence of Turkey, <http://www.msb.gov.tr/Birimler/GNPP/html/pdf/p1c2.pdf>. Accessed on 26 December 2009

Its geographical position makes Turkey a Balkan, Mediterranean, Caucasian, and Middle Eastern country, all at the same time. Today, most of the conflicts on the top of the international agenda are taking place around Turkey.

Turkey controls the only seaway joining the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. Referred to as Bosphorus and the Dardanelles in international terminology, the Turkish Straits geographically separate the Asian and European continents but bind them together politically and increase Turkey's geo-political and geo-strategic importance. The Turkish straits are the main entry and exit door of not only the littorals of the Black sea but also the whole of the Black Sea basin. The Turkish Straits connect the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Surrounded completely by Turkish territories and regulated by what is known as the territorial sea regime, the Turkish Straits are exclusively national and used in international transport in line with the Montreux Convention.¹⁴

In the Middle East and the Caucasus, regions that are in the immediate vicinity of Turkey, deep-rooted conflicts may at any moment lead to wide-ranging military confrontations, despite all the efforts made to attain lasting peace and stability. Similarly, the situation in the Balkans remains fragile. Therefore, the proactive and positive approach of Turkish foreign policy is both a choice and a necessity brought about by regional challenges.¹⁵

Turkey is geographically also located in close proximity to 72% of the world's proven gas and 73% of the oil reserves, in particular those in the Middle East and the Caspian basin. It, therefore, forms a natural energy bridge between the source countries and consumer markets and stands as a key country in ensuring energy security through the diversification of supply sources and routes, considerations that have gained increased significance in Europe today. From the energy security perspective, the Turkish Straits are of particular importance at around 3.7% of the world's daily oil consumption is shipped through the Turkish Straits.¹⁶ Large energy consumers such as the EU seek to secure supplies through diversifying their energy suppliers. If Turkey became a major energy transit corridor into the EU, the Union would be able to increase the diversification of its energy suppliers and

¹⁴ <http://www.trtenglish.com/trtinternational/en/newsDetail.aspx?HaberKodu=41c5b326-22f1-463f-a357-9d5e8f3a5434>. Accessed on 26 December 2009.

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>, Accessed on 10 December 2009.

¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/EnerjiPolitikasi/Turkey's%20Energy%20Strategy%20\(Ocak%202009\).pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/EnerjiPolitikasi/Turkey's%20Energy%20Strategy%20(Ocak%202009).pdf). Accessed on 26 December 2009.

transit countries to a certain extent. To this end, Turkey could become a partner of the EU in terms of energy. Moreover, with the implementation of its energy projects (oil and natural gas pipelines, LNG terminals, refineries, underground gas storage facilities), Turkey will have the potential to make significant contributions to the regional as well as global energy supply security.

Water also represents one of the most important items on Turkey's agenda. Despite its geographical location on the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Turkey is not a water rich country. The Tigris and Euphrates provide an important source of water supply to Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. Water, an essential need for human beings, is growing scarcer and, therefore, water policy should be handled with cooperation. Turkey views water as a catalyst for cooperation rather than a source of conflict. Its policy is based on the premise that transboundary waters should be used in an equitable, reasonable, and optimum manner.

Touching upon the major aspects of Turkey's geographic location, we could easily draw the conclusion that the security thinking of the country has been intensively influenced by geography. All the issues handled above require a very detailed examination and the literature in this sense is very extensive. However, the main aim of this article is to give a brief outlook on the security preferences of Turkey that stem from its location. The starting point for scholars analyzing Turkey's security discourse is the country's geographical location. Without drawing a clear picture of the geographical realities, the big picture cannot be completed. The fact that Turkey is the only state that is at the same time a member of NATO, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Cooperation and Development, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the G-20 and the Islamic Conference Organization, is striking evidence of the influence of geography on its security and foreign policy preferences, while making it a unique international actor.

During the Cold War years, for the Western Block, Turkey was considered as a geopolitical asset having an important function of containing the USSR in NATO's southern region. However, with the fall of the Warsaw Pact, the picture has changed. The strategic importance of Turkey has been revisited with the start of a new era in world politics. This article argues that the importance of the country has been even more visible after the Cold War, due to the realities of the new system. In fact, Turkey has never lost its geopolitical importance; on the contrary, it was able to strengthen its importance by applying multilateral and multifaceted approaches in its security and foreign policy preferences.

