

CONTEMPORARY RUSSO–TURKISH RELATIONS

FROM CRISIS TO COOPERATION

Edited by **ALI ASKEROV**



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To my children
Tekin and Fatima

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Foreword

Stefan D. Brooks

Russian–Turkish relations and also the politics of both nations are currently in a state of flux. For Russia and Turkey, there remains opportunities for not only continued and even closer cooperation between them, but also possible confrontation and discord, although such a scenario would leave both nations even more isolated. The prospect of closer ties between both nations is ironically due to conflicts that both Russia and Turkey have experienced with the West such that they have shared grievances with the West.

The governments of both nations offer examples of what can be referred to as democratic backsliding toward increasing authoritarian, autocratic, or dictatorial rule. Ever since Vladimir Putin became Acting President of Russia in 1999 and then President starting in 2000, his rule has been characterized by the consolidation of the power of the Russian government, the erosion of civil liberties, and the suppression of dissent such that it is debatable whether Russia is even a democracy anymore. Turkey has also undergone significant change under the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, first as Prime Minister from 2003–2014, and since 2014, as President. Under Erdoğan, Turkey’s secular democratic tradition dating back to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 has been eroded, if not ended, in favor of an autocratic, authoritarian, or even dictatorial government, while at the same time Erdoğan has promoted Islam as a basis for both political rule and as a new form of Turkish identity, and also to suppress opposition to his rule.

Russia and Turkey each have their own set of problems with the West. Putin’s opposition to NATO’s eastward expansion since the end of the Cold War, either in proximity to (such as with Poland and Romania) or in some cases (as with the Baltic States) along Russia’s borders, is well-known. Since the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 to defend Western Europe against the Soviet Union, as an admittedly an anti-Soviet/Russian alliance, Putin naturally regards NATO expansion as nothing but an attempt to contain and encircle Russia. In the face of NATO expansion, Russia has not hesitated to use military force to defend what it regards as its sphere of influence against perceived threats to Russian interests. In 2008, Russia fought five-day

war with Georgia, not only invading parts of Georgia, but also supporting pro-Russian separatist forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which Russia has not only militarily occupied but also recognized as independent nations, both acts in violation of international law and also lacking support from virtually all other nations. The 2008 Russo-Georgian War was provoked by increasing tensions between Georgia and Russia as Georgia's government not only sought closer ties with the West, but also membership in NATO and the European Union, something Russia obviously objected to.

Tension between the West and Russia also sparked a political crisis in Ukraine in 2014, leading to Russian military intervention and the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian region of Crimea. As a nation that borders Poland (a NATO member) to the west, and Russia to east, Ukraine is in located along a geopolitical fault line, compounded by the fact that the people of Western Ukraine identify with Western Europe while eastern Ukraine is composed primarily of ethnic Russians who naturally identify with Russia.

When the pro-Russian President of Ukraine Victor Yanukovych rejected a pending agreement with the European Union, opting instead for closer ties with Russia, protests erupted in February, 2014, which escalated into violence between protesters and the Ukrainian government, ultimately promoting Yanukovych to flee to Russia and the formation of a new government. Opposition to what became known as the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution lead to a rebellion in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, prompting both Russian military intervention and also the Russian annexation of the Crimea, a peninsula along the Black Sea that hosts the Russian navy Black Sea fleet. Russia denounced the Ukrainian Parliament's decision to remove Yanukovych from power, calling it a coup d'état, and following clashes in February between supporters and opponents of Yanukovych in Donbass, Russian troops occupied Crimea and in March, following a legally dubious referendum, announced Crimea was now part of Russia. At the same time, in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, which borders Russia, protests by pro-Russian groups and supporters of the now exiled Yanukovych escalated into armed conflict with the Ukrainian government, sparking a civil war. Russia was accused of not only supporting these pro-Russian groups but also arming them, in addition to deploying Russian troops into the Donbass region. Although Russia defended its actions in the Ukraine on the basis of safeguarding the large number of ethnic Russians living in eastern Ukraine, it cannot be denied that Russia also took advantage of the political turmoil in Ukraine and to avert the possibility that a post-Yanukovych Ukraine might someday join NATO, Russia annexed the Crimea, thereby permanently securing Russia's naval presence in the Black Sea, and also establishing a buffer zone in Donbass.

Turkey's problems with the West have grown under Erdogan's rule, and following a failed July 2016 coup against Erdogan, the subsequent crackdown and purges against those accused of either supporting the coup or being hostile to Erdogan has led to the arrest of tens of thousands of soldiers and government officials—including judges, teachers and professors—and also journalists, along with media outlets being banned, including websites such as Wikipedia. Negotiations between Turkey and the European Union (EU) for Turkish membership ended with the post-coup crackdown and purges. In November 2016, the European Parliament voted to suspend negotiations with Turkey over concerns that the crackdown and purges violated the principles of human rights and democracy, and the next month, the Council of the European Union affirmed this decision. With Turkish membership in the EU now moot, Erdogan finds Turkey isolated from Western Europe, although even before the July 2016 coup and subsequent crackdown and purges, it was debatable whether Turkey, under Erdogan's authoritarian rule and embrace of Islam for political rule, was compatible with not only the values of the Western Europe but also the criterion for EU membership.

Russian–Turkish relations have major implications for the regions of the Caucuses, Central Asia, and the Middle East. As two major powers located either in or in proximity to these three regions, both Russia and Turkey can certainly affect regional stability. In the Caucuses, Turkey has enjoyed strong ties with Azerbaijan owing to their shared Turkic ethnicity and both nations also share a dispute with their neighbor Armenia. In the case of Azerbaijan and Armenia, both nations contest the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, while Turkey continues to be in embroiled in a bitter dispute with Armenia over the controversy surrounding the purported Armenian genocide by Turkey between 1915 and 1932.

In the Middle East, Russia and Turkey have adopted different positions during the Syrian Civil War, with Russia supporting its ally President Bashar Assad and Turkey supporting his overthrow. With the collapse of the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and what now appears to be the apparent survival of the Assad regime, Russian–Turkish relations over Syria appear to have stabilized. It is in Central Asia where Russian–Turkish relations are probably the most important. Both nations regard the region with particular interest and not only because of its abundance of natural resources. Russia regards Central Asia as its sphere of influence since the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan used to be part of the Soviet Union. As for Turkey, the people of these Central Asian states are of Turkic ancestry and thus Turkey has cultural ties to this region.

Russia and Turkey appear destined to have wary but stable relations. Neither nation has many allies or friends in their respective regions, and both Russia and Turkey have strained ties with the West. For these reasons, it is not in the interest of either country to become enemies. On the

other hand, both nations regard the other as a potential competitor for regional influence and power. Currently, the greatest potential source of discord appears to be over Syria, but as it now appears that the Assad regime will not be overthrown (indeed Russia has since withdrawn most of its military forces from Syria), this may no longer be an issue.

Turkey's strained relations with Europe and NATO gives Russia an opportunity to exploit, as evinced by Russia's sale in December, 2017, of S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems for a reported \$2.5 billion. Given that this weapon system cannot be integrated into NATO's air defense and also demonstrates closer ties between Turkey and Russia, this sale has understandably caused concern among NATO members. Clearly, the Turkish purchase of a Russian missile defense system is a way for Turkey to express its displeasure with NATO and the West, and also deepen its ties with Russia, particularly given the fact that Russia is a major trading partner. Turkey is the weakest member of NATO and Russia is exploiting that fact.

Should relations continue to deteriorate between Turkey and NATO, it is possible that Turkey might withdraw from NATO, but although it's membership still offers it security guarantees, this begs the question of whether Turkey regards Russia as a threat. Although Turkey may not regard Russia as a threat, it may not trust Russia either and probably regards its military actions in Georgia and Ukraine as proof of its aspirations to be a regional hegemon. With the Russian annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, Russia has permanently secured its presence in the Black Sea, but Turkey also borders the Black Sea and access to the Mediterranean Sea from the Black Sea is through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, both controlled by Turkey. In any case, any military alliance between Turkey and Russia seems unlikely because Turkey recognizes Russia's superior military power and does not wish to become a junior partner to Moscow. However, should Turkey withdraw from NATO, Russia will certainly seek to exploit this event and Turkey might have no choice but to turn to Moscow as it seeks new allies, and Russia would admittedly be the most likely ally.

A final issue worth considering is what effect a war between Israel and Iran, or between Iran and Saudi Arabia, would have on Russian-Turkish relations. Neither Russia or Turkey are allies of Iran, although Russia and Iran both support the Syrian government of Bashar Assad and both nations continue to provide assistance to Assad in the Syrian Civil War. Russia has at best cordial ties with Israel but can hardly be considered an ally, while Turkey's relations with Israel are strained. Turkey borders Iran and has cordial relations with Tehran, but is hardly an ally. It is inconceivable that should war break out between Iran and Israel over Tehran's development of nuclear weapons that either Russia or Turkey would intervene on behalf of Iran or for that matter Israel. The same can be said should war break out between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It

is not clear what Turkey and Russia would gain from intervening in either a war between Iran and Israel, or between Iran and Saudi Arabia, regardless of which side either nation intervened on. Should war break out between Iran and Israel, Iran's proxy ally, the Shi'a insurgent and terrorist group Hezbollah would almost certainly attack Israel from Lebanon and possibly also Syria where it has been fighting in support of Assad in the Syrian Civil War. Despite Russia's support for Assad, it seems implausible that Russia would attack Israel, although should Israel also attack Syria, Russia might intervene to defend its ally in which case this might create the possibility of a confrontation between Russia and Israel. More likely, however, is any Israeli attack on Syria would be limited to Hezbollah. In sum, it does not appear that Russian-Turkish relations would suffer or even change should war break out between Iran and Israel, or between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

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Introduction

Ali Askerov

Russo–Turkish relations have a long history that goes beyond the times of the Tsarist Russian and Ottoman Empires; however, the most profound relations between them recorded by the history took place during the lifetime of these two empires. History has witnessed numerous wars and crises between Tsarist Russia and Ottoman Turkey in the 16th through the 20th centuries, as they fought over the strategic vicinities of the Balkans, Crimea, and the Caucasus. Even after the fall of the both empires in the wake of the World War I, their interests in most cases did not intersect. The newly established Soviet Russia (then, Soviet Union) and the Republic of Turkey, which modernized itself with the secular Kemalist revolution in the 1920s, managed to establish good relations. During World War II, Turkey managed to remain neutral and declared war on Germany only after Nazi Germany's defeat was apparent. Later, in the wake of its victory during World War II, and having conquered Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union was in a position to threaten the security and even existence of the Turkish Republic. For this reason, Turkey developed a strategy of joining the Western Bloc and it managed to produce policies that helped it to become a NATO country.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened up new opportunities for cooperation between Russia and Turkey. Despite some problems due to the wars in the Upper Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, the former Yugoslavia, and in Chechnya, where Russia and Turkey had conflicting policies, their relations flourished continuously. In the 2000s, President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Prime Minister (now President) Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey managed to develop good relations between their countries, establishing a leading trend to cooperation in the sectors of tourism, construction, and energy. The rapidly growing relations were so beneficial and rewarding that Turkey did not join the sanctions of its Western allies against Russia due to its aggression in Crimea, Ukraine in 2014. This partnership between Russia and Turkey continued until the crisis of Syria starting in 2011 as a result of the civil war mainly caused by Arab Spring, when the Kremlin pursued a pro-Assad policy. Ankara, however, after some hesitation, took a position against the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

At some point, the contending interests of Russia and Turkey lead to the cooperation between them to stall, and the crisis in their relations reached its culmination when the Turkish air forces downed a Russian fighter jet over the Turkish-Syrian border in November 2015. Ankara's response to the Russian demands for an official apology and compensations was blaming Moscow for the crisis. Russia was swift to impose economic sanctions on Turkey; also ended almost all trade, although this significantly hurt Russia's own economy as well. Before long, the impact of this crisis on both countries forced them to reconsider the situation and look for ways to normalize their previously strong relations. In June 2016, Ankara offered its apologies to Moscow for downing the Russian fighter jet and relations began to normalize.

Various factors made Moscow and Ankara reconsider their policies toward each other, which included distrust with the West. Over time, Turkey has developed extreme displeasure about the Middle Eastern policies of its Western allies. The new circumstances in the region worked against the Turkish interests and this pushed Ankara to searching of alternative allies that needed to be strong enough to replace the West if necessary. Nonetheless, Ankara never wanted to give up its Western orientation unless it were alienated by the West. Today, in addition to the improving cooperation in the realm of trade, the signs of Turkish-Russian security cooperation are observable in Syria. Despite its fluctuating Syrian policies, Turkey has established itself as one of the major actors alongside with Russia and Iran that are shaping the future of Syria. Ankara and Moscow have managed to revive cooperation in the sectors of tourism and energy, and trade in agricultural and industrial goods has resumed. The presidents of the both countries have given optimistic prognosis about the future relations between their countries, however, it is hard to predict how far they will go.

This work discusses contemporary Russo-Turkish relations and offers observations on the recent crisis in these relations. Although this book presents some thoughts on the main historical events between Russia and Turkey, its primary focus is on the contemporary issues that shape their relations in the post-Cold War Era. The dynamics of the Russo-Turkish relations in late modern times portray an interesting array of international events that are of local, regional, and international importance.

In the first chapter, Ilyas Topsakal examines the evolution of the relations between Turkey and Russia across the ages since the prehistoric times. Topsakal argues that the roots of the Russo-Turkish competition go back to the prehistoric times when the flow of the Turkic people to westward started. The chapter gives a priority to the relations between Turks and Russians since the 15th century. His contribution provides the framework for the history of Turkish-Russian relations.

In the second chapter, Cemre Pekcan reviews the main lines of the relations between Turkey and Russia since 2000. She argues that Turkey

and Russia had limited relations during the Cold War era due to their opposite political/ideological identities. However, with the changing nature of the international system in the post-Cold War era, their relations have improved rapidly especially in the energy, trade, and tourism sectors. The chapter offers a detailed analysis of diplomatic, economic, military, and cultural relations between Turkey and Russia from 2000s into the 2010s.

In the third chapter, Ali Askerov and Lasha Tchantouridze discuss the impact of the Syrian factor on the contending foreign policies of Russia and Turkey. The chapter discusses the Turkish-Syrian and the Russian-Turkish relations prior to the crisis in Syria, as well as the clashing policies of Russia and Turkey after the Syrian conflict started in 2011. The authors also discuss other important conflicts in the region that took place before the Syrian civil war started. The chapter concludes with some explanations of the conflict dynamics between Russia and Turkey through the analysis of the conflict escalation.

In chapter 4, Togrul Ismayil discusses how the airplane crisis affected Russo-Turkish relations, both politically and economically. He examines the impact of the crisis on the economies of both countries and on their strategic partnership. Ismayil provides the details of the *letter diplomacy* and explains its importance in the process of improving relations between Russia and Turkey.

In chapter 5, Ali Askerov, Sean Byrne, and Thomas Matyok discuss the PYD/YPG policy of the US and its role in affecting Russo-Turkish relations today. The chapter discusses current Turkish policy toward the PKK with that of some ten years earlier and raises important questions related to the management of the Kurdish issue. The chapter suggests that it is time to think about major shifts in the Turkish approach to the problem so as to not face surprising challenges in the future. The authors claim that Ankara's aspirations shouldn't be limited to short term gains, rather it needs to develop policies that would cause long term peace in the region.

In the sixth chapter, Aydin Cetiner discusses the military-strategic dimensions of the Russo-Turkish relations, highlighting the importance of the geo-strategic policies of both Ankara and Moscow in the region. The chapter suggests that the relations between Turkey and Russia in the post-Cold War era have been marked by a set of anxieties and rivalries related to security and cooperation issues. Russia's efforts to maintain its own security have been manifested in the "Near Abroad Doctrine"; while Turkey, as a NATO member, had followed pro-Western policies during the Cold War.

In chapter 7, Lasha Tchantouridze discusses the Black Sea question in Russo-Turkish relations, which in recent years have become the source of a mostly unnoticed crisis. As Tchantouridze notes in the chapter, the

relations between Turkey and Russia play a crucial role in the stability of the Black Sea region.

In the eighth chapter, İbrahim Arslan discusses the obstacle to possible rapprochement among three major states in the region, Turkey, Russia, and Iran. As prominent actors in the region, these three states are capable of influencing regional political and economic cooperation, and also security issues. Their trilateral relations have become more complex with the eruption of the Syrian crisis in 2011. The chapter explores the possibilities of rapprochement between Turkey, Russia, and Iran.

In chapter 9, Kamala Valiyeva discusses Russo–Turkish cooperation and competition over the Central Asian countries in the wake of Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991. She argues that Central Asia represents a region of a particular importance for both Turkey and Russia due to its opportunities in energy, transport, and trade areas. Regarded by Russia as its backyard, Central Asia is within the orbit of Moscow’s strategic, economic, and security interests. Russia strives to reestablish economic ties between the former Soviet republics and restore its influence in this post–Soviet region. Turkey, however, sees itself as having a natural bond with the Central Asian countries due to its cultural kinship with them. Ankara sees itself as a bridge between the Central Asian republics and the rest of the world.

In chapter 10, Tugce Varol discusses Turkish–Russian relations in the context of energy cooperation. As she notes, Russia is the biggest energy supplier of Turkey, whereas Turkey’s growing economy is one of the most important markets for Russia’s energy strategy. Varol claims that cooperation between Russia and Turkey has an asymmetrical nature since Turkey imports from Russia much more than it exports to Russia, which is a potentially dangerous situation for normal and peaceful interactions. The tense situation in the geography around Turkey and Ankara’s critical domestic politics have caused a serious threat to its energy security. However, despite the tensions between Ankara and Moscow due to various differences they have had since 2002, Russo–Turkish energy cooperation did not fully stop. Nonetheless, the situation is still ambiguous and hard to predict whether the relations will return to the point that existed before the crisis.

In chapter 11, Soner Karagül compares Russia and Turkey’s European Union (EU) policies. Turkey and Russia have had an influence on Europe for a long time and Karagül argues that Russia, as a great power since the 18th century, has moved deeper into Europe both politically and economically and impacted European balance of power. In the apex of its power, the Ottoman Empire was also active in the European affairs, but with its decline it managed to play decreasingly little role in European affairs. While challenging each other for centuries, the Ottomans had to forge alliances with European powers. The chapter presents the foreign policies of the modern Russian and Turkish states sought toward Europe.

In chapter 12, İbrahim Arslan and Mithat Baydur discuss a proposal for sustainable peace in the Sykes–Picot agreement’s hundredth year. They argue that despite deep-rooted, violent, and protracted conflicts in the region, the history of the Middle East is also replete with occasions for conflict resolution, offering hope that the most intractable conflicts can be resolved peacefully. The chapter makes numerous recommendations for the management of the protracted conflicts in the Middle East.

In chapter 13, Abulfaz Suleymanov, Gali Galiev, and Chulpan İldarhanova examine social dynamics of the modern Russian and Turkish societies that can be characterized, with certain reservations, as transitional, which is connected with two main factors: “post-imperial” reorganization, and the influence of the dynamics of globalization process. They discuss certain similarities and differences between the Russian and Turkish societies and offer explanations for existing socio-economic problems within each of their societies.

Sergey A. Kizima argues in chapter 14 that the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) may play a crucial role in the economic development of the region, which is important for regional peace and security. However, at this time, the organization itself faces some hurdles to overcome first in order to be able to provide assistance to its members in improving their economies. In this respect, its key members—Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine—must play the key role. Kizima claims that China’s membership in the BSEC would contribute to the revival of the organization tremendously.