Traditionally, Turkey has been considered an important country because of its geographic location between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, which gives it easy access to strategically important regions and major energy resources. The conventional importance attributed to Turkey's strategic value became more visible following the events of September 11, and consequently Turkey has come under the spotlight. As a result, Turkey and its foreign policy increasingly became a centre of interest. As Huseyin Bagci and Saban Kardas rightly point out, the dominant view is that post September 11 events have contributed to Turkey's strategic importance.¹⁷

At this point, we would like to cover the Iraq issue, which constitutes an example emphasizing Turkey's increasing strategic importance in world politics. Turkey's priority with regard to its neighbour is Iraq's preservation of its territorial integrity and national unity that, according to Turkey, political reconciliation is the key for Iraq to emerge as a secure and stable country and, therefore, it gives full support to the efforts of the Iraqi Government to stabilize Iraq through political dialogue. Turkey enjoys a privileged network of communication with all the political groups and community leaders in Iraq without any exception. Turkey supports the political process on the way to democracy in Iraq, and the parliamentary elections held on 7 March 2010, was considered to be decisive for the success of democratization and stabilization efforts in Iraq as well as on the resolution of ongoing problems in the country on the basis of political reconciliation.¹⁸ Turkish officials stress the importance of the reconstruction efforts and economic development, enabling all Iraqi people to benefit from Iraq's natural resources in a fair manner and determination of a special status for Kirkuk Province that will reflect the consensus of all parties. Another very important item is the PKK terror organizations' presence in Iraq. The elimination of the PKK presence from Iraq and from the agenda of Turkish-Iraqi bilateral relations is one of Turkey's major security objectives. With a proactive approach, Turkey initiated neighbouring countries process regarding Iraq and this platform has developed into a unique international forum.

¹⁷ Bagci H. and Kardas S., *Post September 11 Impact: The Strategic Importance of Turkey Revisited*, Prepared for the CEPS/IISS European Security Forum, Brussels, 12 May 2003, available at <http://www.eusec.org/bagci.htm>

¹⁸ Press Release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the Parliamentary elections in Iraq, 5 March 2010, available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_50_5-march-2010_-press-release-regarding-the-parliamentary-elections-to-be-held-in-iraq.en.mfa

The Iraq issue had ramifications on Turkey-US relations as well. Before the Iraq war broke out, Turkey, on the one hand, tried to contribute to the solution of the crisis in both bilateral and multilateral fora, and on the other hand, entered into negotiations with the US on political, economic, and military issues in order to eliminate the possible negative impacts of a possible war. In accordance with Article 92 of the Turkish Constitution, the motion that would have allowed the opening of a northern front through Turkey was rejected by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on 1 March 2003. The rejection of the motions created a bitter atmosphere in bilateral relations. However, the TGNA adopted a decision to open Turkish airspace to US forces.

Following the rejection of the motion, regular contacts and reciprocal high-level visits helped consolidate the Turkish-US friendship. The two sides reiterated the mutual commitment to extend the cooperation further. The momentum created by these visits and the developments that led to the U.S. intervention in Iraq revealed the need to conduct more frequent and structured political consultations. Both parties agreed on the necessity to establish an institutional mechanism to allow these consultations to be held on a regular and structured basis. As a result, the then Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice and the then Minister of Foreign Affairs HE. Abdullah Gül agreed upon the “Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Strategic Partnership” in July 2006, that specifies the areas of cooperation on issues of common interest that allow structured consultations on those issues.¹⁹ Despite occasional difficulties in bilateral relations, the US and Turkey share a sound and deep rooted partnership.

Another important issue is Iran’s nuclear file. Turkey and Iran have deep-rooted relations based on centuries of interaction. Political bilateral relations rest on the principles of non-interference in internal affairs, good neighbourliness, common interests, and respect for mutual sensitivities. The controversy between Iran and the international community regarding Iran’s nuclear program is still ongoing. Turkey holds the view that Iran has the right to develop peaceful nuclear technology on an equal footing with the other countries, and this is valid for all countries. Turkey is against nuclear weapons and attaches importance to the non-existence of nuclear weapons in its region. Turkish officials strongly emphasize that the only way to solve this problem is to recourse diplomacy. On this matter, diplomacy

¹⁹ Turkish-US Political Relations, available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-u_s_-political-relations.en.mfa

still has ample room to manoeuvre and Turkey is actively trying to prepare the groundwork for diplomatic means. The stance of the Turkish government was reiterated by Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ahmet Davutoglu during a joint press conference on the occasion of Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Manucehr Muttaki's recent visit to Ankara on 3 February 2010. There is a consensus in Ankara that Iran's nuclear program issue could only be solved through diplomatic and peaceful means.