In the final chapter, Ali Askerov and Stefan D. Brooks discuss the role of a third party in the process of normalization of the Russo–Turkish relations. They examine how the historic contexts inform and shape the role third parties play in managing differences between states, especially when the mediators are under the influence of one of the disputants. The authors argue that the Kremlin has been able to influence the mediation process between Russia and Turkey significantly and get what it wanted from Turkey. However, the outcome of the negotiation made possible by means of mediation is in the benefit of both Russia and Turkey.

In the conclusion, Ali Askerov remarks on the latest developments in the Middle East and briefly discusses the new tensions that are potential sources of new international conflicts against peace and prosperity. He argues that all types of conflicts may yield positive results and become a rewarding source of cooperation if approached and used constructively. By and large, the future cooperation between Russia and Turkey is extremely important for the sake of the entire region and the whole world.

The book as a whole represents a comprehensive and balanced combination of compelling approaches to Russo–Turkish relations in late modern times that are as much about conflict as about cooperation. We hope that this collection answers many questions related to Russian and Turkish relations in our times.

ONE

A History of Russian–Turkish Relations

*From the Ottoman Empire Period
to the End of the Soviet Era*

İlyas Topsakal

The Ottoman Empire (also known as the Ottoman State) was a Turkestan state that ruled in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Anatolia, the Middle East, and Northern Africa between 1299–1922. Osman Gazi, who is the founder of the Ottoman Empire and the ancestor of the Ottoman Dynasty, was a descendant of the Kayı tribe of the Bozok sub-branch of the Oghuz Turks. The state was established in the Söğüt district of Bilecik Province. The date of establishment for the Ottoman Empire is widely accepted as 1299. However, according to some historians such as Halil İnalcık, the Ottoman Empire achieved its characteristics and qualities of state after the Battle of Bapheus in Yalova in 1302, not in 1299.¹

Although we mention the date of 1492, when the Moscow Principality and the Ottoman State contacted each other through their envoys, as the beginning of the historical process of Turkish–Russian relations, relations between these two nations date back earlier. The northern wing of the Turkic migrations from east to west, which goes back to the era in BC, always forced the Slavs and Turks to coexist, especially in the sub-forest areas of the Ukrainian steppes. For this reason, Lev Nikolayevich Gumilyev mentions the similarities of these two co-existing people in his work *Ancient Turks*, especially in the Ukrainian region.² The existence of the Turkic states in the region that began with the Huns in the 4th century

AD, continued with the Avars³ (AD 558–619), Khazars (AD 558–965), Pechenegs (AD 860–1091), Cumans (Kipchaks), and Ogurs (Bulgars; AD 630–864), which were formed after the breakup of the Gokturks⁴ (AD 552–745). This political structure continued its dominance in the region with the Turkish Mongol emperor Genghis Khan (1162–1227) and his sons.

The Ottoman State emerged as a social, political and economic power in Anatolia and the Balkans. The state had its most powerful period in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Russians began to gain strength in the 16th century, and in the 17th and 18th centuries they gained a political advantage over the Ottoman state. In addition, as the Russians aimed to expand their borders to the Caucasus in the south, they fought with the Ottoman State continuously. Russia's aim was to dominate the Black Sea, the straits, and the Mediterranean trade zone in order to be effective politically and economically. In the meantime, the Ottoman Empire had to defend these areas. It is also known that the Ottoman Empire helped the Turkistan khanates in Central Asia in order to prevent Russia progressing to the Caucasus and the Black Sea. This is why the powerful Grand Vizier Sokullu came to Astrakhan in 1568 to stop Russia, and wanted to realize the goal of facilitating logistical transportation to the Caspian Sea by joining the Volga and Don Rivers with the Or Canal.

The first diplomatic relations between the Ottoman State and the Russians was established during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II, who ruled from 1481 to 1512, when Ivan III Vasilyevich—also known as Ivan the Great, who reigned from 1462 to 1505—sent his ambassador, Alexis Golovkastof, to Istanbul to liberalize the trade of Russian trade ships in the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean.⁵ Connected to this, and considering their power and status, the Ottomans did not accept the Duchy of Moscow as their direct respondent but notified them that they would conduct their relations through the Crimean Khanate, which was subject to Ottoman rule. Especially with the weakening and collapse of the Golden Horde State,⁶ and the collapse of its successor khanates in the fifteenth century, first the Kazan Khanate in 1552 and then the Astrakhan Khanate in 1556⁷ were defeated by the Russians. Based on these events, the Russians began to dominate Western Turkistan. By the end of the sixteenth century, Russian Tsardom became a great state threatening Sweden and Poland in the west with the wealth and power it gained in the east. The Astrakhan campaign and the Or Canal project launched by Sokullu Mehmet Pasha in 1568 failed due to the negligence of the Crimean Khan and logistical impossibility, and the expansion of Russia to the east and south could not be prevented by the Ottoman Empire.⁸

It can be considered that the project of joining the Don and Volga Rivers, which is planned by Sokullu Mehmet Pasha and opening a door to Turkistan, was intended to stop the Russians who were emerging as a new power and could be a future threat to the Ottoman Empire's sove-

reignty in the north. According to Inalcik, this project was planned at the time of the Kanuni era and aimed at stopping the Russians, who came from the north.⁹ The pressures on Muslim peoples in Astrakhan¹⁰ and its surroundings during the Kanuni period (reigned 1520–1566) continued in the era of Ottoman ruler Selim II (reigned 1566–1574). Continuing to fight the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean for pilgrimage and trade routes, the Ottomans returned to the north in early 1568 and launched the Astrakhan campaign in order to prevent threats from Russia. After these preparations, which continued throughout the winter, they came to the area, a little north of Astrakhan, in August 1569. This area was discovered by the ancient Greeks to be the most shallow ground that the Don and Volga Rivers cross over before they flow into two separate seas.¹¹ The excavation of the canal started at the area between the Ilovlya branch of the Don River and the Kamsyshinka branch of Volga (now called the town of Petroval). The excavations continued for three months continuously and one-third of the channel was opened. About 30,000 Nogay Tatars were hired to work on the canal works. The historian Pechevi¹² says that, although there was no lack of security, food and equipment, the Tatars had spread a rumor among soldiers that winter comes to the region three months earlier, and that it would not be possible to work in the unbearable cold; therefore, the soldiers returned. Despite the edict of the Ottoman ruler Selim II, which ordered the army to spend the winter in Astrakhan, the army disobeyed the order and withdrew.

After the Ottomans left the Astrakhan region, they were not interested in the region for about a century. However, during this time, the Crimean Khanate, under the aegis of the Ottomans, continued to control Russia and to receive taxes on behalf of the Ottoman State from Russia in accordance with the existing agreements. In fact, Crimean horsemen burnt down Moscow completely in 1571 to prevent Russia gaining strength. In 1552, Russia attacked the Kazan Khanate, in the east and captured the capital Kazan; there was a great massacre. The main purpose of the Russian expansion of their territory to the south, which was a threat to the Ottomans, was to acquire land for agriculture and to make it possible for poor Russian villagers to have access to fertile lands. In 1502, the Crimean Khanate broke the power of the Great Horde by conquering Saray—the last fortress of the Golden Horde—and gained control over Kazan and the territory around it. The people affected by this turmoil were placed in Perskop city.¹³ Therefore, the lands between Ryazan and the Crimean Khanate remained empty and these lands not owned by anyone were called Dikoye Pole (wild field). Kazakhs and peasants from Russia started to settle in these empty lands. Before long, the Kazakhs started to settle in Dnepr at the borders of the Crimean Khanate.¹⁴ Hoping to protect itself from the pressure of the Crimean Khanate, Moscow built “ostrogs”¹⁵ and fortresses. The Russians completed building Belgorod, the most important southern defense line—some 800 kilometers long—in

1653. This border line not only secured the south but it also expanded the Russian border about 100 kilometers down to the land of the Crimean Khanate. This process caused the Russians to learn about the surrounding region along the Ukrainian lands. In addition, the Russians settled these lands by building ostrogs. Even if the Russian armies lost the wars against the Ottoman armies, they became the true owner of the region because they settled in this area. Based on these events, Ukraine became one of the most important migration areas for Russians. Nonetheless, the Turks did not see the Russians as a serious threat in the sixteenth and for most of the seventeenth centuries; therefore, did not plan to conquer the Russian territories to keep it under control.¹⁶ From 1654 on, under the influence of the Cossacks,¹⁷ the Russians captured most of Ukraine and seized places with strategic importance from both the Crimean Khanate and the Ottomans. In the meantime, Hetman Doroshenko, the king of Ukraine, abandoned Ottoman patronage and began to be under the patronage of Russia. This caused the Ottoman army under the command of Mustafa Pasha, including the forces of the Crimean Khanate, to march into Ukraine's capital, Cyhyryn city, in 1678. It was the beginning of a new era in the history of the two neighboring states when they began to fight directly.¹⁸ According to the Bahchesaray Agreement¹⁹ (3 January 1681) signed between the Crimean Khanate and Russia after this war, which ended with an absolute victory of the Ottoman army in 1681, the Russians agreed that they would continue to pay taxes to Crimea. The Ottoman State continued to refuse to accept the Russians as their direct interlocutor in this period, and conducted their relations through the Crimean Khanate.²⁰

However, the Ottoman raids into Poland and Russia did not have the potential to fix the distorted economic order (the taxation system; timar²¹ and iltizam²²). For this reason, according to the general opinion of the Russian historians, despite the victories between 1676 and 1681, the Ottoman state gave up its interests in Ukraine and Russia and turned its attention to Central Europe, leaving the region to the governance of the Crimean Khanate. A. L. Nordin-Nayokin, who was the foreign relations officer of Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich, believed that the peace achieved with Poland had to also be reached with the Ottomans, and he warned the Russian Tsar accordingly.²³

When the Ottoman Empire was defeated at the apex of its power in Vienna in 1683—with the encouragement of the Pope—Austria, Poland, Russia, Venice, and Malta formed the Holy League. The battles against the Holy League, which lasted for 16 years, severely damaged the Ottoman Empire and weakened its power. In 1699, with the Treaty of Karlowitz, the Ottoman Empire admitted defeat and withdrew from the war. Poland also signed an agreement that it accepted Russian sovereignty over the territory of Kiev and Smolensk in return for Russia joining the Holy League.²⁴ For the Holy League, Russia launched two campaigns in

Crimea under the command of Prince Golitsin between 1687 and 1689, but could not succeed in capturing Crimea, and had to retreat after suffering major defeats.²⁵ This alliance against the Ottoman Empire was a new foreign policy by Russia. Russia would continue to advance into Ottoman Black Sea ports.

Since Tsar Peter I (reigned 1682–1725) attached great importance to maritime trade, he besieged the Castle of Azak located at a key point on the Black Sea with a large Russian army in the spring of 1695. Although the Ottoman troops repelled the Russian attacks at first with the strong resistance of soldiers and the support they received from the sea, Peter I took over the castle on 19 July 1696.²⁶ In doing so, the Russians gained direct access to the sea trade, the importance of which they had previously noticed. The Castle of Azak, invaded by Russians, was also important for transporting the possessions that Russians obtained in the 17th century to various places of the world via the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, and Mediterranean Sea. Now, Russian merchants would be able to carry their fur and valuable chemical materials from Siberia to the important ports of the world.

The Ottoman State signed the Treaty of Karlowitz with the Austrian, Venetian, Polish, and Russian states of the Holy League on 23 January 1699.²⁷ One year later, with the arrival of the Russian representatives to Istanbul, the “Istanbul Treaty” — as a continuation of the Treaty of Karlowitz — was signed with Russia on 13 July 1700. As a result of this agreement, the Russians, who had previously contacted with the Ottoman State through the Crimean Khanate, made a bilateral agreement with the Ottoman Empire, and succeeded in holding the important Azak Castle.²⁸ In addition, by holding a strategic commercial center that would lead to the warm seas of the Mediterranean, Russian Tsar Peter I made a move that could be influential in international politics. It was also important for Russia to make this agreement at a time when the Holy League was weakened. Russia had also acquired land by benefitting from this weakness.

The Ottoman Empire gathered an army under the command of Baltacı Mehmet Pasha²⁹ in 1711 in order to stop Russia’s movement along the Caucasus and the Black Sea. The Ottoman army besieged the Russian army on the edge of the Prut River. However, no war began between them, and Baltacı Mehmet Pasha lifted the siege by accepting the offer of Tsar Peter I (reigned 1682–1725), and the Prut Agreement was signed on 21 July 1711.³⁰

According to the agreement, Azak Castle, previously held by Russia, would be returned to the Ottoman State. Moreover, all castles on Ottoman–Russian border constructed by Russia would be destroyed, and the Russians would stop interfering with the affairs of Poland and the Cossacks of the Crimea. In addition, Charles XII of Sweden would be able to return to his country and Russia would not prevent it. Apart from Rus-

sian merchants, there would be no Russian ambassador in Turkey, the prisoners of war would be returned to the Ottoman State, and Russia would pay taxes to the Crimean Khanate as it had done in the past.³¹ The Prut Treaty can be considered as official proof that the Turks were still militarily strong; however, Turkish army was mentioned as a disorganized army in the resources at that time. Again, the agreement was even more important to the Russians, as Russian diplomacy had succeeded in making an agreement with the least loss and without fighting.³² Peter I prevented the possible destruction of the Russian army by maneuvering when he was trapped by the Prut River.³³ Although Turkish historians consider this agreement to be an important event due to the success of the Russians in their dealings, Russian historians are not convinced that their country signed a very successful treaty, because all of the previous achievements of the Russians were taken back through this agreement, and they had to evacuate the Zaporizhia³⁴ region; thus Peter I could not realize his goal of reaching the Black Sea coast. Moreover, with the border agreements made with the Russians—first in 1720 and then in 1724—the border lines of both sides remained the same.³⁵

The Ottoman State sent Nishli Mehmet Aga to Russia as a middle-ambassador to discuss the issue of Iran and the pressures on the Muslims living in Russia, who were under the patronage of the Ottoman State. Kapıcıbaşlı Nishli Mehmet Aga was the first among ambassadors to Russia who wrote a *sefaretnâme*³⁶ (recounting the journeys and experiences of an Ottoman ambassador in a foreign country). He left Istanbul in October 1722 and returned on 17 February 1723. The ambassador conveyed a proposal regarding the attack on Iran and the partition of Iran. He also demanded that legal rights be given to Muslims living in the region and an end to their persecution.³⁷ After the Vienna defeat, the Ottoman State had to compromise on the Russian project of placing a Russian population on the Caucasus and Ottoman border. However, the Ottoman State recovered in a short time and managed to stop its losses temporarily by establishing a balance in foreign policy. The psychological superiority due to Prut victory in 1711 had an important place in this success.

The peaceful period between the Ottoman State and the Russian Tsardom ended in the period of Russian Czarina Anna Ivanovna (1730–1740). The Russian Czarina, making an agreement with Austrian emperor Karl VI, waged war against the Ottoman Empire in 1736 when they attacked the Castles of Crimea, Özi, Azak, and Khotyn. In the same year, the Austrian state declared war against the Ottoman Empire based on the agreement with Russia.³⁸ The Ottoman army succeeded in this struggle against the two great countries in the course of almost three years, centering primarily on the Austrian front. With the Treaty of Belgrade³⁹ (18 September 1739) signed with Austria, the Ottoman State took back the lands it had previously lost. The agreement with the Russians consisted of fifteen articles and one conclusion part.⁴⁰ According to this agreement,

Russia was to withdraw from the territories it had invaded previously and the Castle of Azak was to be destroyed and the land was made neutral. The independence of the Kabardins⁴¹ territories was recognized. It was decided that the Russians would stop attacks on Cossacks and that the Crimean Tatars⁴² would stop their raids on Russia. The Russians were not allowed to have naval vessels and merchant ships in the Black Sea.⁴³ The Belgrade Agreement in 1739 was made at the request of Austria and its ally Russia. In these wars, the Ottoman State defeated the Austrian army in Niš and took back Belgrade, however, it was not very successful against the Russian army, so it had to retreat from Khotyn and Bender. When Austria withdrew from the war, Russia was alone and had to retreat from the war against the Ottomans. As a result of these wars, the Ottoman Empire had been successful militarily; however, its financial health deteriorated because of debts to Europe, especially to France. Moreover, the Belgrade Agreement marked the beginning of the process in which Europe would have a role as an important factor in the relations between Russia and the Ottoman State.

After the Belgrade Agreement with the Russians, it was decided to reciprocally send ambassadors. In this respect, Mehmet Emni Efendi was sent to Petersburg with the title of Governor of Anatolia.⁴⁴ Emni Efendi, who set out in 1741, was responsible for resolving the issues on the implementation of the provisions of the Belgrade Agreement. Emni Efendi, who was a successful diplomat, also discussed issues such as the exchange of captives and referring to the Russian tsars as emperors in protocols. Emni Efendi returned to Istanbul in 1742 and wrote a *sefaretname* on this travel.⁴⁵

In the period of Czarina Yelizaveta Petrovna (reigned 1741–1762), there was no war between Russia and Turkey and relations were peaceful. Relations between the Ottoman State and the Russian Tsardom continued at the diplomatic level. In the meantime, Dervish Mehmet Efendi, who travelled from Istanbul to St. Petersburg in 1754, conveyed the edict of the Sultan to Czarina Elizabeth to inform her of the Ottoman ruler Osman III's (1754–1757) accession to Ottoman throne. Mehmet Efendi, who wrote his journey as a *sefaretname*, returned with the letters of the empress in 1755.⁴⁶ When Mustafa III (1757–1774) ascended to the Ottoman throne, he sent Shehdi Osman Efendi in 1757, who had previously traveled to Russia as part of Mehmet Emni Efendi's entourage, with the title of Şikk-ı Sani Defterdarlığı (a title of high ranking finance officer) to inform the Russian state of his accession to throne. Returning from St. Petersburg in 1758, Shehdî Efendi gave information and detailed descriptions on the state of Russia by writing a *sefaretname*.⁴⁷

Russian Czarina Catherina II (reigned 1762–1796) had elected Stanisław Poniatowski as the king of Poland to succeed King August III.⁴⁸ With Polish refugees taking refuge in the Ottoman lands, the Russians chased after them and massacred both the refugees and the Mus-

lims. As a result, Ottoman ruler Mustafa III declared war on Russian in 1768.⁴⁹ The chancellor of Catherina II, M. I. Vorontsov, stated in his report dated 1762⁵⁰ that Russia could not be safe if Crimea remained as part of the Ottoman State. Crimea was the most important way for Russians to reach the Mediterranean through the Black Sea. Therefore, after the Russian intervention in Poland and Sweden, it was also very important strategically for the Russians to keep Crimea under their patronage. In 1769, the Russian State Council took the first step to have the territory of Crimea by recognizing the independence of Crimea. Russian historians interpret this event as a political decision taken in terms of the balance of power in the world and emphasize that it was very accurate. Because, according to Russian historians, the annexation of the Crimean territory could have stirred the reaction of other Western states. Russia would be forced to go into a war that she was unprepared for and could lose completely the land gains against the Ottomans. The Russian–Turkish war began in 1768 and lasted until 1774. The Turks, defeated both on land and at sea, had to enter peace negotiations with the Russians. Peace negotiations were started in Focshani and Bucharest, but no agreement could be reached due to the excessive demands of the Russians. However, as a result of the increase in Turkish defeats, a truce was concluded on 10–21 July 1774 in Küçük Kaynarca (today Kaynardzha).⁵¹