Another major area that reflects Turkey's contributions to peace and stability is the Southern Caucasus. The main aspects of Turkish policy vis-à-vis Southern Caucasus is the existence of independent, sovereign, stable states that adopt contemporary values and realize their democratic transformation and, thereby, providing political and economic support to them. Stability and peace in the Southern Caucasus is of particular importance for Turkey since it enjoys deep-rooted historical and economic ties with those countries. Turkey wishes to establish comprehensive cooperation with South Caucasian countries and supports their integration with international and regional organizations such as NATO, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Turkey is one of the first countries that recognized the independence of South Caucasian countries, and established diplomatic ties with the exception of Armenia. Ill-disposed policies pursued by Yerevan towards its neighbours have discouraged Turkey to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. However, Turkey is determined to continue the process of dialogue by engaging with Armenia and is willing to normalize its relations with this country to promote regional cooperation and contribute to the security of the region.²⁰ Therefore, with the new administration in Armenia, it was considered to be an opportunity to open a new phase in the relations. President Gul paid an official visit to Armenia in September 2008, upon the invitation of President Sargsyan, and accompanied by Foreign Minister Davutoglu. In the aftermath of this visit Foreign Ministers have met several times with a view to discussing the means that will bring peace and security to the region. The two countries signed the "Protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations" and the "Protocol on the development of bilateral relations" on 20 October 2009 that constitute a major step on the way to the normalization of relations. Turkey holds the view that the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey will contribute to regional

²⁰ Turkey's political relations with Armenia, available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-armenia.en.mfa

peace, but finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is also very essential for the entire region. Therefore, a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will facilitate the approval by the Turkish Parliamentarians of the said protocols. The Constitutional Court of Armenia has declared its decision of constitutional conformity with the Protocols with a short statement on 12 January 2010. The Constitutional Court has recently published its grounds for the decision. However, the decision containing preconditions and restrictive provisions that impair the letter and spirit of the Protocols are considered to have the potential to undermine the very reason for negotiating these Protocols as well as their fundamental objective by Turkish authorities.²¹ This approach is not acceptable to Turkey, since it maintains its adherence to the primary provisions of these Protocols and expects the same attitude from the Armenian government. As the normalization efforts continue, the adoption of resolutions by some parliaments regarding historical events with domestic political motives does not benefit anyone and carry the potential to damage the ongoing efforts towards establishing peace and stability in the South Caucasus. The passage of the decision H.RES. 252 in the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs regarding the 1915 events on 4 March 2010 and the adoption of a resolution by the Parliament of Sweden on 11 March 2010 pertaining to the claim that certain peoples were subjected to genocide during the final period of the Ottoman Empire constitute two recent examples of such decisions. Turkish officials strongly condemned these acts and recalled the Turkish Ambassador in Washington and Stockholm to Turkey for consultations.

The Turkish foreign and security policy elites are sometimes criticized by some circles as being very sceptical and extremely cautious. It is true that Turkish decision makers act very cautiously in designing their policies. However, this behaviour does not stem from a lack of trust *vis-à-vis* their counterparts. It is mainly the result of seeking the best course of action that could contribute initially to the stability of the country itself, than the regional and global peace and welfare. Turkey manages very well to cope with the challenges of this new era with a correct strategic vision and active diplomacy in all fields. It does not turn a blind eye to any crises or instability, especially in its neighbourhood and also elsewhere, being cognizant of the fact that any sort of instability can reach a global dimension through a spillover effect.

²¹ Press Release by Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Recently Published Grounds of the Decision of the Armenian Constitutional Court on the Protocols Between Turkey and Armenia, 18 January 2010, available at www.mfa.gov.tr

3. Westernization of the Turkish Security Discourse

As the Turkish nation state was founded in 1923, it was surrounded by a new international environment that was no longer identical to the one that had existed prior to World War I. Most of the new actors were politically unstable and economically weak compared to the victorious powers of World War I and the international system had ceased to be a “European system” in which Europe was no longer predominant. To this end, the new Turkish Republic was in need of a new, realistically sound foreign policy that could respond to the challenges of the new international system without endangering the existence of the state. One of the fundamental features of the new Republic's foreign policy has been its western orientation. This was expressed first in cultural and, after World War II, in political and military terms. This orientation has been continuous.²² Westernization had its roots in the Ottoman Empire period.

The history of westernization in the Turkish State dates back to the ‘Tanzimat’ (regulation) period, which began in 1839. The mentioned period was characterized by various attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire with a view to securing the territorial integrity of the Empire. The Ottoman Empire adopted westernized policies mainly in the technology, education, and military fields. Tanzimat period's main aim was to “save the state” and bring the Empire back to its victorious days. The Ottomans were aware of the fact that that one of the most important reasons for European political strength was the organizational basis of the European nation-states. This led them to organize the government through a rational division of tasks and the creation of effective enforcement mechanisms.²³

The Turkish Republic consolidated the modernization of political structures and the secularization process of the 19th century. Founding a new state modelled on the European examples of nation-state was, in the logic of the Republic, intended to realize a complete westernization of the social, cultural, and political spheres in Turkey.²⁴ As the founder of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk's theory and

²² Aydin M., *Turkish Foreign Policy Framework and Analysis*, Centre For Strategic Research Papers, December 2004, Ankara

²³ Ulusoy K., *The Changing Challenge of Europeanization to Politics And Governance in Turkey*, International Political Science Review 2009, p. 363, available at <http://ips.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/30/4/363>

²⁴ Ulusoy, op.cit., p.371

practice of foreign policy have been the most important factors in shaping Turkish foreign policy. Atatürk did not want to see the Turkish nation as a foreign or hostile community set apart from the nations of the world and did not want the nation to belong to any group holding such views. Atatürk wanted Turkey to be a part of the civilized world. He was aware that a successful foreign policy was necessary in order to achieve his far-reaching reforms inside Turkey. Between 1920 and 1955, Turkey entered a number of pacts and alliances, as well as signing friendship declarations with all its neighbours and bilateral security treaties with the United States.²⁵ However, as far as Turkey's security was concerned, Turkey's adherence to NATO in 1952 has constituted a milestone.

Since the institutionalization of European Affairs after the end of the World War II, Turkey attempted to take part in the picture, mainly because of the 'western element' in its foreign policy. Be it organizations such as NATO or the Council of Europe, or the European Economic Community in the early 1960s, Turkey has consistently attempted to locate itself in the western sphere of political activity.²⁶

Since Republican times, Turkey has sought security through alliances and devoted persistent efforts to embrace the West. NATO membership in 1952 solidified Ankara's western orientation by establishing a long lasting institutional and functional link with the West. Turkey regards the North Atlantic Alliance as the linchpin of Euro-Atlantic security and stability. As for security policy, Turkey has defined the concepts of strategic cooperation and strategic partnership that could affect its new geopolitical axis in the post-Cold War period.²⁷

Turkey joined the Council of Europe in 1949. It has been a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe since 1975. It has also taken place in the European security architecture through its associate membership status in the Western European Union in 1992.

In the post-cold war period NATO membership has remained the cornerstone of Turkish security policy. Contrary to the belief that post Cold War security structure has diminished Turkey's strategic importance, Turkey's importance has increased and it has continued to assume a leading role in dealing with the security

²⁵ Aydin, op. cit.

²⁶ Bronstone A., *European Security into the Twenty-First Century, Beyond traditional theories of international relations, Euro-Turkish Relations: The Saga*, Chapter 7, (England, Ashgate Publishing, 2000) p. 188

²⁷ Udum S., *Turkey and the Emerging European Security Framework*, Turkish Studies, Vol. 3, No. 2, (Autumn 2002), p. 69-103

threats facing Europe. Thirteen out of the 16 'hotspots' of concern to European security determined by NATO experts, are situated on Turkey's immediate periphery.²⁸ The world faced an escalation of tensions to a great extent in some of these areas during the 1990s. An eruption of a crisis in any of these 13 spots has carried potential security risks for Turkey.