The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca is one of the most burdensome treaties in the history of the Ottoman Empire in terms of its conditions.⁵² A turning point for the Ottoman Empire, this agreement consists of twenty eight articles and two separate provisions. It allowed the Russians to take vast lands between the Dnepr and Dniester rivers and set the Kuban River as the border.⁵³ The Russians, who separated Crimea from the Ottomans and ensured its independence, had the right to control Crimea and the Kerch Strait.⁵⁴ The Russians, who controlled the Crimea, had the right to control the Kerch Strait, the most important place on the Black Sea. A history of Crimea (Russian Sefaretname 1771–1775), written by Necati Efendi—part of the entourage of Silahtar İbrahim Pasha—deals with the wars of Russia against Crimea and narrates the Ottoman–Russian war between 1768 and 1774, especially on the Crimean front. It was decided to send an envoy from the Ottoman State to Russia, and Russia to the Ottoman State, to discuss the problems arising out of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. For this purpose, the Babıali (literally “sublime porte” or Ottoman government) sent Çavushbaşlı Abdülkerim Efendi to Russia in 1775 as an ambassador with the title of Governor of Rumelia. Mehmet Emin Nahifi Efendi, the poet and high-ranking military officer (müşir), served as an emissary of Abdülkerim Pasha and explained in his sefaretname the struggles regarding the settlement of the problems arising after this agreement.⁵⁵

The Russians increased their activities toward Crimea after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. With respect to the Crimea issue, the Aynalıkavak

bond of arbitration (*Aynalıkavak tenkihnamesi* in Turkish) was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, with the mediation of France and England, on 21 March 1779.⁵⁶ The treaty emphasized that Crimea was independent and the dominance of the Ottoman State over Crimea was reduced gradually.⁵⁷ The Crimea issue between the Ottomans and the Russians continued to be important, and finally Catherina II invaded Crimea in 1783 with an army of seventy thousand soldiers led by Potemkin. The Ottoman State, however, failed to respond to this situation due to its economic and military inadequacy and accepted the situation implicitly.⁵⁸

The lands of Crimea and its surrounding region were one of the main resources of the Ottoman Empire, not only in terms of population, but also for strategic and logistic reasons.⁵⁹ In addition, the settlement of Russia in the region would bring about a total loss of activity in the area for Ottoman Turkey in the future. For this reason, the Ottomans fought for years against Russia (1787–1792, 1807–1812, 1853–1866). The Ottomans declared war against the Russians again in August 1787 as a result of the increasing desire of the Russians toward the warm seas, especially the Black Sea. Austria also became a party to this war, and the Ottoman State had to fight two major states in two fronts.⁶⁰ The main purpose of the Ottoman State in entering the war was to take the Crimea back and to push the Russians to the borders that existed before the signing of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. The aim of Czarina Catherina II was to eradicate the Ottoman Empire and become the sole sovereign of the Black Sea, to make the Balkans Russian subjects, and to establish a Greek state (supported by her) in Istanbul.⁶¹ The Russians, who cooperated with Austria, achieved great victories in the battles against the Ottoman State. The interpretations of Russian historians also overlap with those of Turkish historians. According to both groups of scholars, the Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman State, and Muslims and Turkish subjects in Russia, were the most important factor in the relations between the two states. While the two states were fighting out with the opposing party outside their borders, they were also mainstreaming this struggle among the people involved with religious institutions and clerics within their borders. In this context, the Russian state used the Orthodox church and clerics, and the Ottoman state used the caliphate and imams, as part of the war.

At the beginning of the war, the Ottoman State requested support from Sweden and Prussia against Russia and signed an alliance with these states.⁶² However, these alliances were not successful due to the French Revolution, and the Ottoman State was left without allies in its war against Russia.⁶³ With the French Revolution, which shook Europe and the world and marked the beginning of a new age of nationalism, the Russians declared that they wanted to negotiate with the Ottomans but the defeated Ottomans did not accept the request for these negotiations. After Koca Yusuf Pasha's appointment as Grand Vizier,⁶⁴ the Ottoman

State, which could not get the support expected from Prussia, sent the delegation that had previously signed the Sistova Agreement to Iași (Jassy)⁶⁵ to conduct peace negotiations. The negotiations started in November 1791 but would not be completed until January 1792; the Treaty of Jassy,⁶⁶ consisting of thirteen articles and a conclusion, was then signed. According to this treaty, the Ottoman State accepted all treaties in force: namely the 1774 Treaty of Kaynarca, the 1779 Aynalıkavak Tenkihnamesi, the 1783 Trade Agreement, and the annexation of the Crimea and Taman in 1784. The land on the left side of Dniester River⁶⁷ would be given to the Russians together with Ochakov Castle, while Ismail, Bender, Akkerman, and Kili Castles would be given to the Ottomans. The tax debts of the Bogdan Voivodeship⁶⁸ would be canceled, taxes would not be collected for two years, and public amnesty for the captives of both sides would be announced. Kuban⁶⁹ would be the border between the two states in the Caucasus. To assure the peaceful relations between Russia and the Ottoman State, the governors of Cildir would not attack Tbilisi, the Georgian Prince. Russian merchant ships would be protected by the Ottoman Navy against the pirates of Garp Ocakları (pirates from Algeria), and Garp Ocakları would compensate any damages to such ships; the Ottomans would provide such compensation if the pirates did not pay.⁷⁰

Long-standing Russian–Ottoman wars have helped the Russian army to improve its technological capabilities and renew its military system. The same battles had weakened the Ottoman army, and deteriorated overall financial stability by bringing extra costs to the state treasury, which was already in poor condition. As a result of the defeat in the Ottoman–Russian wars, Selim III understood the necessity of reforming the Ottoman military and wanted to create a new and modern army.⁷¹

During the Peloponnese and Greek revolts (1821–1829) against the Ottoman government, Russia, England, and France formed a triple alliance and transformed the Ottoman State's domestic affairs into a European problem. In addition to incitement activities organized in Balkans against the Ottoman government through Orthodox churches, the Russians burned the Ottoman Navy in Navarino (1828–1829).⁷² Despite the request of the Ottoman Empire for compensation, the Russians declared war in 1828,⁷³ and taking advantage of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire with no navy, they crossed the Black Sea and landed at Edirne.⁷⁴ Ibrahim Pasha, the son of the Governor of Egypt Mehmet Ali Pasha, had been waiting for help from the Ottoman army but had to abandon the Peloponnese⁷⁵ when the necessary aid did not reach him. The Ottoman Empire had lost the Ottoman–Russian War in 1828–1829, and accepted the independence of Greece through the Treaty of Edirne signed with Russia in 1829. The Russians occupied Ahiska, Kars, and Erzurum under the command of General Paskiyevic. The war ended with the Treaty of Edirne (1829).⁷⁶ In the Central Balkans, the border between Europe and

the Ottoman Empire would again be the Prut River, but the rights given earlier in international agreements to Moldavia–Wallachia and Serbia would be increased. In addition to granting full independence to Greece, Russia would be paid a substantial amount of compensation by the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, following Treaty of Edirne, Serbia declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830 with the support of Russia.⁷⁷ In short, the Ottoman Empire had admitted the defeat against Russia with the treaties of Küçük Kaynarca, Jassy and Edirne. Especially after the Treaty of Edirne, the balance between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was ensured by the help and support of England and France to the Ottoman Empire.

The Turkish state, which had survived the Russian threat through the Treaty of Edirne with severe losses, had to deal with the revolt of Mehmet Ali Pasha, the rebellious governor of Egypt. M. Ali Pasha, who was not recognized as the governor of Syria, came to Kütahya⁷⁸ after defeating the Ottoman armies. Ottoman ruler Mahmut II (reigned 1808–1839) had to make an alliance with the Russians on 8 July 1833 to suppress the revolt of M. Ali Pasha. According to this alliance, which was known as the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi,⁷⁹ the Russian army would help to the untrained and technologically inferior Ottoman army, and subsidize the Ottoman treasury (which was having difficulties with repayment). In the case of war with other states except Russia, the Ottoman State would help Russia by closing the straits to all other states. With this change in strategy,⁸⁰ the Egypt issue was now on the agenda as an international topic that was of interest of France, England, and Russia because Egypt and its surroundings was a very important strategic location. France, England, and Italy had desired to be ascendant in North Africa. As a result of the negotiations on the Egypt issue with the European States, the Strait of Istanbul (Bosporus), the Strait of Çanakkale (Dardanelles), which were under control of the Ottoman Empire, gained an international status. Moreover, the privileges given to Russia by the Ottoman Empire in the straits had been removed with the Treaty of Hünkar İskelesi (1833).⁸¹ After the Treaty of Hünkar İskelesi (1833), Ottoman–Russian relations witnessed a peaceful period. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) provided the Russians protection of Orthodox Christians living in the Balkans as vassals of the Ottoman Empire. Using this advantage, the Russian Tsardom had incited the Orthodox people in the Balkans against the Ottomans, and the Ottoman–Russian wars began again in 1853. Britain and France joined the Ottoman Empire in these wars—called the Crimean wars—which continued until 1856. Becoming one of the most important forces among the European states after the Vienna Congress of 1815, Russia suffered a heavy defeat in the Crimean Wars, because the Russian Navy in the Black Sea was quite weak. even though the Russian Ground Army was strong. After Russia was defeated, it had to sign the Treaty of Paris. According to this treaty, the winning countries—namely France,

England, and the Ottoman Empire—demanded that Russia abolish the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, and the terms of that treaty were canceled.⁸² The Black Sea had been made neutral and unarmed by making new arrangements concerning the Strait of Istanbul and the Strait of Çanakkale. The patronage of the Russians on the Memleketeyn⁸³ since 1774 (the two cities, Moldavia and Wallachia) was terminated.⁸⁴ The Turkish–Russian struggle, which had been continuing with Ottoman defeats for about 150 years, was stopped with the support that the European allies had given to the Ottomans. However, the political, social, and economic concessions given in return for this support caused irreparable consequences for the Ottoman State.

Russia could not get what it wanted from the Balkans and the Caucasus against England and France, which supported the Ottoman Empire, and started to act by using its power with Orthodox people in the Balkans. In 1857, Wallachia and Moldavia were united to form the Romanian state with Russia's efforts. Russia had increased its effectiveness in the Balkans by intervening in the turmoil that started in Herzegovina in 1875, received the support of the community and weakened the Ottoman government thoroughly.⁸⁵

Russia regained the prestige that it had lost in the Balkans and the Caucasus during the Crimea War, and grew stronger; this situation was the reason for a new Russian–Ottoman War (1877–1878), known as the “War of 93.” During these wars, which had become the biggest defeats for the Ottoman State in its history, the Russians massacred hundreds of thousands of Muslims, came too close to Istanbul (the capital of Ottoman Empire), and invaded the Balkans.⁸⁶ On the Caucasian front, Kars and Erzurum—which are on the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire—fell to the Russians. With the Treaty of San Stefano⁸⁷ signed between the two states on 3 March 1878, it was acknowledged that the Ottoman Empire had lost all territories in Europe and the Caucasus. However, Britain and Austria, opposed to sole Russian ownership of the Ottoman lands, were not willing to let Russia establish its rule in the Balkans and Central Europe, and they organized the Berlin Congress (13 June–13 July 1878). The states in the Balkans were recognized as independent at this conference.⁸⁸

In 1905, the Russians, defeated by Japan during the Russian–Japanese War, turned their attention back to the Balkans. Balkan countries—namely Albania, Crete, Macedonia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria—wanted to leave the Ottoman Empire. Russia provided all possible help to the Balkan countries in their desire to leave. This support led to the start of the Ottoman–Balkan Wars (1912–1913). The rebellious Balkan countries entered into their wars of independence against the Ottoman Empire forming Serb–Bulgarian, Bulgarian–Greek, Montenegro–Serbian, and Montenegro–Bulgarian alliances. The Serb–Bulgarian, Bulgarian–Greek, Montenegro–Serbia, and Montenegro–Bulgaria alliances,

which fought for independence against Ottoman Empire in 1912, achieved great success and defeated the Ottomans. They occupied the west of Thrace⁸⁹ and all the Balkan lands extending to Edirne, and shared the lands among themselves. The Balkan countries, which were separated from the Ottoman Empire and declared their independence, then began fighting, as they could not agree to share the lands that they gained. Soon after these events in the Balkans, the Russians had another conflict with the Ottoman State over Armenian politics. With a document dated 8 February 1914, two large autonomous Armenian provinces based in Van and Erzurum were founded in Eastern Anatolia under foreign government inspectors.⁹⁰

TURKISH–RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN SOVIET TIMES

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Ottoman State tried to remain impartial, but England and France, which the Ottoman State had wanted to make alliances with, refused to join an alliance with the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman State then began negotiations with Germany for an alliance. While negotiations were ongoing, the German Navy bombed Odessa and Sevastopol on the Black Sea Coast of Russia, and Russia declared war against the Ottoman State on 2 November 1914.⁹¹

The Ottoman Empire fought with Russia only in the Caucasus during the First World War. After the failure of Enver Pasha in the Sarikamis campaign,⁹² the Russians occupied Erzurum, Trabzon, Erzincan, and Mush in 1916. After the February 1917 Revolution in Russia, an armistice was signed between the Ottoman State and Russia in December 1917, which ended the war. With the February Revolution on 23 February 1917, the Romanov family, who ruled Russia, had to hand over power to the Petrograd Soviet under the presidency of Nikolay Chkheidze, and the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin—who was in exile in Switzerland—returned to Russia on 3 April 1917. While Russia was tackling these revolutions, the Ottoman army under the control of Enver Pasha—which was reinforced by Azerbaijani and Dagestani volunteers—captured Baku in April 1918. Even though Russia had domestic problems, the Ottoman army could not achieve the success they had expected. Thus, the Treaty of Brest–Litovsk, a peace treaty signed between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the German Empire, the Austro–Hungarian Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, was then agreed to. According to the Brest–Litovsk Peace Agreement, Kars, Artvin, Batum, and Ardahan⁹³ were left to the Ottoman Empire. However, the Ottoman Empire’s allies—Germany, Austria–Hungary and Bulgaria—retreated from World War I by admitting defeat in September 1918. Although the Ottoman Empire had succeeded in Canakkale and the Caucasus, it had to admit defeat as it was left without allies, and signed the Armistice of

Mudros with the Entente States (the French Republic, the British Empire, and the Russian Empire). The Ottoman Empire fell with this armistice, and Istanbul (Constantinople), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, was occupied by British, French, and Italian forces on 16 March 1920. Against the background of these developments, the members of the last term of the Ottoman Parliament, which was convened in Anatolia, began their national movement for independence by declaring the *Misak-ı Milli*⁹⁴ (National Pact).⁹⁵

Many negotiations were held between the Bolshevik government and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), which ruled during the War of Independence.⁹⁶ Russia was supporting the TBMM and its president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, even covertly supplying weapons. In return for this support, they tried to promulgate Bolshevik propaganda in Anatolia. While the Russians were promising to support the ongoing national independence war of Turkey, they did not fulfill their commitments; they were also supporting the Greeks who were fighting with Turks.

Russia supported the new Republic of Turkey by contributing to preventing the usage of the Straits by all countries during the discussion on the issue of the Straits in the Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed in Lausanne on 24 July 1923 between Turkey and United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Portugal, Belgium, and Yugoslavia. However, other states did not accept this offer.⁹⁷

The Soviet–Georgian War took place between 15 February and 17 March 1921, and the Soviet army occupied and subjugated Georgia by dividing the southern Caucasus into three autonomous regions (Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian). In addition to these events, Russian and Turkish delegations held talks in Moscow in March 1921 to determine the borders in the Caucasus region. With the Treaty of Moscow that was signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on 16 March 1921, the borders between Turkey, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan were determined.⁹⁸

In the early years, the Soviets adopted policies of good neighborliness, non-aggression, and neutrality to minimize the risks of the formation of new blocs by the European states against it. The first agreement with the Soviets involving mutual friendship and non-aggression with Turkey was signed in Paris on 17 December 1925. According to this agreement, if one of the two states were attacked, the other would remain impartial; the two sides would not attack each other and also would not join a hostile alliance against each other. However, the Turkish Republic's trade relations with the West in the post–Lausanne period was not well received by the Russians, and they were cautious about the new Turkish state, as they considered it as part of the Western bloc.⁹⁹ In the Montreux Convention on the Straits, Russia strongly supported Turkish control over the Straits (the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles), because Russia pre-

ferred Turkish control of the Straits rather than the other states (United Kingdom, France, United States, Italy, etc.) in case of war or peace. Friendly relations between Turkey and Russia continued until World War II.¹⁰⁰

Soviet–Turkish relations were revived at the beginning of the World War II, and negotiations to form an alliance between the two countries began. For this purpose, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu started to negotiate with Russia’s Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov on 21 September 1939. The Soviets, however, surprised Turkey by announcing a non-aggression pact they concluded with Germany. In addition, Molotov presented an offer including the demands of Russia and the arrangement of the Straits regime. The offer was rejected by Saraçoğlu. The rejection of the offer made Stalin angry, and he threatened Saraçoğlu, who had not left Russia, by expressing the impossibility of an alliance with Turkey. Turkey and Soviet Russia froze their ties after these events. In order to guarantee the Straits, Turkey signed an alliance agreement with the United Kingdom and France on 19 October 1939.¹⁰¹

The Soviet Union and Germany did not reach a consensus during the Berlin talks; therefore, Russia desired once again to be allied with Turkey. Turkey, meanwhile, signed a non-aggression pact with Germany on 18 June 1941. Before the war with the Soviet Union, Germany had aimed to secure the Balkan front.¹⁰²

In the Battle of Stalingrad (23 August 1942–2 February 1943),¹⁰³ the allied states, including the Soviet Union, asked Turkey to act against the Germans. At the conferences in Tehran and Cairo in 1943, England and the Soviets decided that Turkey should enter the war against Germany. Turkey, unable to resist the pressure, cut off diplomatic relations with Germany on 2 August 1944. Although Churchill did not agree with Russia’s intentions on Kars, Ardahan, and Straits, he did not take up any clear position against Russia. Turkey declared war on Germany and Japan on 23 February 1945 in order to get rid of the threats from Russia and to join the United Nations Conference. Turkey’s participation in the United Nations Conference was approved on 15 August 1945. However, requests by Soviet Russia from Turkey were not completed, and Soviet Russia demanded again that it be able to seize and rule Kars and Ardahan by canceling the 1925 Paris Non-Aggression Pact.¹⁰⁴ Soviet Russia had increased its political efficacy in the Balkans and Central Europe with bilateral agreements signed with Czechoslovakia (1943), Poland (1945), Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania (1948). This situation became a threat to the homeland and border security of Turkey. In the meantime, the Second World War ended with the atomic bomb that the US had dropped on Japan.¹⁰⁵

After the end of World War II, the Soviet Union kept pursuing expansionist policies. At the same time, it sought to dominate Turkey and the Turkish Straits. On 7 August 1946, Russia sent a memorandum to Turkey

explicitly announcing its ambitions on the Turkish Straits. Ankara strongly condemned the claims through a memorandum resisting the Soviet demands. After that, the Soviets issued a second memorandum on 24 September 1946 on the same issue, which caused the US and Britain to announce that they supported Turkey. This process contributed to Turkey's becoming a member of NATO (on 18 February 1952), which had been founded in 1949 under the leadership of the US as a way to defend Western Europe against the Soviet Union. Before long, Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Greece signed the Balkan Pact against potential Soviet expansionism. In 1953, the USSR declared that they had abandoned their demands on Turkey, which signaled its changing foreign policy.