Turkey has continued to be a crucial strategic member of the Atlantic Alliance after the end of the Cold War, through its strategic geographical location and its valuable contributions to the Alliance's political and military transformation. It has added great value to the Euro-Atlantic security. The dynamics of post September 11, has affected Turkey much more than any other European ally. During the time of the discussions regarding military intervention in Iraq, Turkey's key role in the security area has once again been very visible. In February 2003, Turkey requested NATO assistance under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The Alliance undertook a number of precautionary defensive measures to ensure Turkey's security in the event of a potential threat to its territory or population as a consequence of the crisis. The decision to assist Turkey was the culmination of formal and informal consultations on a possible NATO role in Iraq, which began in 2002. This decision reflected the Alliance's commitment to the security of its member states and policy of making its assets and experience available wherever and whenever they are needed, in accordance with NATO's founding treaty.²⁹ Even this particular example of NATO's decision in the framework of Article 4 about Turkey's defence was clear evidence of Turkey's key role when it comes to global security issues. In fact, Turkey's strategic importance has never diminished after the Cold War.

Turkey's role in NATO has also become more visible in this new security environment. As a country covering the southern flank of the Alliance during the Cold War years and it has contributed to a great extent to the Euro-Atlantic security. Turkish General Staff summarizes the main elements of the Turkish Defence Policy as determination and will for National Defence, NATO solidarity, and the Turkish Armed Forces.³⁰

Turkey's contributions to NATO's transformation efforts have been remarkable. Currently, the work to prepare a new Strategic Concept is underway and

²⁸ Ibid. p. 73

²⁹ NATO and the 2003 campaign against Iraq, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51977.htm, accessed on 1 February 2010

³⁰ Turkish General Staff Web Page, http://www.tsk.tr/eng/genel_konular/tarihce.htm

Turkey is also actively taking part in ongoing work for the drafting of new Concept. Turkey believes that the 1999 Strategic Concept is still relevant and collective defence should continue to be reaffirmed as the core purpose of the Alliance. According to Turkey, it is not necessary to redefine the Article 5 responsibilities and the new Concept should provide the necessary flexibility. The indivisibility of the Alliance's security, continuation of Transatlantic link, and solidarity should be preserved in the new Concept. A delicate balance should be established between defence and crisis management operations. For Turkey, the principle of 'consensus' is an indispensable element of preserving Alliance's solidarity and any concession on this principle is unacceptable. According to Turkey partnerships and NATO-Russia Council should be considered among the main elements, continuation of open door policy should be emphasized, and the agreed framework of NATO-EU strategic cooperation as established in March 2003 should continue to provide the modalities of this cooperation. Terrorism is another important issue that should occupy an important place in the new Strategic Concept.

Turkey regards with the utmost importance the notion of solidarity and considers that it is directly linked to the credibility of the Alliance. To this end, consensus is the key element to maintain the solidarity of Allies. Turkey also believes that a more politically involved NATO is needed. New global actors such as China, India, Pakistan, and Japan should be included in the network of partnerships. Therefore, the continuation of the Alliance's open door policy is vital.

Turkey's EU membership bid dates back to the late 1950s. The Association Agreement was concluded between Turkey and the European Economic Community in 1963.³¹ Through the Customs Union arrangement established in 1995 between the EU and Turkey, the relations reached an advanced stage economically. From 1994 onwards, the EU policy makers concentrated on Eastern enlargement. The EU's new agenda, meaning enlargement, has also opened a new era in Turkey-EU relations. The 1999 Helsinki Summit officially declared Turkey a candidate country for accession to the EU. Turkey's candidacy status can be regarded as a crucial turning point concerning the transformation of Turkish politics in every aspect. Since December 1999, Turkey's security and foreign policy environment has been diversified.³²

³¹ Ibid., p.75

³² Durmuşlar T., *Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy: 1999-2007 Period*, draft work, <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/graduateconference/barcelona/papers/477.pdf>

The European Union's quest for playing a major role in security and defence affairs, has been very closely followed by Turkey. It has supported the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) of the EU from its outset. Turkey's efforts to render ESDP more inclusive have contributed to the effective development of the project from its very beginning. These efforts were based on the vested rights and status that Turkey has enjoyed in the Western European Union (WEU).³³

Turkey shares the same values as the Euro-Atlantic community. A significant number of Turks live in Europe and the Turkish economy is essentially tied to Europe. One can easily assert that peace and security in Europe is of significant importance to Turkey. The new risks and threats give us a good reason for common concern.³⁴ As a key component of its foreign policy, Turkey reaffirms its primary role in European security and defence affairs. From the beginning of the Cold War, it has played a vital part in the West's defence structure thanks to its geographic position providing common borders with the Balkans, Syria, Iraq, and the former Soviet Union.³⁵ Any security initiative in Europe needs Turkey's effective participation in order to achieve sustainable peace.