Turkey–Soviet Russia relations revolved around the issue of Cyprus¹⁰⁶ in the 1960s. Since the Kremlin thought that a strong unitary Turkish state established in Cyprus could cooperate with NATO, it opposed Turkey's role in the Cyprus issue. Although the Soviets continued to develop their trade relations with Turkey in this period, they maintained their pressure on Turkey regarding the Cyprus issue and its NATO membership. In 1964–1965, high-level talks were held between Turkey and the Soviet Union with the intention of enhancing bilateral relations. Turkey's Foreign Minister Feridun Cemal Erkin (at the end of 1964) and the Prime Minister Suat Hayri Ürgüplü (in 1965) visited the Soviet Union. Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin visited Turkey between 20–27 December 1966. In the joint declaration issued after Kosygin's visit, it was emphasized that improving political and economic relations between the two countries was central. Suleyman Demirel, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey—on the invitation of the USSR—paid official visits to Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tashkent, and Baku between 19–29 September 1967. In these negotiations, good neighborliness, trade relations, disarmament, issues regarding the Near and Middle East, the issue of Vietnam, the issue of Cyprus and the security of Europe were discussed. Demirel also met with the president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Podgorny, and both of them gave messages of goodwill and friendship.¹⁰⁷ The President of the Republic of Turkey paid an official visit to the USSR to establish good relations between the two countries on 12–21 November 1969. President Podgorny and Prime Minister Kosygin in Moscow welcomed Cevdet Sunay, the first Turkish president to visit the USSR. Cevdet Sunay stated that bilateral relations between the two countries had been developing rapidly during his talks in Moscow.¹⁰⁸ They also agreed on a peaceful solution to the issue of Cyprus.¹⁰⁹

Turkey's Cyprus operation was the issue that led Turkish–Russian relations to worsen in the 1970s. Since 1964, the Russians had expressed on every level that they would not accept that Turkey establish a single state in Cyprus. Turkey landed troops on the island on 20 July 1974, invoking its right as a guarantor. Negotiations regarding the withdrawal

of the Turkish army from the island were held in Geneva on 22 July 1974, but no agreement was reached. On 14 August 1974, the Turkish army continued its operations when the negotiations failed. In response to this, NATO did not interfere in Turkey's military operation, and Greece exited from the military wing of NATO on 16 August 1974.¹¹⁰ This led the Soviet Union to begin to support Greece against Turkey after the Greeks exited NATO.¹¹¹ However, in response to Turkey's Cyprus operation, the US imposed an arms embargo on Turkey in 1975–1978, and Ankara's relations with NATO and the US declined. Therefore, the USSR, in changing its policy, wanted to strengthen the opposite bloc against the US by incorporating a Turkey that is at odds with the US into the Warsaw Pact. Especially after 1975, in accordance with improved relations between Turkey and USSR, the Soviet Union contributed to the strengthening of NGOs and left-wing parties in Turkey by providing financial and logistical support. During these years, the armed groups of leftist organizations were efficient and gained significant power in Turkish political system. Therefore, the military coup that was carried out with the 12 September 1980 Revolution had defined leftist and separatist organizations as the reason for the revolution. With the revolutionary government, Turkey re-established good relations with NATO and the US.¹¹² Arab–Israeli relations and the Iran–Iraq Wars in the Middle East between 1980 and 1990 reshaped relations between Turkey and Russia. US military intervention in Iraq (17 January–28 February 1991) re-determined the relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union emerged as the most important power supporting the regime of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in this period. Turkey, with the US and other allies within the NATO alliance, sided against the Soviet Union. However, when the Soviet Union suffered economic difficulties and collapsed in 1991, it led to a process that put an end to the bipolar system. Despite Russia's economic hardships, the conflict between the US and Russia over the Middle East has never ended.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, Russia and Ottoman Empire competed with each other because they were neighboring countries, and they were also part of the history of the world with their socio-cultural life outside of their battles. The Turkish tribes began to flow westward for many reasons—steadily and without interruption—even in the years Before Common Era (BCE). This migration always brought about new dynamism in the political, economic, and cultural lives of the settled Slavs and Germans in the region.

From the 5th century AD, Eastern and Central European Huns, Bulgarians, Avars, Peceneks, and Khazars governed the region politically.

Slavs, the ancestors of the Russians, were located in the same region, and they were living in the states that are mentioned above as vassals. The administrative experience of the Turkish tribes in this region was crowned with the latest Golden Horde Khanate (1242–1502),¹¹³ established by Batu Khan in 1242. This administrative transformation should not be considered only as a power transfer from Genghis Khan's sons to the Russians, but also the administration of Eastern Europe, which caused social and cultural change. After this process, the dominant power that substituted for the Muslim Golden Horde Khanate has been Orthodox Russia. Orthodox Christianity and Islam did not struggle in the period of Golden Horde Khanate and other Turkic states; but with Orthodox Russia, the two religions clashed with each other in this region.

This is a short story of the historical process of relations between Russia and the Northern Turks. The Ottoman Turks, who established a powerful state in the second half of the 11th century initially in Iran and then expanded to Anatolia and in the lands extending from the Balkans to Central Europe from the middle of the 15th century, represented the mission of protection of Islam by carrying the caliphate¹¹⁴ to Istanbul in the 16th century.

Having grown and strengthened rapidly from the beginning of the 14th century, the Ottoman Turks established relations with Russia through the Crimean Khans in the early 16th century. Thus Turkish–Russian relations can roughly be divided into three periods. The first period is the 16th–17th century, which can be characterized as the period of Ottoman domination; and we can say that the Crimean Khans were quite active in the relations of this period. The second period is the 18th century, when Turkish–Russian relations continued through building a state of balance. In the following centuries, Russia defeated the Ottoman army and seized all the territory extending to the Black Sea. More importantly, the survival of the Ottoman State was only possible with the help of the Western states. Again, the support provided by Russia for the establishment of the Republic of Turkey clearly shows the fragility of the relations between the two countries. Especially in the 1990s, with the increasing influences of an open society and free market economy in Russia, Ankara and Moscow started to cooperate on many joint projects. The relations that started first with exchanging qualified personnel have turned into significant partnerships over time in various realms, including energy and nuclear technology. The developments have not been painless; they have been especially complex in the last two years. Although the relations are strained occasionally and then restored to normal, the partnerships of these two nations living in a region where new changes take place within hours will no longer be flawless and steady. Rather, Russian–Turkish relations are likely to continue on a delicate course. Ostensibly, more infrastructure and adaptation programs are

needed for developing and sustaining the strategic cooperation between Russia and Turkey.

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NOTES

1. Halil İnalçık, "Devlet-i Aliyye Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar," Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009, p. 16.
2. For detailed information see; Nev Nikolayeviç Gumilyef Eski Türkler (Translated by Ahsen Batur), Selenge, İstanbul 2002.
3. In 558, Avars settled along the Danube River and became neighbor to Slavs. They raided in Central Europe. In 619, they surrounded the Istanbul and failed, then the state weakened and was broke down.
4. Gokturks was the first state which Turks' name was used in history. It has been established by Bumin Qaghan in 552 and collapsed by Karluks and Uyghurs in 745.
5. Halil İnalçık, "Osmanlı-Rus İlişkileri 1492–1512," *Türk-Rus İlişkilerinde 500 Yıl 1491–1992*, TTK, Ankara 1992, p. 26.
6. Mehmet Saray, "Altınorda Hanlığı," *DİA*, II, 1989, pp. 538–540.
7. Mehmet Saray, "Astarhan Hanlığı," *DİA*, III, 1991, pp. 505.
8. Halil İnalçık, "Osmanlı-Rus Münasebetlerinin Menşei," p. 379–381; Also see: detailed information on Astar Khan campaign: İlyas Kamalov, *Rus Elçi Raporlarında Astarhan Seferi*, TTK, Ankara, 2011; Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve İdil Boyu*, TTK, Ankara 2011.
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10. Astrakhan is a city in southern Russia. The city lies on 2 banks of the Volga River, close to where it discharges into the Caspian Sea. Today, there are 5 big cities in the region. These are: Akhtubinsk, Kamyzyak, Kharabali, Narimanov, and Znamensk.
11. Emine Sonnur Özcan, Asya'dan Afrika'ya Osmanlı'nın 16. Yüzyıl Kanal Projeleri TÜBİTAK Bilim ve Teknik Dergisi, Kasım 2013, pp. 34–35.
12. Peçevi Tarihi, prepared by Bekir Sıtkı Bayka, I. Vol, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981.

13. M. G. Safargaliyev, *Raspad Zolotoy Ordı, Saransk 1960*, pp. 258–67.
14. S. F. Oreshkova, *Osmanskaya İmperiya i Rossiya v Svete ikh geopolitiçeskogo razgreniçeniya, Voprası istorii: Ejemesyaçnıy jurnal, 03/2005, No. 3*, pp. 34–46.
15. Ostrog is a term (Russian) for a small fort, commonly wooden and generally non-permanently manned.
16. Oreşkova, *Osmanskaya İmperiya . . .*, p. 34.
17. Cossacks had been a group of predominantly East Slavic-speaking people who became called as individuals of democratic, self-governing, semi-military communities, preponderantly located in Ukraine.
18. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya XVIII. Yüzyıl Sonundan Kurtuluş Savaşına Kadar Türk-Rus İlişkileri (1798–1919)*, TTK, Ankara 2011, p. 9.
19. Bahcesaray Aggrement was signed in Bahcesaray, which ended the Russian-Ottoman War (1676–1681), on 3 January 1681 by Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate. This is the first agreement signed between the Ottoman State and Russia.
20. Mehmet Saray, *Türk-Rus Münasebetlerinin Bir Analizi*, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul 1998, p. 41; Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Rusya Tarihi Başlangıçtan 1917'ye Kadar*, TTK, Ankara 2014, p. 252.
21. A timar was land, granted by the Ottoman sultans, between the 14th and 16th centuries, with a tax revenue annual value of fewer than 20,000 akces.
22. An iltizam was a form of tax farm in the fifteenth century in the Ottoman Empire.
23. Oreshkova, *ibid*, p. 36
24. Polnoe sobraniye zakonov rossiskoy imperii, Vol. II, No: 864, Snp. 1830.
25. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya XVIII. Yüzyıl Sonundan Kurtuluş Savaşına Kadar Türk-Rus İlişkileri (1798–1919)*, TTK, Ankara, 2011, p. 11.
26. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, Ak Yayınları, İstanbul 1968, p. 48.
27. Abdülkadir Özcan, “Karlofça Antlaşması,” *DİA*, XXIV, 2001, pp. 504–507.
28. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, p. 15.
29. Baltacı Mehmet Pasha was an Ottoman statesman who served as grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire from 1704 to 1706, and as Kaptan-ı Derya (grand admiral of the Ottoman Navy) in 1704.
30. For detailed information on Prut war and peace, see: Akdes Nimet Kurat, *İsveç Kralı XII. Karl'ın Türkiye'de kaldığı zamana ait Metinler ve Vesikalar*, Rıza Coşkun Matbaası, İstanbul, 1943; Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Prut Seferi ve Barışı*, II Vol., TTK Basımevi, Ankara 1953.
31. Süleyman Kocabaş, *Kuzeyden Gelen Tehdit Tarihte Türk Rus Mücadelesi*, Vatan Yayınları, İstanbul, 1989, p. 86.
32. Mehmet Saray, *Türk-Rus Münasebetlerinin Bir Analizi*, p. 59.
33. Süleyman Kocabaş, *Kuzeyden Gelen Tehdit*, p. 89. There are few different views on why Baltacı Mehmet Pasha signed this treaty. Although some resources argue that Catherine, the spouse of Peter, visited Baltacı Mehmet Pasha's camp with jewelries and that Baltacı showed weakness to Catherine and the jewelries (Samiha Ayverdi, *Türk-Rus Münasebetleri ve Muharebeleri*, Kubbealtı, İstanbul, 2012, p. 203), some other important studies state that Catherine never visited Baltacı Mehmet Pasha's camp but she sent jewelry as presents and those jewelries were recorded and taken as state treasury. For detailed information see: Erhan Afyoncu, *Baltacı ve Katerina*, Yeditepe Yayınları, İstanbul, 2015.
34. Today corresponds to Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, as well as large part of Zaporizhia and Oblasts and a certain part of Kherson and Donetsk Oblast.
35. L. A. Nikiforov, *Formiravanie Rossisko-Turetskoy granitsı v pervoy çetvertı XVIII. v.–v kn. Formiravanie granitsı Rossii-Turtsiyeı i İranım XVII–naçolo XX. vv.*, M. 1952, pp. 62–88.
36. Sefaretname, the book of embassy, was a type in the Turkish literature which was closely related to seyahatname (the book of travels), but was specific to the re-

counting of journeys and experiences of an Ottoman ambassador in a foreign, usually in Europe.

37. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, prepared by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, TTK, Ankara 2008, p. 62; For the Sefaretname of Nişli Mehmet Aga, see: Aydın Mertayak, *Nişli Mehmed Ağa'nın Rusya Sefareti ve Sefaretnamesi*, Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi S.B.E., Unpublished master's thesis, Tokat 2005.

38. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi- Karlofça Anlaşmasından XVIII. Yüzyılın Sonlarına Kadar*, IV. Vol. I. TTK, Ankara, 2011, pp. 252–253.

39. Treaty of Belgrade achieved by the Ottoman Empire that ended a four-year war with Russia and a two-year war with Austria. According to the Treaty of Belgrade, Russia won back Azak Castle, also was prohibited from maintaining a fleet on the Black Sea, and trade on the Black Sea could be conducted only in Turkish vessels. Russia returned Wallachia and Moldavia to the Ottoman control.

40. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV, pp. 292–293.

41. Kabardins are the largest one of the twelve Adyghe (Circassian) tribes (sub-ethnic groups).

42. Halil İnalçık, "Kırım Hanlığı," *DİA*, XXXV, 2008, p. 450.

43. Erhan Afyoncu, *Yüz Soruda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, Vol. IV, Yeditepe, İstanbul 2010, p. 64.

44. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, p. 74; Münir Aktepe, *Mehmet Emni Beyefendi'nin Rusya Sefareti ve Sefaretnamesi*, TTK, Ankara, 1989.

45. Namık Sinan Turan, "18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Elçilerinin Rusya Sefaretnameleri ve Rusya'nın Tasviri," *Türk Rus İlişkileri Üzerine Makaleler*, ed. Yeliz Okay, Doğu Kitabevi, İstanbul 2012, p. 32.

46. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri*, pp. 99–101.

47. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri*, pp. 107–110; Türkan Polatçı, *Rusya Sefaretnamesi 1757–1758 Şehdi Osman Efendi*, TTK, Ankara, 2011.

48. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV, p. 356–358.

49. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Rusya Tarihi*, p. 310.

50. Oreshkova, *ibid.*, p. 40.

51. *Muahedat Mecmuası*, III, TTK, Ankara 2008, p. 275–284.

52. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was a peace treaty signed on 21 July 1774, in Küçük Kaynarca between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. According to the treaty, Turkey abandoned control of the northern coast of the Black Sea. Russia gained the right to keep a fleet on the Black Sea and rights of protection over the Christian people of European countries under Turkish rule. The Crimean Khanate was declared to be independent of Turkey except for religious matters.

53. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, p. 27.

54. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, p. 28.

55. Abdullah Bay, *Abdülkerim Paşa'nın Rusya Sefareti ve Sefaretnamesi*, Gece Kitaplığı, Ankara 2014, pp. 25–27; Namık Sinan Turan, "18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Elçilerinin Rusya Sefaretnameleri ve Rusya'nın Tasviri," p. 43.

56. Mehmet Saray, *Türk-Rus Münasebetlerinin Bir Analizi*, p. 94.

57. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV, p. 452.

58. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV, p. 490, S. M. Solovyev, *Soçineniye*, kn. 29, p. 98; *Polnoye sobraniye zakonov rossiskoy imperii*, Vol. 23, No: 17003, Snp. 1830.

59. Historically, the Crimean Khans had been power that ruled Russia (both Caucasus and Ukrainian steppes) for centuries. With the loss of Crimea, Ottomans had lost this power. In addition, Kerch Strait, as a natural port, is the most important commercial route for the north of the Black Sea.

60. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, p. 37.

61. Virginia H. Aksan, *Kuşatılmış Bir İmparatorluk Osmanlı Harpleri 1700–1870*, translated by Gül Çağalı Güven, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, p. 173.

62. For Ottoman-Prussia alliance see: Kemal Beydilli, *1790 Osmanlı-Prusya İttifakı*, İ.Ü. Yya., İstanbul, 1981.

63. Süleyman Kocabaş, *Kuzeyden Gelen Tehdit*, p. 159.

64. In the Ottoman State, the Grand Vizier (Sadrazam) was the prime minister, with the absolute power of attorney and, in principle dismissible only by sultan himself.

65. Iași (Jassy or Iassy) is the second largest city in Romania. Iași is located in the historical region of Moldavia, and had traditionally been one of the leading centers of Romanian social, cultural, academic and artistic life. The city was the capital of the Principality of Moldavia from 1564 to 1859, then of the United Principalities from 1859 to 1862, and the capital of Romania from 1916 to 1918.

66. *Muahedat Mecmuası*, IV, pp. 4–14.

67. The Dniester is a river in Eastern Europe. It runs through Ukraine and then through Moldova, finally discharging into the Black Sea on Ukrainian territory again.

68. Bogdan is a Slavic name that also appears in Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. Voivode is an Eastern European title that initially denoted the principal commander of a military force. During Ottoman times, voivode was the title borne by the ruler of a province, whose powers included the administration, security and tax collection under a special regime. The territory ruled or administered by a voivode is known as a voivodeship. In English, the title is often called as “duke” or “prince.”

69. The Kuban River is a river within the Northwest Caucasus region of European Russia. It flows mostly through Krasnodar Krai, but also in the Karachay Cherkess Republic, Stavropol Krai and the Republic of Adygea.

70. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, IV, pp. 587–595; Serhat Kuzucu, *Kırım Hanlığı ve Osmanlı-Rus Savaşları*, Selenge Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, pp. 233–236.

71. Virginia H. Aksan, *Kuşatılmış Bir İmparatorluk*, p. 183.

72. *Muahedat Mecmuası*, IV, pp. 70–80.

73. Russian-Turkish War of 1828–1829 was begun in consequence of the Greek Revolution regarding the announcing an autonomous state against the Ottoman Empire. When the empire did not accept this, Russia declared war against the empire in 1828. When the Ottoman army had to withdraw, the Treaty of Adrianople (the Treaty of Edirne) was signed in 1829, between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Greece won independence from the Ottoman Empire and Serbia achieved autonomy.

74. Edirne is a city in the region of East Thrace in the northwestern of Turkey, close to Turkey’s borders with Greece and Bulgaria. Edirne had been the third capital city of the Ottoman Empire from 1363 to 1453.

75. The Peloponnese, known as Morea in the Ottoman era, is a peninsula in southern Greece. It is separated from the central part of the country by Gulf of Corinth and the Isthmus.

76. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, pp. 54–59.

77. Fahir Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1789–1914*, Timaş Yay., İstanbul 2014, pp. 278–280.

78. Kütahya, lying on the Porsuk river, is a province in the Aegean region of Turkey, and 11,889 square kilometers in size.

79. *Muahedat Mecmuası*, IV, pp. 90–93.

80. Ottoman-Russian relations continued with wars until the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi, however, they became military and commercial partners after this agreement.

81. Samiha Ayverdi, *Türk-Rus Münasebetleri ve Muharebeleri*, pp. 271–273.

82. *Muahedat Mecmuası*, IV, p. 242–258.

83. Memleketeyn that means “two countries” in Turkish, was the lands known as Moldavia (today’s Romania) and Wallachia in Ottoman period. Until the 1821 Greek Revolution, in which Greeks had been suspended from the administration, Memleketeyn was ruled by Greeks from Fener, also known as Feneriots.

84. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, pp. 68–73.

85. Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya*, p. 75.

86. Kemal Beydilli, “Rusya,” XXXV, 2008, p. 264.

87. Fahir Armaoğlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, pp. 512–513.

88. Rıfki Salim Burçak, *Türk-Rus-İngiliz Münasebetleri (1791–1941)*, Aydınlık Matbaası, İstanbul 1946, pp. 34–37.

89. Thrace is an area in southeast Europe, now separates Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, comprises southeastern Bulgaria, northeastern Greece and the European part of Turkey. It is bordered by the Black Sea to the east, the Aegean Sea to the south and Balkan Mountains to the north.

90. Kemal Beydilli, "Rusya," p. 264.

91. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, pp. 157–159.

92. The Battle of Sarikamış (December 22, 1914–January 17, 1915) was a conflict between the Russian and Ottoman empires during World War I, in Sarikamış as part of the Caucasus Campaign. It resulted in the Russian victory.

93. Kars, Ardahan, and Batum were known as "Elviye-i Selase" in Ottomans, which were three cities in Ottoman lands. Today, Kars and Ardahan are in the northeast region of Turkey, while Batum is in the territory of Georgia.

94. Misak-ı Millî (National Pact) is the set of six terms made by the members of the last term of the Ottoman Parliament. The parliament published the terms on 12 February 1920.

95. Rifki Salim Burçak, *Türk-Rus-İngiliz Münasebetleri*, pp. 52–53.

96. The Turkish War of Independence (also known as Kurtuluş Savaşı, or İstiklâl Harbi, or Millî Mücadele) was the war in order to protect the unity and territorial integrity of the state after the allies occupied the lands of Ottoman Empire. It was fought between the Turkish National Movement and France on the Southern, Armenia on the Eastern, Greece on the Western front, and the United Kingdom and Italy in Istanbul. The lands of the Ottoman Empire were occupied and partitioned following the Ottomans' defeat in World War I. The Turkish National Movement in Anatolia resulted in the formation of a new Grand National Assembly by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his colleagues. After the end of the Southern Front, Eastern Front, and the Western Front of the war, the Treaty of Sevres was removed, and the Treaties of Kars and Lausanne were signed. Anatolia and Eastern Thrace were left by the Allies, and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey declared the establishment of a Republic in Turkey on October 29, 1923.

97. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, pp. 182–192; for detailed information see: Aleksandr Kolesnikov, *Atatürk dönemi Türk-Rus ilişkileri*, translated by İlyas Kamalov, Ankara 2010.

98. A. F. Miller, *Oçerki noveşey istorii Turtsii*, M. L., İzd. AN SSSR, 1948, p. 115.

99. Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1914–1995)*, Alkım Yayınevi, İstanbul 1999, pp. 141–142.

100. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, pp. 195–199; for detailed information see: Atatürk'ten Soğuk Savaş Dönemine Türk-Rus ilişkileri: Atatürk'ten Soğuk Savaş Dönemine Türk-Rus İlişkileri Çalıştayı, prepared by İlyas Kamalov, İrina Svistunova, Ankara 2011.

101. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, pp. 204–207.

102. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, pp. 211–215; for detailed information see: Muhammed Emin Karadağ. II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan Günümüze Türkiye'nin ABD ve Rusya ile Siyasi İlişkileri, Master's Thesis, Kadir Has Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2008.

103. The Battle of Stalingrad (23 August 1942–2 February 1943) was a conflict of World War II in which Germany and its allies fought with the Soviet Union to control the city of Stalingrad in Southern Russia.

104. It had reinforced its military elements by establishing Warsaw Pact in Warsaw on 14 May 1955.

105. Haluk F. Gürsel, *Tarih Boyunca Türk Rus İlişkileri*, pp. 216–220.

106. There has been a period of political and violent conflict in Cyprus, also referred to as the Cyprus crisis between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots between 1955 and 1964.

107. Ebru Gençalp, *Türk Basınında İkili Ziyaretler Booyutunda Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (1965–1980)*, *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies, XIV/29 (2014–Güz-Autumn), pp. 315–352.

108. Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, p. 831.
109. Ebru Gençalp, Türk Basınında İkili Ziyaretler Boyutunda Türk Sovyet İlişkileri (1965–1980), *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi, Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies*, XIV/29 (2014 -Güz/Autumn), pp. 332.
110. Haydar Çakmakçı, *Avrupa Güvenliği*, Platin Yayınları, Ankara, pp. 115
111. Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, p. 831.
112. Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi*, pp. 831–832.
113. For detailed information see: A.Y. Yakubovskiy, “Altın Ordu ve Çöküşü,” *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, 2002, İlyas Kemaloğlu, *Altın Orda ve Rusya*, Ötüken Yayınları, İstanbul 2015.
114. Caliphate is a political-religious state under the Islamic domination and a successor to the Islamic prophet Muhammad and a leader of the whole Muslim community called as a “caliph.”

TWO

Main Lines of Turkey–Russia Relations in the 2000s

Cemre Pekcan

Russia and Turkey had limited contacts during the Cold War era as they belonged to the opposing camps, the Soviet bloc, and Western bloc, respectively. However, during the post–Cold War era, Turkish–Russian relations took on a new dimension and improved rapidly, especially in the energy, trade, and tourism sectors. In the 2000s, multilateral cooperation and high-level diplomatic visits increased between the two countries, and Russia gradually became one of Turkey’s most important trade partners. Nonetheless, Turkish-Russian relations were not always stable; there were some bumps on the road. During this period, the rapprochement between the US and Russia after the 11 September, 2001 attacks, the rejection by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on 1 March 2003 for the United States to invade Iraq through Turkey, the attitude of Turkey against the US in the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, and the multilateral cooperation of Turkey and Russia in the Black Sea basin has had a positive impact on the Turkish-Russian relations. On the other hand, the crisis between Turkey and Russia on the import–export of agricultural products, disputes over resolving the Cyprus problem, and Turkey’s downing of a Russian fighter jet on 24 November 2015 damaged the two countries’ warm relations. However, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin conveying condolences to the family of the deceased Russian pilot in June 2016 and the Kremlin’s support for Erdogan after the coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016 helped to normalize relations between the two countries gaining a renewed momentum.

In this chapter, we will analyze the diplomatic, economic, military, and cultural relations between Turkey and Russia after 2000 and examine the cooperative and conflicting issues between the two countries.

DIPLOMATIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

When we look at the history of Turkish–Russian relations, the main form of interaction, according to Mitat Çelikpala, was hostility and rivalry due to wars between the Ottoman and Russian empires.¹ This form of interaction continued until the end of the 1990s when tensions increased on issues such as energy, terrorism, and weapons' sales to Greek Cypriots. The main areas of dispute in this decade were the failure of Russia to conform to the European Conventional Forces (CFE–AKKA) agreement and alternative approaches to the conflicts in Chechnya, Abkhazia, and Nagorno-Karabakh (Upper Karabakh). Turkey's disappointment over Russia's sympathetic view of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the question of weapons' sales and Russian S300 air missile defense systems in the Republic of Cyprus, and the dominance of the Turkish navy in the Black Sea were also among the issues between these two states.² At the same time, high-level dialogue between Russia and Turkey also increased in the second half of the 1990s.

With the beginning of the 21st century, Turkish–Russian relations went from hostility and rivalry to cooperation. The first phase of this transformation began with Ismail Cem, foreign minister of Turkey, between 1997 and 2002, whose approach was to establish smooth and peaceful relations with neighboring countries, and this provided the basis for multi-dimensional cooperation between Turkey and Russia.³

The Justice and Development Party (JDP, AKP in Turkish), established under the leadership of Erdogan, received the highest number of votes in the 3 November 2001 election and formed the first single-party government in Turkey since 1987 on 15 March 2003. This new government began to follow a multi-dimensional foreign policy, quite different from Turkey's traditional Western approach, which aimed at protecting the status quo. During the ongoing tenure of the AKP government, the foreign ministers of Turkey were: Abdullah Gul between 2003–2007, Ali Babacan between 2007–2009, Ahmet Davutoğlu between 2009–2014; and currently, Mevlut Cavusoglu occupies the position.

Ahmet Davutoğlu developed a new foreign policy for Turkey. As expounded in detail in his book entitled *Strategic Depth* (2000), Turkey's foreign policy were to be based on a balance between security and democracy; having no problems with its neighbors; proactive and pre-emptive diplomacy; a multi-dimensional foreign policy, and rhythmic diplomacy.⁴ With these new principles, Turkey began to improve relations with its neighbors and also with many nations in Africa and Asia. In

addition, cooperation with regional and international organizations was developed and Turkish investments increased in Africa and Asia. At the same time, in Russia, Vladimir Putin, President of Russia from 2000 to 2008 and Prime Minister between 2008–2012, was reelected as president in 2012. He was preceded by Dmitry Medvedev. With the Putin government, economic development and the fight against terrorism have become Russia's priorities. In the 2000s, Russia's relations with other countries were shaped by the following key aims and objectives: to promote energy sources; to prioritize trade relations; to try to establish regional balances by means of ethnic conflicts; and to combat terrorism.⁵ In this context, after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, Turkey and Russia signed an Action Plan for Eurasia on 16 November 2001. With this Action Plan, the parties declared that they would increase cooperation, especially in trade and combating terrorism.⁶ During this period, the common interests of Turkey and Russia in numerous fields improved their relationship. In 2003, Turkey's rejection of the request by the US to deploy its forces in Turkey to invade Iraq, Russia's opposition to the use of force in the UN Security Council, and Turkey and Russia's similar reactions and common steps toward the American Black Sea-based security policies had a positive effect on Turkish-Russian relations.⁷

In 2004, Abdullah Gul became the first Turkish Foreign Minister to visit Russia in eight years. During this trip, the parties discussed energy and security issues and as a result, they signed five agreements.⁸ The same year, Putin became the first Russian President to visit Turkey in 32 years. In Ankara, another six agreements and protocols were signed on military, defense, and energy issues.⁹ This period of rapprochement between the two countries continued with reciprocal visits in 2005 and afterward.

The official visit of Abdullah Gul to Moscow as President of Turkey in 2009 had a different significance because, after visiting Moscow, Gul also toured the Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus that were within the former Soviet orbit. He was the first ever Turkish president to pay a visit to Tatarstan. Thanks to the Turkish–Russian rapprochement, Turkish relations with Central Asian countries started to develop as well.¹⁰

During the 2000s, Russia supported Turkish initiatives in the Middle East, a role Turkey undertook as a mediator with Brazil to defuse the Iran nuclear dispute, and also diplomatic efforts carried out in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Following Turkey's "Mavi Marmara" flotilla crisis with Israel,¹¹ Russia requested a full investigation of the event, stating that Israel had violated international law. Also in 2010, Russia supported Turkish candidate Mevlut Cavusoglu in the election for president of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.¹² During this period of rapprochement, cultural relations also improved. To develop cultural exchanges and awareness between Turkey and Russia, it was announced

that 2007 would be Russian Culture Year in Turkey and 2008 would be Turkish Culture Year in Russia. In this context, the ministers of Culture and Tourism of both countries met in various joint ventures and organized various events such as opera and ballet performances, displays of folk dancing, plays, concerts, exhibitions, and street and fashion festivals.¹³

In 2011, Turkey and Russia reciprocally removed visa requirements for visiting each country for a duration of 30 days.¹⁴ The elimination of visa requirements accelerated tourism between Turkey and Russia. However, Russian–Turkish relations experienced a sharp decline in 2015 when the Turkish Air Force shot down a Russian jet near the Syria–Turkey border on November 24, claiming that Russia had violated its airspace. In fact, there had previously been another incident on 22 June 2012 when Syria shot down a RF-4E Turkish Phantom jet fighter without any warning, claiming it violated its border. In some media sources there were suggestions that Russia was involved, however, Russia denied this claim and Turkey also announced that the allegations were completely unfounded. JPD Vice-President Omer Celik stated that they did not consider that Russia was responsible in any way for the shooting down the plane and that it did not make sense for Russia to do such a crazy thing.¹⁵

After the Russian jet was shot down in 2015 by Turkey, however, tension between Turkey and Russia rapidly escalated. While Turkey claimed that Russia had violated its airspace, Russia claimed that Turkey was supporting terrorists and replied that they had been stabbed in the back. As the crisis worsened, Russia approved sanctions against Turkey, which included the export of foodstuffs, restrictions on Turkish companies, preventing tourists vacationing in Turkey, the canceling of commercial flights, and abolishing the visa waiver program. In addition, Russia decided to apply stricter controls over trucks coming from Turkey and ships in the Black Sea. Russia also suspended some energy projects, such as Blue Stream.¹⁶

The rapidly rising tension between Turkey and Russia began to recover within a short period of time. In May 2016, approximately six months after the November 24 crisis, where relations were almost at breaking point, Putin softened his position vis-à-vis Turkey, stating that they wanted to restore relations with Turkey. In June, President Erdogan wrote a letter to Putin expressing his condolences to the family of the dead Russian pilot. Afterward, Putin telephoned Erdogan, thanked him, and relations entered a renewed process of normalization.¹⁷

On 15 July 2016, Turkey experienced a shattering jolt when a group within the Turkish Armed Forces declared that they had seized control of the government. This coup attempt, allegedly sponsored by Fethullah Gulen, a leader of the movement called *Hizmet* (Service), ended when the Turkish people took to the streets, protested against the soldiers, and called for democracy. Hundreds of people lost their lives while demon-

strating against the coup attempt. After the failed coup, Putin was the first president to convey his support to Turkey. Soon after, Erdogan made his first overseas visit to Russia after the coup attempt, during which the two leaders talked about cooperation in tourism, energy, and trade as well as a lifting the Russian sanctions. In many newspapers, Erdogan's visit to Moscow was understood as a signal to the West about Ankara's grievances due to late and weak support it received from its allies when the coup took place. In addition, Erdogan's visit to Russia was a signal about the change in Turkey's foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia.¹⁸ This could well be the case if one considers the ongoing refugee crisis and deterioration in Turkish–European Union relations.

On 19 December 2016, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Andrey G. Karlov, was assassinated by an off-duty Turkish police officer at the opening of an art exhibition in Ankara.¹⁹ Although the assassination was expected to create a new crisis between Turkey and Russia, both countries evaluated the murder as a provocation against improving their relations.

To sum up, Turkish–Russian relations began to improve gradually with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. At the beginning of the 2000s, cooperation gained momentum especially in commerce and the tourism sector. However, the rapid decline of this relationship for six months after the jet plane crisis shows how fragile the relations could be. Therefore, for their own benefit, both countries need to evaluate their strategic interests and continue with cooperation in various areas.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia initiated economic reforms in order to recover from the economic collapse of the 1990s. To create a free market economy, privatization policies in many sectors, such as agriculture, industry, food, and construction, were implemented.²⁰ Economic relations between Turkey and Russia are mainly carried out within the framework of two agreements, which are the Convention on Commerce and Navigation, and the Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreement signed on 8 October 1937 and 25 February 1991, respectively. In fact, Turkey began to buy natural gas from Russia in 1987, following their 17 September 1984 Natural Gas Agreement.²¹

After the 1998 global economic crisis, Turkey and Russia experienced a significant decline in trade. However, increasing cooperation and closer relations between the two countries in the 2000s had an impact on their economic relations as well. According to Fatih Ozbay, the main impetus for developing good relations is mutual economic interests, scientific-

technical potential, and Turkey's long experience in shaping a market economy.²²

Today, both Russia and Turkey are rising economic powers. According to the IMF, in 2016, Russia was the 12th largest economy in the world and Turkey was the 18th in terms of nominal and purchasing power parity (PPP) in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ranking.²³ In addition, trade between Turkey and Russia is increasing steadily. Putin and Erdogan mentioned after their meeting in St. Petersburg in 2016 that their target was to boost their trade to \$100 billion.²⁴

On the other hand, one of the most important economic factors between Turkey and Russia is tourism. The Turkey Statistical Institute (TurkStat) stated that the number of tourists visiting Turkey was below 10.42 million in 2000 but increased to 23.34 million in 2007 and reached 36.24 million in 2015.²⁵ However, due to the plane crisis in 2015, the number of Russian tourists fell 25% in the first six months of 2016, from 2 million tourists to 1.45 million.²⁶

The plane crisis also affected the trade volume between Turkey and Russia, which in 2002 was approximately 5 billion dollars and showed a steady rise from 2002 to 2008. In 2008, trade reached 37 billion dollars. The 2008 global financial crisis affected many countries as well as Turkey and Russia, and the trade dropped to 22 billion dollars in 2009. However, business began to pick up again from 2009 until 2015, when another sharp fall took place. As aforementioned, the reason was Russia's restriction policies on trade and tourism to Turkey after the plane crisis. In 2015, trade volume dropped to 23 billion dollars from 31 billion dollars in the previous year.²⁷ By 2016, the two countries started to restore their relations and as of mid-2017, trade volume is rising again. However, Turkish imports from Russia exceed its exports, causing a trade deficit for Turkey. It seems this will continue to be a problem between the two countries.

According to statistics for 2014, Russia was the 7th country to which Turkey exported the most goods. In the same year, Russia ranked first among the countries from which Turkey imported the most.²⁸ According to 2015 data, Turkey ranked in 9th place among Russia's importing partners and became the 3rd after the EU and China among Russia's export markets. Considering their trade in total, Turkey is ranked as the 4th trade partner of Russia.²⁹ According to the Turkish Ministry of Economy, the most exported products from Turkey to Russia are citrus fruits, tomatoes, and accessories and components for road vehicles.³⁰ On the other hand, Turkey imports mainly mineral fuels and oil from Russia followed by iron, steel, and grain.³¹ In addition, Russia is one of the most important countries for Turkey in the construction sector. In fact, Russia ranks in the first place as the country where Turkish contractors carry out projects. The total value of projects that have been run by the Turkish contractors up to now is approximately 64 billion dollars.³²

To sum up, the trade partnership between Turkey and Russia, which continued to steadily increase after 2000, was interrupted due to the sanctions and restrictions imposed by Russia after the plane crisis. However, after the resolution of the conflict, tourism and trade began to increase again. During the 23rd World Energy Congress held on 9–13 October 2015 in Istanbul, Erdogan and Putin signed new trade deals to restore and strengthen their economic and trade ties. Both sides agreed on energy projects as well, which will be analyzed in the next section on energy cooperation.

ENERGY COOPERATION

Energy policies became one of the most important issues for Turkey due to its growing economy in the 2000s. Russia is Turkey's main energy supplier as Turkey receives more than 50% of its energy from Russia.