According to Meltem Muftuler-Bac, there are three assets that make Turkey an indispensable actor in the European security system in the post Cold War era: its membership of NATO, its military capabilities, and its geostrategic position. First, by exercising its veto in the North Atlantic Council Turkey has an institutional lever that can affect the EU's defence aspirations. Second, Turkish military capabilities are essential for operations in the European Security area. Finally, Turkey's geostrategic position that allows it to be a major player in its surroundings.³⁶ We also suggest adding Turkish contributions to ESDP, as another important asset for the European security architecture. Cognizant of the fact that there is still ample room for enhancing the cooperation between Turkey and the EU on security matters, Turkey makes every effort to be able to partake actively and support EU on this very important initiative. Not being a full member of the European Union has brought along some complications for Turkey's full participation in the security

³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-_esdi_p_.en.mfa, accessed on 25 January 2010

³⁴ Erguvenc S., *Turkey's Security Perceptions*, Perceptions, Vol.3, No.2, June-August 1998

³⁵ Oymen O., *Turkey's European Foreign Policy*, Perceptions, Vol.2, March-May 1997

³⁶ Muftuler Bac M., *Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies*, Security Dialogue, Vol.31, No 4, December 2000, p. 490

and defence policies of European Union. Despite the existence of some unfavourable conditions, Turkey did its best to contribute to the ESDP activities. Turkey is the biggest non-EU contributor to the ESDP missions and operations, the third biggest contributor to Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and a significant contributor to civilian and military capability development efforts.³⁷

Conclusions

Turkey's unique geographical location, historical experience, and relations with its neighbours are the main factors in shaping its security policies. While these determiners are still very relevant, Turkey's security policies have broadened by the challenges of globalised security agenda. Non-state actors such as media and public opinion have been more vocal in the security and foreign policy making process. The process of accession to the European Union was also another factor influencing Turkey's security thinking. As a result of the fact that in the aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey's security responsibilities have considerably increased, Turkey has significantly broadened its contributions to international and regional security efforts, both in hard and soft terms in a vast geography.

NATO membership still constitutes the backbone of Turkey's security policy. Turkey is actively taking part in the Alliance's political and military transformation and providing substantial contributions to the operations. The European Union's quest for playing a major role in security and defence affairs has also been very closely followed by Turkey. Despite the existence of some unfavourable conditions regarding Turkey's participation, ESDP has been actively supported by Turkey from the beginning. While the European dimension of Turkish security policy remains essential, Turkey has been following a multi-dimensional approach. Turkey's active involvement in the European initiatives does not prevent it from establishing close cooperation with the US, Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, or Russia. Turkey regards all these dimensions as complementing each other. This multi-dimensional approach makes Turkey a key actor that should be included in any kind of security cooperation, mainly in its region. Therefore, any security initiative in Europe should take into consideration the value of this very important strategic actor and exert every effort to benefit from the opportunities that Turkey

³⁷ Davutoglu A., *Bridging an Unnecessary Divide: NATO and the EU*, Issues, EUISS, October 2009, Vol.30 ,available at http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/ISSues30_web.pdf

could provide. This approach will best serve to the interest of the continent as a whole.

Contrary to the belief that the post Cold War security structure has diminished Turkey's strategic importance, Turkey's importance has increased. The September 11 terror attacks have also added to Turkey's strategic importance and it has come to the centre of the international scene. The dynamics of 9/11 have affected Turkey much more than any European Ally, and the importance attributed to Turkey's strategic value has become more visible. Currently, most of the conflicts on the top of the international agenda are taking place around Turkey. It is responding to these challenges with a proactive approach. This approach is both a choice and a necessity brought about by regional and global challenges.

Among other examples, the election of Turkey for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the term 2009–2010 by a record of 153 votes is a striking evidence of Turkey's prominent role in the international scene and it proves the confidence that the international community has placed in the foreign and security policies pursued by Turkey.