In 2010, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev paid a visit to Turkey during which a high-level Cooperation Council was set up. At the same time, arrangements to streamline tourism, transport and visa formalities were made between the two countries. An agreement was also reached on the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Akkuyu nuclear power plant in Mersin.³³

In the 2000s, many important projects were accomplished. First, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline, which connects Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, was inaugurated in 2006. The Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Pipeline, also known as the South Caucasus Pipeline, started to operate in 2007. Together with these two pipelines, one of the most important endeavors between Turkey and Russia is the "Blue Stream" project, a large pipeline crossing the Black Sea and built to transport natural gas from Russia to Turkey. It was officially opened in 2005. In the project, which was signed in 1997, it is estimated that Turkey would receive 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia over 25 years.³⁴

The other important pipeline is the "Turkish Stream" project. Before the idea of the Turkish Stream came about, Russia was transferring natural gas to Europe through Ukraine. Then, due to the crisis in Ukraine, Russia proposed the "South Stream" project, which would transfer natural gas to Europe via Bulgaria through the Black Sea. However, because of the Bulgaria's non-agreement and the European Commission's uncooperative approach, the South Stream project was canceled.³⁵ As an alternative, Russia suggested another project, called "Turkish Stream."³⁶ Putin gave the first details of the pipeline in December 2014, during his visit to Turkey and the two leaders decided to begin the construction in 2016.³⁷ With this undertaking, Russian gas will reach the Thrace region of Turkey and then Greece through the Black Sea. The cost of the Turkish Stream project, which will have an annual capacity of 63 billion cubic

meters, is approximately 13.6 billion euro.³⁸ Although the economic measures against Ankara did not include construction projects, progress on the Turkish Stream project was suspended after the Turkish fighter jet shot down the Russian SU-24 fighter-bomber. However, with the subsequent rapprochement, Erdogan and Putin came together in Istanbul to attend the 23rd World Energy Congress in 2016, and Erdogan announced in a joint conference that implementation of the project was a priority for the parties.³⁹ The Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant under construction in the province of Mersin is the first nuclear power plant to be built in Turkey and another important project between Turkey and Russia. In 2010, Turkey and Russia signed an agreement and started the construction. Within this project, it is planned to build four reactors, each with 1,200 megawatts of power, which is estimated to meet 10–12% of Turkey's future energy needs. The project is run by the Russian company Rosatom and is planned to be finished in 2022.⁴⁰

It can be seen that relations between Turkey and Russia are growing significantly in the energy sector. Although these projects will generate interdependence of the two countries on each other, they may also lead Turkey to be more dependent on Russia. The reason is that Turkey imports nearly all of its natural gas and Russia's share is more than 55%. In addition, Russia controls most parts of these pipelines so Turkey's imports also depend on Russia's control.⁴¹

MILITARY–SECURITY RELATIONS

In spite of improving economic and trade relations between Turkey and Russia, military relations did not make the same progress due to Turkey's membership in NATO. Nevertheless, Turkey is the first NATO member that cooperates with Russia militarily and buys arms from it—the world's second largest weapons producer. However, this has caused reactions by the West and the pressure on Turkey prevents improvement in military relations with Russia because as a NATO member there are some arms standards that Turkey has to obey.⁴²

Turkey, which has been part of NATO since 1952, regulates its security policies according to NATO policies. As mentioned earlier, Turkey, in the framework of its multi-dimensional foreign policy, seeks to strengthen its influence in its region. In this context, it could be said that Turkey's view of NATO is different under the JDP (AKP) government. Tarık Oğuzlu interprets Turkey's questioning of NATO as an axis of expansion and adds that Turkey's Western-oriented approach is beginning to expand.⁴³

Looking for alternatives, Turkey sometimes turns to the East. In 2008, Russia won a bid to sell 80 medium-range anti-tank weapon systems and 800 missiles to Turkey. The other countries bidding were Israel and the

US.⁴⁴ This was an important development in Turkish-Russian relations. Currently, it is reported that Turkey is negotiating with Russia to buy their S-400 defense systems to meet the needs of their air defense capabilities.⁴⁵ All these developments can be seen as a signal to the West as Turkey wants to show that it is not only an ally for the West but also ally with the East by pursuing a multi-dimensional foreign policy.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is another platform that may add a further dimension to Turkish-Russian relations. Founded in 1996 as the “Shanghai Five” by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, it became the SCO with the participation of Uzbekistan in 2001. This is essentially a military, economic, and political body that aims to strengthen military trust in mutual border regions.

Currently, the SCO has six members, six observers, six dialogue partners, and three guests. Turkey declared its wish to join the SCO, which has been referred to as the “NATO of the East,” in 2005. However, despite Putin’s positive overtures, Turkey’s membership has so far been rejected, although it was accepted as a “dialogue partner” in 2012.⁴⁶ Dialogue partner status means a state who shares common goals and principles of the SCO, and Turkey’s dialogue partner status means that Turkey will develop its economic and cultural ties with SCO countries and join some activities in the region fighting against terrorism and separatism in the region.

When we consider Turkey’s ongoing accession process to the EU, now continuing for over 50 years, Turkey’s quest for alternatives can be expected. Although the SCO resembles a military grouping, unlike the EU, Turkey can improve its relations with SCO countries and increase its influence in Central Asia. However, the results of SCO membership need to be considered carefully, especially from the NATO perspective.

Needless to say, on the other side, Turkey is experiencing problems in its relationship with NATO as well as the EU. In August 2015, Foreign Minister Cavusoglu commented that since NATO was not fully cooperating with Turkey, which wished to develop its own defense systems, Ankara may consider to work with Moscow, if it was willing to collaborate on this issue. He also added that President Erdogan had given up hopes regarding cooperation with NATO and the EU and was pivoting toward the East.⁴⁷

PROBLEMATIC ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

Although cooperation between Turkey and Russia has increased in the areas of energy, tourism, and trade, there are some issues on which the two countries take different sides and this creates problems between them. First, Turkey and Russia have differing attitudes toward the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The TRNC, consisting of the

northern half of Cyprus, is not recognized by any country other than Turkey and is therefore considered a *de facto* independent state. Russia, especially in the Soviet period, had tended to favor the Greek Cypriot side.⁴⁸

In an interview with the radio station "Voice of Russia," the former President of the TRNC, Dervis Eroglu, stressed that Russia was a very powerful state and Russia's recognition of the TRNC could help solve the Cyprus problem.⁴⁹ However, no attempts have been made by Russia to put this issue on their foreign policy agenda.

Secondly, another problem is Russia's support for the Armenian genocide claims. The alleged Armenian genocide is described as the ethnic cleansing of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire in 1915. However, Turkey denies the use of the word "genocide" and refers to the event as "relocation" or "forced migration," claiming that atrocities were committed by both sides and that the Armenians also killed many Turks.⁵⁰

In 2015, Putin visited Armenia to attend a commemoration ceremony and used the word "genocide," which Turkey strongly rejected, and this increased tensions between Ankara and Moscow. Moreover, in the same year, Russian lawmakers submitted a bill to the parliament to recognize the "Armenian genocide." The law aimed at imposing penalties on those who denied the alleged Armenian genocide in Russia. However, the Constitutional Court of Russia did not find the bill well-prepared and it was dropped.⁵¹ So, the Armenian genocide recognition issue did not raise further tensions between Turkey and Russia.

As another problematic issue, it is important to mention the Russo-Georgian War (also known as the "Five Day War") in 2008. The war involved Russia, Georgia, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. At the end of hostilities, Georgia gave up its limited control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Russia recognized their independence. Georgia is an important export market for Turkey. After Turkey recognized Georgia's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, their relations improved rapidly and Turkey became Georgia's largest trade partner.⁵² Also, Georgia's territorial integrity is very important for Turkey's Caucasus policy. According to Atilla Sandıklı, a powerful and stable Georgia guarantees peace in this troubled region of the Caucasus, which is essential for Turkey's interests. Therefore, protecting the territorial integrity of Georgia is a priority for Turkish foreign policy.⁵³ However, during the 2008 war, despite the close relations between Turkey and Georgia, Turkey did not actively support Georgia due to its improving relations with Russia. It was seen that Turkey's priority was not to spoil its relations with Russia. Related to this issue, Turkey pioneered the establishment of the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform in 2008 to help shape developments in the region. With this platform, which provides cooperation between Turkey, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, Turkey seeks to ensure security in the area for the purpose of transferring energy via the

Caucasus to Europe. According to Ali Balcı, the establishment of this platform is a signal that Turkey does not want to leave influence in the region merely to Russia.⁵⁴

In 2014, a crisis took place in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Ukraine. The Viktor Yanukovich government in Ukraine preferred good relations with Russia rather than integration with the EU, and following massive protests, he was removed from power and replaced by Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who supported close relations with the West. Moscow reacted to this by claiming territorial rights to the Crimea, whereupon its future rapidly developed into an international crisis.⁵⁵ Before long, Russia invaded and annexed Crimea, which is important for Turkey because of its historical ties with the peninsula and the Muslim population living there. The Tatars, ethnically a Turkic people, constitute twelve percent of the population. During this crisis, Turkey supported Ukraine's territorial integrity and did not recognize Crimea's takeover by Russia. However, Leonid Kalashnikov, first deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma Committee, stated that they did not expect steps from Turkey to defend Russia's policies. They would stay calm about Turkey's non-recognition of Crimea as part of Russia and would not change their approach to Turkey because of this.⁵⁶

Lastly and more recently, one of the most disputed issues between Turkey and Russia is their opposite attitudes toward Syria. The Syrian Civil War started in 2011 between the government of President Bashar al-Assad and various opposition groups who sought to remove the Assad government. The opposition groups formed the Free Syrian Army, which is supported by Turkey. During the Syrian Civil War, Turkey and Russia have consistently maintained contrary positions; while Turkey supports the opposition groups, Russia supports the Assad government.⁵⁷ However, these divergent approaches did not prevent the two countries continuing their economic cooperation. Turkey, Russia, and Iran recently agreed on a proposal for a ceasefire in Syria to give priority to fighting terrorism instead of removing the Assad government.⁵⁸ If the ceasefire is successful, negotiations are expected to continue after taking place in Astana and Geneva in the near future.

CONCLUSION

The process whereby Turkish–Russian relations shifted from competition toward cooperation actually began in Ismail Cem's period as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. During the current AKP era, this multi-dimensional cooperation has continued and with the increase of reciprocal high-level visits, relations between the two countries have rapidly developed in the fields of commerce, culture, tourism, and energy. This rapprochement between Turkey and Russia has had many important results.

First, firms of Turkic origin have increased their investment in Russia. Second, tourists from Russia have made an enormous contribution to the Turkish economy. Third, Russia has become an important energy provider for Turkey. This has made Turkey more dependent on Russia.⁵⁹

The biggest deterioration of Turkish–Russian relations occurred due to the shooting down of the Russian jet aircraft, yet within six months between the two countries had been normalized. Russia, as the main energy supplier for Turkey, is improving its relations with Turkey militarily as well, although to a more limited extent. In spite of disagreements between the two countries on the Cyprus issue, the Armenian question, the Syrian Civil War, the Russo–Georgian War, and the annexation of Crimea, the leaders of these two countries have left these issues off the agenda and have not let them interfere with their cooperation.

It is clear that the rivalry between Turkey and Russia has been replaced by cooperation in the 21st century and that Turkey’s problems with the EU and NATO have caused Turkey to turn toward Russia. How far Turkey’s close cooperation with Russia will affect its relationship with the West in the future remains uncertain.

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THREE

Contending Policies of Russia and Turkey

The Syrian Crisis

Ali Askerov and Lasha Tchantouridze

For decades, Turkey and Syria have had several long-standing problems that include the Hatay Province question, Syria's support for Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) instigated terrorism, and water-related issues. None of these problems has been as challenging as the security problems that emerged with the Syrian Civil War, an outcome of the Arab Spring of 2011. The Syrian Civil War has been disastrous for Turkey due to the overwhelming refugee waves flowing from Syria that have caused social, economic, and security problems. The events surrounding the war in Syria have been fast moving and requiring quick and effective policies to handle the problems in order to avoid escalations of sensitive socio-economic and political issues in Turkey. However, Ankara has failed to stay ahead of the events in Syria and to produce consistent policies to deal with important developments stemming from the raging civil war in its neighbor. In 2012, Ankara moved against the Assad government in Damascus to bring about regime change in Syria as a remedy. This approach appeared to be contrary to Russia's Syrian policy, as from the very beginning the Kremlin has supported the Assad regime. Moscow has had its own political and economic interests in Syria since the Soviet times that have been transformed into Kremlin's new pro-Assad stance. The contending Syrian policies of Turkey and Russia have caused serious problems for Ankara and Moscow, restricting their abilities to manage the relations constructively for some time. The disagreements between these

two states escalated rapidly causing their economic relations to halt in 2015–2017, requiring the top political leaders to develop new policies of reconciliation. The subsequent de-escalation process brought about some signs of convergence in the Syrian policies of Russia and Turkey.

This chapter discusses the Russo–Turkish relations by reviewing three phases of bilateral ties that developed around the Syria question. First, we discuss the relations between Turkey and Syria prior to the Syrian Civil War. Then, the relations between Russia and Turkey are examined briefly, as they were developing prior to the bilateral crisis triggered by the shooting down of a Russian military jet by the Turkish Air Force in November 2015. We conclude by addressing the events surrounding the dramatic deterioration of bilateral ties between Russia and Turkey, the efforts to remedy the crisis, and its implications.

TURKISH–SYRIAN RELATIONS PRIOR TO THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

Within the general foreign policy philosophy of the *zero problems with neighbors* developed by Ahmet Davutoglu,¹ a former minister of foreign affairs and later prime minister of Turkey, Erdogan's government after coming to power in 2002 pursued a policy to improve the traditional unfavorable relations between Turkey and Syria.² Erdogan's charismatic personality, manifested in his uncompromising approach to Israel,³ made him very popular in the Arab world. Invigorated with this fame, Erdogan was initially very eager to develop Turkish relations with all the Arab countries, including Syria. In general, however, the Turkish government was determined to develop and pursue new idealistic/moralistic policies to address the most intractable and long-lasting national problems both inside and outside of the country. The so-called *evolutionary policies* of the Turkish government included the resolution of the most intractable conflicts such as the Kurdish problem, the Syrian issue, and even the century-long crisis with Armenia. Improving the relations with Damascus was among Ankara's top priorities, and its positive signs were not late to appear. Part of the Ottoman Empire since the early sixteenth century, Syria became independent after the World War II stripping itself off the French mandate. In 1938, while being under the French mandate, Syria lost its Hatay region to Turkey by peaceful means: Hatay Province first became a nominally independent republic, and soon after, it joined Turkey through a referendum. Although the League of Nations played the key role in managing the process, according to the established international rules, ever since the Hatay issue has been one of the major sources of tension between Turkey and Syria. For decades, Syria allowed the Kurdish terrorists establish bases on its territory to carry out their clandestine actions in Turkey, and used this as a deterrence strategy against Ankara's minority policies. Even the notorious leader of the

Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, remained in Damascus until 1998 when Ankara's diplomatic pressure finally ousted him from Syria.

Soon after that, when Hafez al-Assad, the father of the current ruler of Syria died in 2000, Turkey and Syria had a remarkable opportunity to open a new chapter in their history, and they did not miss it. Bashar al-Assad, the new president of Syria, visited Turkey in 2004 and a year later, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer of Turkey visited Syria, ignoring the pressures and protests by both domestic and international opposition. The relations developed rapidly due to the responsive policies of the Syrian government under Bashar al-Assad, who seemed to have desired positive change in his country. Shortly thereafter, President Assad and Prime Minister Erdogan initiated new efforts to advance Turkish-Syrian relations, the warmth of which also was reflected in their personal interactions. Assad made informal visits to Turkey, where his meetings with Erdogan were reflected in the media. However, the favorable process of improving their relations did not last long: it started to slow down and then deteriorate with the Arab Spring hitting Syria in 2011. This was a turning point in Syria's public and political life entailing serious decisions about the future of the country. Naturally, Assad decided to resist the uprising brought about by the 2011 protest movement to preserve the national unity and territorial integrity of his country. Soon, international powers started to intervene in the Syrian conflict by either opposing or supporting the Assad regime.

It took some time for Turkey to define its new position within the meaningful regional circumstances. The dramatic change of the Turkish policy vis-à-vis Syria was partially a result of Syria's antagonistic policy toward Turkey, as the official Damascus started to view all moves at Syria's border with a great suspicion. The first hostile act by Syria was shooting down a Turkish military jet in June 2012 that reportedly slightly violated Syria's air space.⁴ Ankara, on the other hand, started to repeatedly express its concern for civilian casualties in Syria, and came out in general opposition to the policies of Assad's regime. However, ambiguities of Turkey's Syrian policy have persisted for a long time as Ankara needed more time to examine how Syria was being altered by the warring factions to formulate its policy to serve its national interests in the best way. New challenges emerged for Turkey that not only threatened its security, but also put its territorial integrity in danger. Partially under the influence of the US policies, Ankara started to support the Free Syrian Army (FSA) trying to topple the Assad regime. This meant that Ankara severed diplomatic relations with Damascus, and put itself in opposition to Russia and Iran who supported the Assad regime. For some reason, Ankara believed in a rapid and decisive victory of the FSA over the regime, and possibly made plans to exercise its influence to shape the new administration in Damascus. Later, when the Obama administration

shifted its priorities in Syria and began to cooperate with the Kurdish insurgent group PYD/YPG, Ankara understood that it has miscalculated hasty decisions to cut off ties with Syria.⁵ As chapter 5 discusses it in more detail, Ankara sees PYD/YPG as a continuation of the PKK in Syria, a Kurdish terrorist organization that threatens Turkey's territorial integrity.

By severing the diplomatic ties with and withdrawing its ambassador from Damascus, Ankara disabled itself from reaching the Syrian leadership through the diplomatic channels, which is a necessary means for managing conflicts peacefully. For a country that has claimed to have zero problems with its neighbors, having leverage is important to manage conflicts peacefully. Moreover, Turkey's new Syrian policy affected its own economy more adversely than that of any other country in the region because of the myriad trade restrictions emerged out of the conflict. Currently, Turkey hosts more than three million refugees from Syria, which is extremely costly. In such circumstances, having no political leverage over the Syrian issue is a serious loss for Ankara. Ostensibly, Turkey, as a regional power, weakened its own influence in Syria, and the region as a whole, by removing itself out of the main stage of the power game. Prime Minister Erdogan's obsessive usage of religious rhetoric while condemning Syrian political leadership undermined Turkey's credibility as a fair and impartial actor in the region. Over time, it has become clear that other powers such as Iran, not to mention Russia, exercise more power and influence in Syria than Turkey—the latter has deprived itself of the opportunities of having a political weight in its neighboring country. Erdogan defended this policy by appealing to the themes of justice and human rights, which Damascus accepted with some sarcasm due to the human rights problems existing in Turkey itself.

The reality is that Turkey has established itself in a position of gaining more influence in Syria since it abandoned its old *zero problems with neighbors* policy, which helped neither peace, nor war. By rejecting Damascus, Ankara missed the historical opportunity of forging close relationships with the Assad government, which it needed to exercise leverage for a peaceful or relatively less violent transformation of the conflict. Instead, the Turkish government blamed the Syrian government for violating human rights, and called upon the Assad government to resign, which was a move made in line with Western policies.⁶ Erdogan's government miscalculated the events in Syria thinking that the Syrian government would suffer the fate of the other Arab regimes that had been toppled by the Arab Spring. But it was not only Ankara that failed to weigh the consequences of Russia's presence in Syria, the Western allies remained surprisingly passive in preventing Russia from establishing its dominance in Syria. The shooting down of the Russian military jet by the Turkish Air Force in November 2015 was an attempt to deter Moscow's active and aggressive actions in Syria, which in the end did not yield to any positive

change for Turkey and its allies. As discussed in the final chapter, having economic sanctions imposed on Turkey, the Kremlin managed to masterfully use the incident in its own favor by making Ankara proceed in line with Moscow's design of the reconciliation process.

THE RUSSIAN–TURKISH RELATIONS BEFORE THE CRISIS

The Russo–Turkish relations have been discussed in chapters 1 and 2. Our intention here is to highlight certain points of strategic importance that would help describe the situation before the Syrian crisis emerged, and explain the gap between the pre-crisis and post-crisis situations. As mentioned in chapter 2, one of the most prominent signs of strategic cooperation between Russia and Turkey was the joint project of the Akkuyu Nuclear Plant, which was to be built in cooperation with the Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom per a contract signed in 2010, over which President Erdogan and President Putin met three times. Each time they met, the leaders stressed that despite the disagreements in their foreign policies, the two countries would promote economic cooperation. Turkey's economic relations with Russia helped Erdogan develop the sense of high tolerance so that he did not react seriously to Putin's statements made during the anniversary of the tragic 1915 events of the Ottoman Empire, which Putin identified as the Armenian genocide, a designation that is normally strongly condemned by Ankara. Undoubtedly, one of the most significant projects between Russia and Turkey was the Turkish Stream project, a pipeline development offered to Ankara by Putin in 2014. The agreement was signed by Moscow and Ankara in Istanbul in the presence of both Putin and Erdogan on 10 October 2016.⁷ An exciting project for both states, which started to materialize in the early 2015, it envisioned to carry Russian natural gas to Europe through Turkey. Interestingly and strangely enough, the signing and implementation of the project was delayed by the sides. It is generally believed that the primary reason was that the sides could not agree on the price of gas supplies.⁸ According to some media claims in Russia, however, Ankara deliberately delayed it to guarantee the discount on natural gas it would buy from Russia.⁹ Eventually, the project halted long enough without being signed by the parties, and the blast of the jet crisis in November of 2015 delayed it further.

Putin's participation in the memorial ceremonies for the alleged 1915 Armenian genocide organized in Yerevan on 24 April 2015, did not anger Erdogan contrary to the expectations. In Yerevan, unlike his earlier written statement, Putin was reluctant to use the word "genocide" which could have been interpreted as one of the first signs of the mutually satisfactory cooperation between Ankara and Moscow on the Akkuyu project, the foundation for which was laid only ten days earlier. Putin

and Erdogan met on 13 June 2015, during their joint visit to Baku for the purpose of participating in the opening ceremonies of the European Games.¹⁰ This summit removed all doubts about the cooling off relations between Russia and Turkey that started when Erdogan did not honor Moscow's invitation to participate in the 70th anniversary of Russia's victory over Nazi Germany in May of 2015.¹¹ Shortly thereafter, the Kremlin's statements about the past meeting appeared publically; they stressed that President Putin and President Erdogan discussed the joint projects of their countries, in addition to the situations in Syria and Ukraine. The prognosis about the future of the Russo–Turkish relations was positive; the partners envisioned to increase the trade volume to USD 100 billion by 2020. Erdogan's visit to Moscow in September of the same year consolidated the cooperation, but both presidents confessed that they had different foreign policy worldviews; the main source of stress was the developments and the involvement of both Russia and Turkey in Syria.¹² Erdogan's serious criticism of Russia's policies in Syria started with the use of force by Russia in Syria in late September 2015, even though it was used against the terrorists.

Before that, many remarkable events occurred in the region with Russia's direct involvement. Russia's attack of Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the initiation of war with Ukraine are among the gravest events that took place in Turkey's proximity to the north to which it did not react severely, although both Ukraine and Georgia are of significant geostrategic importance to Ankara, let alone the historical ties between them and Turkey. Moscow's antagonism toward Georgia and Ukraine grew consistently with the progress of Tbilisi's and Kiev's pro-Western policies. Those policies of Ukraine and Georgia, developed under their respective presidents Viktor Yushchenko and Mikhail Saakashvili, were perceived by the Kremlin as hostile and incompatible with Russia's interests. Before taking any serious steps in Ukraine—which Russia had seen as its little brother—Moscow wanted to tame what it regarded as an “unruly” Georgia, which geographically separates it from Turkey.

The October 2006 live fire exercise conducted by Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the vicinity of Georgia's main sea-port Poti, followed the Tbilisi–Moscow spy row and signaled a sharp deterioration of Russo–Georgian relations. After imposing a comprehensive economic embargo on Georgia, and organizing mass deportations of ethnic Georgians from Russia, the Kremlin highlighted the vulnerabilities of Georgia's defenses—its Black Sea coast has been virtually undefended from a potential sea invasion since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The small Georgian navy and the coast guard could not do much to deter Russia's hostile acts let alone repel a full-scale invasion. Moscow fully utilized this advantage during the August 2008 war with Georgia—although the Georgian ground forces managed to hold off the Russian ground forces advancing through

the mountain passes from Russia's North Caucasus, they had little choice but to sue for peace when the Russians deployed the Black Sea Fleet from Sevastopol, Crimea, and landed on Georgian soil virtually unopposed. The Georgian ground troops fighting in central Georgia would have been surrounded and destroyed—their enemy did falter in the mountains, but once gaining control over Georgian lowlands the Russians acquired a huge strategic advantage.

Curiously, Ankara's official reaction to the invasion of Georgia was rather muted despite the fact that Moscow was demonstrating its readiness to wage an unlimited war in Georgia seeking to overthrow its government. As the French-brokered ceasefire took shape, the Turkish leadership praised President Medvedev of Russia,¹³ and then Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan visited Moscow on August 14 2008 to confer with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin.¹⁴ Similarly, Ankara's reaction to Russia's takeover of Crimea and the invasion of southeast Ukraine in 2014 was reserved as if Russia was dealing with its internal affairs. Ankara issued alarms regarding Moscow's militaristic foreign policy pursuits only after the Russian military deployments in Syria in the fall of 2015, and tried to reverse the changed strategic balance. After disregarding Russia's aggressive moves on its northern borders, Ankara grew alarmed when it found similar Russian actions on its southern borders, essentially surrounding Turkey by Russian combat troops. It is possible that Ankara perceived the Russian invasions of Georgia and Ukraine as a settling of some post-Soviet squabbles, but it did miss important warning signs of how far Moscow was willing to go to settle similar scores elsewhere, including Syria.

Ankara reacted to Russia's involvement in Syria on 30 September 2015, as Russian forces commenced bombing so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other anti-Assad rebels. The first reactions came from Feridun Sinirlioglu, Turkey's foreign minister; but before long, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu accused Russia in hitting the moderate opposition forces in Syria, which Moscow rejected.¹⁵ On 3 October 2015, President Erdogan stressed that he had some difficulties understanding Russia's involvement in Syria, as Russia and Syria shared no borders.¹⁶ Erdogan's surprising and rather naïve comment explained a lot why Ankara was so passive on the Georgian and Ukrainian issues.

The first and second violations of the Turkish air space by Russian jets took place on 3 October and 5 October 2015, respectively. Ankara's concerns expressed through diplomatic channels pushed the Kremlin to make statements that the violations were related to inclement weather conditions.¹⁷ According to the statements of the Turkish Ministry of Defense made on 6 October 2015, eight Turkish F-16 jets performing reconnaissance flights over the Turkish–Syrian border were put on radar lock (which enables missile systems to automatically follow a target) by an unidentified MIG-29 aircraft for several minutes.¹⁸ Alongside with Presi-

dent Erdogan's objections, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg expressed his doubts about Russia's violations of Turkish airspace to be unintentional.¹⁹ This was indirect support for Turkey from NATO, which encouraged Ankara to oppose Russia's increasingly aggressive involvement in the Syrian quagmire. Although Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, claimed that Putin called Erdogan and apologized for the violations, things continued to deteriorate rapidly, putting the Russian and Turkish militaries on a collision course.²⁰

The last meeting between Erdogan and Putin before the crisis took place on 15 November 2015, at the G20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey, where they discussed the issues of fighting ISIS, and finding a political solution to the Syrian Civil War. The details of the meeting were not publicized, however, the leaders reached an agreement on meeting in Russia on December 15 for the sixth summit of the High Level Russian-Turkish Cooperation Council. This never materialized due to the crisis that began on November 24. At the G20 Summit in Antalya, Putin implied that Turkey was one of the countries financing ISIS, at least through illegal oil trade; however, Erdogan chose not to react due to the rules of Turkish hospitality.²¹ Just a few hours after Turkey downed the Russian jet on November 24, Putin accused Turkey of protecting ISIS at a press conference organized in the Kremlin. Claiming that Russia's plane was downed over Syrian territory by an air-to-air missile from a Turkish F-16 jet, Putin accused Turkey supporting terrorists and smuggling oil from the areas controlled by the ISIS.²² This was a beginning of the crisis between Russia and Turkey that would last for about eight months.

CLASHING POLICIES, SYRIAN STALEMATE, AND CONFLICT ESCALATION

In Syria, Russia has waded into more dangerous and uncharted waters, but by moving smartly, Moscow has managed to force the West to make another step back after the Crimean crisis, now in the Middle East. Russian actions in Syria have also addressed the strategic rivalry with the United States, by forcefully demonstrating Moscow's advantages in this area that remained unanswered by the United States until the April 2017 Tomahawk cruise missile attack on the Russian-protected Syrian airfield in reaction to the use of chemical weapon by the Assad government.

As discussed above, Ankara strongly objected to Russian Air Force combat missions so close to its borders, demanded that Russian pilots cease violating Turkish air space, and threatened Moscow with sanctions. Among other things, Turkey promised that it would stop purchasing the Russian gas—about 60% of Turkey's natural gas came from Russia in late November 2015, when Turkey downed a Russian ground attack jet in Syria for reportedly violating Turkish airspace, the relations between

them deteriorated to the lowest point in a very long time.²³ The Russian pilots survived the attack, but as they parachuted from the doomed jet, one of them was killed in the air by pro-Turkish Syrian rebels. Another Russian serviceman died in the rescue mission for the other downed pilot.²⁴ Presumably, Ankara had a very good reason to pursue a Russian jet. Armed Russian fighter jets on combat missions violated Turkish airspace—the first ever such incident in NATO's history.²⁵ In response, protests against Russia were issued in Ankara and Brussels, and Moscow responded that they would look into the claims.²⁶ Ankara found subsequent Russian explanations unsatisfactory and expressed its deep dissatisfaction with Moscow.²⁷ President Erdogan had threatened to stop purchasing Russian gas,²⁸ and in the end, Ankara took this decisive measure as no other solution seemed to be viable.

The Russians were very bitter about the downed jet, but not because of the fatalities—Moscow has never believed in tears when it comes to war casualties. The Turkish attack on a Russian jet highlighted weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the Russian operations in Syria. It took the Turks only few minutes to register the jet, track it, and shoot it down without the Russians realizing that they were threatened. The Russian ground attack SU-24 jet was vulnerable to aerial attacks, but it was not accompanied by jet fighters, and no electronic measures were taken by the Russians to protect it. The Russians have suffered similarly embarrassing military setbacks during their war adventures from 2008 on, exposing weaknesses in their military forces. In the August 2008 invasion of Georgia, the Russians lost a number of jets, including their famed long-range Tu-22M3 bomber. Additionally, Russia was not confident it had air superiority in Georgia during the five days of war,²⁹ and its ground force advance was stalled by the Georgian side. The Black Sea Fleet was very slow to deploy, but once it did, Georgia had to sue for peace as it was lacking a viable naval force and coastal defenses. In Ukraine, only the indecisiveness and incompetence of the Ukrainian side allowed Russia to avoid heavy casualties—the rapid-action light infantry Russian troops deployed in Crimea were essentially defenseless sitting ducks for at least two weeks, as their support was late to show up in numbers.

None of the above-mentioned shortcomings resulted in a major setback for the Russians due to timidity, incompetence or self-imposed moderation by their opponents. However, the April 2017 missile attack on a Syrian airbase by the US Navy turned out to be a serious warning message to the Russians, and the first credible response to Moscow by the United States since August 2008. More directly, the American Tomahawk cruise missiles countered the spectacular October 2015 Russian cruise missile attack on various targets in Syria aimed at the Islamic States and other militant groups. The Russian air and missile attacks in Syria posed a significant threat to Turkey, a NATO member with the second largest standing force, especially since the Russian action there went uncon-

tested for almost eighteen months. As Russia entered the Syria war in fall 2015, it undertook the first of a series of the impressive cruise missile attacks on ISIS and other targets. The first round was fired by Russia's Caspian Sea Flotilla in a dramatic demonstration of Russia's military capabilities, and its newly found confidence. The attacks were launched by four Russian warships on 7 October 2015, on President Putin's 63rd birthday, from neutral waters off the coast of Azerbaijan with nuclear warhead-capable 26 sophisticated cruise missiles.³⁰ The Caspian cruise missile attack went as expected and it appeared to be a complete surprise to NATO—always an unpleasant combination of words when “missile attack” and “surprise” are used in the same sentence. More, the *Kalibr* (*Klub*) missile system used by Russia to carry out this attack is capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Four Russian warships participated in the launch of the missiles, meaning that Russia has a significant and very dangerous strategic force in the Caspian Sea, capable of reaching far beyond what had been previously believed. The maximum range of the *Kalibr* missiles is 2,500 kilometers—the Caspian flotilla with these missiles covers the entire Caucasus, the Black Sea, most of the Middle East including the Persian Gulf, major parts of the Red and Arabian Seas, eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea, parts of NATO members of southeastern Europe, and can reach any part of Turkey, Central Asian states, including Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Most importantly, the Caspian Sea flotilla can easily support in combat Russia's Black Sea fleet—a unique situation given that the Caspian Sea is landlocked and separated from the Black Sea by three states and a series of mountain ranges. This is noteworthy considering the strategic importance of Black Sea for Russia. The Russian cruise missiles launched from the Caspian Sea entered Iranian airspace and then crossed into Iraq before hitting targets inside Syria.³¹ Moscow had permissions to fly over the airspace from both Iran and Iraq; a good indication of the close cooperation among these three, which should be worrisome news for Washington and Ankara, as Iran is their strategic foe, while Iraq is supposed to be a close ally. Russia has used the war in Syria for an effective demonstration of its conventional and strategic military capabilities—a very useful method of deterring potential adversaries contemplating conventional military operations—but the *Kalibr* missile attack had the far-reaching message.

As it was mentioned above, the *Kalibr/Klub* cruise missiles are capable of delivering nuclear payloads. This missile system is the most sophisticated in its class as it reportedly has two stages, the final stage kicking in as the missile approaches its target. The *Kalibr* missiles, and cruise missiles in general fly very low to the surface and their long-range detection by radar is impossible. They can be detected in about 24 or 26 (about 15 miles) kilometers from their target, and it is possible, in theory, to intercept and destroy it, but at this point *Kalibr* missile's second stage engages and gives it a supersonic speed making it nearly impossible to shoot it

down. The message the Russians sent to Washington, Ankara, and all other allied capitals implied in no uncertain terms that Moscow possessed devastating weapons against which the allies had no defense. In other words, the strategic balance between Russia and NATO was now demonstrably in Russia's favor. The cruise missile deployments have been limited since the late 1980s following the US-USSR treaty restricting the intermediate nuclear forces in Europe, the so-called INF Treaty. However, if the rivalry between Russia and NATO were to escalate, Russia can withdraw from the 1987 treaty, extend the cruise missile range, and restart a Cold War-type rivalry with the strategic balance in its favor.

The April 2017 American attack on the Al Shayrat air base in Syria was designed to deter Russia from pursuing the path of escalating the conflict. The pretext for the American cruise missile attack was the alleged chemical attack by the Assad regime on al-Qaeda affiliated rebels near the Turkish border few days prior. American warships in the Mediterranean launched 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles that perform in similar fashion to the Russian *Kalibr* missiles, but they do not have a supersonic stage. These missiles can be shot down, but instead of making it a surprise, the American military warned its Russian counterparts of the upcoming missile attack. Despite the advance warning, all missiles reportedly reached their targets inside the air base, in other words, even though the Russians knew about the incoming Tomahawks, and theoretically they were able to intercept and destroy them, the Russian forces could not manage to destroy even a single Tomahawk. The Tomahawks, just like the *Kalibr* missiles, can be detected by radar when they are about 24–26 kilometers from their targets, at which point the tracking device will follow them and aid the ground-based computerized missile interceptors to shoot them down. Each Tomahawk missile will need at least two Russian anti-missile systems firing simultaneously, and if successful, the incoming missile can be brought down at about 8 kilometers (5 miles) from its intended target. In other words, to repel the American attack with 59 cruise missiles, the Russians had to have at least 59 radars and 118 advanced missile interceptors at the Al Shayrat base. No Russian air base, let alone an expeditionary one in Syria, can ever have this much defense from cruise missiles, and even if they had enough radars and interceptors, nothing prevents the US Navy from launching twice as many Tomahawks in the following round. The same logic applies to other Russian military installations and to everything else with strategic importance. In short, the United States made sure the Russians and everyone else involved in the Middle East understood that they were back in the balance of intimidation game with the Russians, the engagement in which they had abstained from since August 2008.

Considering the developments in Syria, it is unlikely that this conflict will come to a conclusion anytime soon. The Russian-supported Assad regime continues to face resistance not only from the extremist terrorist

groups like the ISIS and al-Qaeda, but also from the groups backed by Turkey and its NATO allies, such as the so-called Free Syrian Army. Also, the US has trained, armed, funded, and supported non-ISIS affiliated opposition groups to fight the Assad military that are seriously weakened by Russian attacks. Russia's active support of Damascus will have negative effects on American positions in the Middle East itself, and Russia's long-term military presence in the region will make Washington's future attempts of assembling a NATO coalition for regional engagements all but impossible. If Moscow manages to weaken US influence in the Middle East by waging a successful military campaign in Syria, it will be the biggest achievement in this region by any Russian regime in Russia's history.

Conventional wisdom would suggest that due to this new military expedition in the Middle East, the Russians should not be in a position to afford fresh military troubles elsewhere. Although geographically not far from Syria, the Caucasus has not direct links or relations with the Syrian War. It can, however, become a support region to the front in Syria, especially if things do not go according to Moscow's overall plans. Spillovers from Syria can reignite the Azerbaijani-Armenian stand-off over the Nagorno-Karabakh region and its surrounding areas that are controlled by Armenia, but formally belong to Azerbaijan. If Russia's Syria gamble succeeds and ends quickly, Baku will find its positions even more weakened, as Russia's increased influence will embolden Armenia and Iran, Russia's traditional allies and historical rivals of Azerbaijan. If Baku were to elicit any concession from Armenia regarding the issue of its occupied territories in the foreseeable future, it may decide to act militarily while Russia is tied up in Syria.

Ostensibly, Moscow's entry into the Syrian war is another step in Russia's deliberate and well-planned quest to reassert itself as a major world power and to restore a balance of power with the United States. The Syrian case is an opportunity for Moscow to outmaneuver the United States, and it seems, the Kremlin has successfully used it. The American plans in Syria to bomb ISIS, arm "moderate opposition" to the Assad regime, and force Assad's resignation have failed—none of these objectives were achieved by summer of 2017, neither could the United States muster credible support for any of it.³² Moscow's objective, on the other hand, is much clearer and straightforward: keep the Assad regime in power. Moscow sees only Assad as capable of fighting ISIS (alongside with the Kurdish forces), maintaining state institutions in Syria, and guaranteeing Russia's military presence in the country, at its Tartus naval base. Therefore, the Russian Air Force in Syria targets all who threaten the Assad regime, including those "moderate" groups armed and supported by the United States,³³ and occasionally those supported by Turkey (not because of the fear of upsetting the Turks, but due to a simple fact that pro-Turkish groups in Syria tend to be numerically inferior and

strategically less significant). At the same time, Kurdish groups, allied with Russia and/or the United States, have been targeted by Ankara. By end of the Obama administration in January 2017, the US was seen in no position to protect its people it supported in Syria from the Russian attacks and this further undermined Washington's credibility in the region.³⁴ More, unlike the US, Russia possesses clearly defined and credible allies in the Syrian War—primarily, Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah—both of whom are very crucial for Russia's long-term military influence in the Middle East. This fact, more than anything else, has encouraged the Erdogan government to overcome its hatred of the Assad regime and its suspicions of Iran's true intentions in the region, and to seek an accommodation with the other two. By end of 2016, Russia, Turkey, and Iran agreed on trilateral talks on Syria, and by May 2017, they found common ground on some key issues, including establishing the so-called safe zones in Syria to promote a de-escalation of the civil war.³⁵ Such agreements may not solve much initially, as the warring parties tend to ignore them, especially those affiliated with ISIS and al Qaeda, but the process of bringing Russia, Turkey, and Iran together for a common solution is very significant in post-Cold War Middle East politics.

Being engaged in the Syrian question promises major rewards for Moscow, and its stakes there are not as high as they are in Ukraine. Russia's long-term gains include establishing a stronghold in the Middle East, and for this Assad has to prevail in the war. This is why Moscow has mobilized its diplomatic and military capabilities to reach the outcomes it seeks in the region. Russia also makes its neighbors take notes on how Moscow develops its strategic arms policies. Moscow has also been diligently rebuilding its nuclear-capable platforms as has been evidenced by the October 2015 performance of four Caspian warships. This new Russian military doctrine makes a "preemptive" nuclear strike against non-nuclear weapon nations into an explicit policy of the Russian state.³⁶ This is a worrisome development that would have been regarded with great alarm in the United States only three decades ago: low flying, very fast, long range and accurate cruise missiles tip the strategic balance in favor of Russia. Soviet/Russian military doctrines have always allowed for preemptive nuclear strikes, but only in cases of an imminent nuclear attack by the enemy or a conventional attack by an enemy aimed at crippling Russia's strategic forces.³⁷ The new strategy of the preemptive nuclear strike has been emphasized by Russian officials to give additional weight of Moscow's threats to defend Russia's territorial integrity and that of its allies. Although Moscow's implicit threats are currently chiefly directed at former members of the Soviet Union, especially Ukraine and Georgia, its new policies indicate to the West as a potential military threat as well. If Russia's military escapades in the last decade teach its neighbors anything, it is that Moscow will not hesitate to pursue further military campaigns in the areas of its stated vital interests. Lesser former

Soviet states will do well to avoid such conflicts and keep Russia's attention directed toward the West or the Middle East, where it rightfully belongs.

CONCLUSIONS

By reviewing the November 2015 crisis between Russia and Turkey, we have demonstrated the hazards of two powerful and generally friendly states getting involved in a regional war on opposing sides. The crisis, which resulted from the downing of a Russian ground attack jet by the Turkish Air Force on 24 November 2015, has been subsequently resolved; despite its injured pride, the Russian leadership left a door open for Ankara to make amends, and the Turkish leadership slowly realized that they alone were powerless to alter the power balance with Russia. Soon after the military incident involving a Russian jet, President Putin said that Russia did not see Turkey as an enemy despite the military jet crisis but it was Ankara who should make the first step for reconciliation.³⁸ President Erdogan, who initially said that if there was a party that needed to apologize, it was Russia, also gradually changed his approach to restore good relations with Russia. In fact, shortly after the incident, he also stated that if they knew that the jet was Russian, they would act differently, although Putin did not immediately accept these words as credible.³⁹ Nonetheless, Ankara developed deep feelings of remorse over time due to the economic price it had paid. More, the increasing cooperation of the US with the Kurdish PYD/YPG forces despite Ankara's objections made the latter reconsider its policy vis-à-vis Russia. Although Russia's approach to the Kurds of Syria is not much different from that of the US, Ankara found maneuvering its strategy to a balanced policy between the US and Russia more advantageous for its interests. Currently, despite their conflicting interests in Syria, Russia and Turkey are convinced that cooperation would serve their mutual interests much better than hostility involving a power struggle that normally makes the competing parties to pursue zero-sum policies. At the same time, the recently restored cooperation was possible due to the heavy costs paid by both sides. The many ambiguities between Russia and Turkey still remain, although they are subject to change according to the unforeseen developments in the region. The crises could also be triggered deliberately by either country as their interests require it, that is difficult to anticipate in any context, let alone the overall complexities of the regional conflict in the Middle East.

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FOUR

Turkey–Russia Relations After the Shooting Down of a Russian Warplane

Togrul Ismayil

There are certain memorable days in the history of each country. December 15, 1997 was one of the most important days in the history of Turkey–Russia relations. It was the date that Turkey started to buy natural gas from Russia through “Blue Stream” Pipelines despite the unfavorable reaction of the US. President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Turkey on 6 December 2004 was the first visit to Ankara from Moscow on this level in 512 years. On 1 December 2014, Putin proposed the “Turkish Stream” project to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara. If the events had proceeded as usual, President Putin would meet with President Erdogan at the summit of the High Level Cooperation Council in St. Petersburg on 15 December 2015. But the 24 November of 2015 event of the shooting down of a Russian warplane that violated Turkish airspace caused a termination of the projected December meeting. Until that day, the main official discussions were on how Turkish–Russian relations could be developed further. Following the downing of the Russian warplane by Turkey, everyone started to search an answer to the question of how long the crisis would last.

THE DIMENSIONS OF TURKEY–RUSSIAN RELATIONS

It will be useful to examine the areas of cooperation between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation in several areas. If we primarily

look at trade relations, the volume of trade of the two countries was around 40 billion dollars in 2009.¹ But this number gradually declined to 24 billion dollars by 2015.² The decrease in oil prices and the sanctions imposed on Russia by the EU constitute the main reasons of the decline. This number was around \$3–4 billion at the beginning of the early 2000s. While 65 percent of Russia's exports to Turkey are made up of oil and natural gas products, the products imported by Russia from Turkey consist of textile, iron and steel, fruits and vegetables, and automotive and machinery equipment. Considering demand for natural gas in Turkey, there is a serious imbalance in trade in favor of Russia. However, Russian authorities argue that this imbalance has recently been overtaken by the suitcase trade, tourism, and nearly \$61.7 billion investment by the Turkish construction sector in Russia. In 2009, the number of tourists coming from Russia to Turkey exceeded three million, and Russians ranked first among tourists visiting Turkey. In 2013, 4,270,000 Russian citizens visited Turkey, and in 2014, this number increased to 4,480,000. In 2015, this number declined, however, to 3,649,000.³

It is useful to look at relations between Russia and Turkey in the energy sector in order to understand their trade affairs. As we know, energy cooperation between Russia and Turkey in the field of natural gas started with the ratification of the agreement in 1987 which was signed in 1984. In addition, this cooperation has been diversified with the completion of the Blue Stream Project in 2005. However, there is competition between the two countries regarding transit pipeline routes.⁴ During the Cold War era and nowadays, there have been some instances of military cooperation between Turkey, which is a NATO member, and Russia, although they have historically been weak because they belonged to different Cold war alliances or blocs. In the 1990s, Turkey bought military vehicles and helicopters from Russia. In 2008, a Russian company won the tender by the Turkish Armed Forces related to acquiring anti-tank weapons; however, the necessity of tools and equipment in accordance with NATO standards have kept the size of these purchases very limited.⁵

The 2000s also witnessed several new diplomatic initiatives between Turkey and Russia. The two countries have pursued similar policies to protect regional stability. While Russia has been positive about Turkey's European Union membership bid, Turkey also supported Russia's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the World Trade Organization. In the Black Sea region, some efforts have been made to improve the functioning of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.⁶ Turkish–Russian relations have developed beyond the suitcase trade. In addition to the mutual investments made by the companies, cultural relations developed significantly. Trade and tourism between the citizens of both countries have helped Turks and Russians become more familiar with each other. Russians who have come to Tur-

key, have made it possible to organize Russian communities in the big Turkish cities. At the same time, numerous Turkish–Russian mixed marriages have taken place. Remarkably, 2007 was declared as “Russian Culture Year” in Turkey and 2008 was declared as “Turkish Culture Year” in Russia. Obviously, these cultural activities contributed to the development of deeper cultural relations between the two countries. Similarly, interactions between academics from both countries and student exchange programs have also contributed to the flourishing of cultural interaction between Russia and Turkey.⁷

Despite the important goals for the development of the two countries’ relations, it is hardly possible to argue that they have aimed strategic partnership. The first reason is related to the problem of insecurity. Turkey is a member of the NATO and an important ally of the United States in the region, and this prevents Russo–Turkish relations from developing into a strategic partnership. Considering insecurity in trade relations between Russia and Turkey, it can be argued that Russia would use the position of its natural gas sales as a weapon in its foreign policy. For example, blocking Turkish goods in Russian customs is an important problem for Turkey that is experienced from time to time.

Another crucial point is that the PKK, an illegal Kurdish organization aiming at destroying the territorial integrity of Turkey by establishing a Kurdish state in Turkey, is not regarded as a terrorist organization by Russia, although it is not kept at the forefront of bilateral relations. There are some efforts to combat terrorism, but the PKK is finding support among Kurds living in Russia, and Moscow has refused to do anything about it. The main reason is that Russia does not want to interfere with the Kurds and it does not trust Turkey’s promise not to give support to the separatists in the Caucasus region who seek independence from Russia.⁸

Another issue is Turkish–Russian competition in the Eurasian region. In particular, the Turkish policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia regions is a cause of embarrassment for Russia. Turkey’s close relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia in the Caucasus, and Russia’s close bond with Armenia and Iran are emerging as another stance against these two countries’ relations because not all of these countries are friendly to each other.⁹ The Ukrainian crisis also has certain similarities. While Turkey defended the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Russia has annexed the Crimean Peninsula which was part of Ukraine. Although Russia is also part of numerous regional projects, they are mostly partnerships for the establishment of stability in the regions. However, the possibility exists that different economic and political interests of the regional countries may conflict with each other.

There are also three sources of conflict between both countries, the first of which is the disagreements regarding the Cyprus issue. Russia aims to develop relations with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus (the

Greek side). The second point concerns the Armenian events of 1915. The Duma, the lower house of the Russian Parliament, took some decisions against Turkey regarding the alleged Armenian genocide of 1915. The third important problem is Syria. Turkey supports rebel groups in Syria opposed to the Syrian government and believes that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should leave office immediately, while Moscow opposes the overthrow of the Assad government. In several occasions, Russian air forces bombed the Syrian rebels in coordination with the Syrian government forces. The shooting-down of the Russian Su-24M bomber aircraft, which violated the Turkish airspace on 24 November 2015, damaged Russo–Turkish relations. Before that, even if the relations between Ankara and Moscow were fragile, there was a prospect for an advanced cooperation. After the event, Ankara made statements to ease Moscow’s anger, but the Russian side has reacted harshly¹⁰ and began to take steps that counteract the cooperation between the two countries.¹¹

THE AIRCRAFT CRISIS AND BREAKPOINT IN TURKEY–RUSSIA RELATIONS

November 24, 2015 was a breaking point in the contemporary Turkey–Russia relations. On that day, the SU-24M warplane of the Russian air force was bombing the Turkmen Mountain region in the north of Syria. The Turkish Air Force’s F-16 fighter planes shot down the Russian plane in the Hatay Yayladagi region of Turkey as it violated Turkish airspace. In the first statement by the General Staff of Turkey, it was noted that the plane, which did not respond to the warnings, was shot down.¹² In the following days, the General Staff tried to explain the incident in more detail. On 24 and 25 November 2015, the Defense Attaché and the Military Attaché of Russia were invited to the Headquarters of the General Staff to inform them about the shooting down of the SU-24M fighter plane. The details were as follows:

During the warning of the aircraft by the Turkish authorities its nationality was unknown; Due to the fact that the fighter jet violating the Turkish airspace did not respond to the calls repeated tens of times, the rule of engagement (ROE) was applied to it. The use of force was applied to the case according to ROE since the situation was seen as provocative; Turkish armed forces intensified their efforts to locate and rescue the Russian pilots; The Turkish side stated that all kinds of questions related to the event were answered. The clarifications included the usage of radar track maps which was the main concern of the Russian side. Ankara stated that it was ready to share any information with Moscow; Ankara also reiterated that the rules of engagement entered into force automatically due to the fact that an aircraft with unknown nationality violated Turkish airspace, despite repeated warnings. It was reminded that Tur-

key's readiness to comply with the ROE in a similar situation was publicly mentioned earlier and Moscow was aware of it.

In addition to all these points, it was also noted that the Turkish authorities contacted the military authorities in Moscow by telephone and stated that Ankara was ready for any kind of cooperation with Moscow.¹³ On November 29, Russian pilot Oleg Peskov's body was delivered to Turkey by the Syrian rebels and sent to Russia by military ceremony on the same day.

THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS

President Erdogan shared his opinion on the airplane incident at the reception held in the Presidency Complex for Teachers' Day on 24 November 2015. Erdogan said that he had been following all developments since Friday and Turkey did not want to witness this kind of tragic event. He added that the incident happened entirely within the framework of Turkey's previously announced ROE. Erdogan stressed that Turkey would never pursue hostile policies toward its neighbors or any other country in the world. On the same day, President Putin of Russia said that Russian aircraft was four kilometers away from the Turkish–Syrian border when it was attacked by Turkey, and that the airplane and its pilots never threatened Turkey. Putin characterized the shooting-down of the plane as being stabbed in the back. The Russian president added that this incident would have serious consequences for Russian–Turkish relations. He also stated that Turkey was acting as if "Russia had shot down its own plane" and that the shooting down of the plane "went beyond the fight against terrorism."¹⁴ At the same time, Putin noted that the Russian plane was shot down despite the agreement between the United States, Russia, and Turkey regarding the prevention of aviation incidents over Syria.

After the incident, a statement was made by the NATO, which made it clear that it closely followed the situation, and it was in contact with the Turkish authorities. In fact, Ankara immediately informed the NATO about the incident, as the situation was grave because for the first time in the history, a NATO member country shot down a Russian warplane. However, the fact that the Russian plane was shot down by Turkey was not a surprising situation since Russia had constantly been bombing the border of Turkey and deploying its military in the region. Moscow ignored Ankara's determination and readiness to meet a tense situation on the Turkish border with force. The interference made by Russia against the Bayirbucak Turkomans (Turkic people of Syria who are dominant in some regions of Syria), which was a very sensitive issue for Turkey, triggered tensions between the two states very quickly. In his annual

press conference on 17 December 2015, Putin rejected the Turkoman dominance in the region and spoke about the issue in a mocking tone. This was a sign of the deepening crisis between Turkey and Russia.

After the incident, Putin's use of harsh language against Turkey was an indicator of a long-term crisis between Moscow and Ankara. The atmosphere of tension and conflict now replaced peace and cooperation. Russia preferred to bring the issue to the agenda of the international institutions instead of trying to resolve it on a bilateral basis with Turkey. The Kremlin carried out a tough propaganda against Turkey. Russia's initial uncompromising attitude delayed the process of improving the relations.

THE FIGHTER JET CRISIS IN RUSSIA

The fighter jet crisis raised many concerns and questions on the Russian side to the conflict. Russian public opinion was very negative and hostile against Turkey. The primary points related to the crisis were as follows:

If Russia successfully managed the fighter jet crisis, it would maintain its presence in Syria and gain a permanent access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean, which has been Russia's dream since the times of Peter the Great. Russia's presence in Syria would provide new opportunities for it to strengthen its positions in the Middle East and Africa.¹⁵

The plane crisis was an opportunity for Russia already exposed to international isolation due to the crisis in Ukraine in which Russia was involved. Prevailing in a crisis with Turkey, a NATO member, meant a lot for Moscow because Russia could show the whole world that it is still a super power.¹⁶

Turkey was a very important trading partner of Russia and, therefore, the prolonging of the plane crisis would mean serious economic problems for Russia.¹⁷

Russia's implementation of aggressive policies in Syria similar to those it pursued in Georgia and Ukraine would create problems for the Kremlin due to Turkey's political, economic, and military strength.

Moscow has intimidated Central Asian states, which still are within Russia's sphere of influence, to take a position against Turkey.

THE PLANE CRISIS IN TURKEY

The plane crisis on the Turkish side did not go unnoticed; in fact, it was the main topic of discussions and debated in Turkey for several weeks. Here are some main arguments in Turkey after the crisis took place:

By downing the Russian jet Turkey has gained psychological superiority over Russia. Ankara showed that Russia could not breach the border without being punished whenever it wanted.

Turkey showed that it was determined to protect its borders even by shooting down the Russian planes. Nonetheless, shortly after the incident, Turkey's rightful position backfired.

Following the shooting down of the plane, Western states did not take action against Russia, although they made pro-Turkish statements.¹⁸

Turkey began to have a difficult time with the sanctions imposed by Russia and therefore it had to find new markets for its goods to export. Accordingly, President Erdogan traveled to countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia and signed trade agreements.

Turkey needed to receive more support from the European Union and NATO.

The border incident once again indicated that Russia was a threat to Turkey in the Black Sea region. Therefore, Turkey should establish good relations with Western countries to strengthen its position in that region.¹⁹

Turkey should not act alone in Syria.

Turkey must stay calm, despite the provocations of Russia.

NATO AND THE AIRCRAFT CRISIS

The NATO declared its support to Turkey clearly soon after the outbreak of the crisis. However, the conflict did not escalate as a result of this support. Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of the NATO, had repeatedly stated that the alliance would not step back from advocating open and transparent defense of Turkey.²⁰ However, the political elite of Turkey was suspicious about the support Turkey would receive from NATO against Russia.

In a possible Russian attack on Turkey, the failure of NATO to support Turkey would harm the credibility of the organization, thus raising questions about its defensive capabilities. If NATO did not support Turkey, it would be an alliance that could not offer security to its members against Russia.²¹ In that case, Russia would not miss this historical opportunity to fully discredit the NATO bringing an end to it. On the other hand, Russia wanted to avoid facing NATO instead of Turkey. In a possible NATO–Russia armed conflict, it would be quite difficult for Russia to win the conflict with its existing economic and military capabilities. In this case, both sides—NATO and Russia—aimed to avoid the conflict without letting it to escalate and get enlarged.

THE IMPACT OF AIRCRAFT CRISIS ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The aircraft crisis damaged Turkish–Russian relations significantly. The trade between the two countries came to a halt because of the sanctions Russia imposed on Turkey. A couple of weeks after the incident took

place, the relations transformed from what was called the “Spring Weather” to the “Black Winter.” Russia’s policy was quite clear: Turkish businessmen could not enter Russia with tourist visas and some Turkish citizens started to be deported. Anti-Turkish attitude in Russia has increased dramatically and the intense efforts were made to inspect and find “defects” in the works of the Turkish companies operating in Russia. Russian authorities targeted Turkish companies and citizens. On 1 January 2016, Russia officially began to implement sanctions against Turkey. For Turks, Russia had lost its attractiveness for doing business.

The basic framework of economic relations between Turkey and Russia was the Agreement on Commercial and Economic Cooperation, which was signed on 25 February 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Bilateral volume of trade, which has increased since 2002, reached 38 billion dollars in 2008 but decreased to 23 billion dollars in 2009 due to the global economic crisis. During the period of July 2008–August 2009, a sever control applied to the Turkish products at the Russian customs. The commercial relations between Russia and Turkey entered into a recovery process in early 2010 when the volume of trade increased to 26.1 billion dollars. In 2008, Russia was the most important trade partner of Turkey. In 2009 and 2010, however, it fell to the second place leaving the first place to Germany. During Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s visit to Turkey in August 2009, a common target for bilateral trade was set to be worth \$ 100 billion over the next five years, but this number declined year-by-year to \$ 24 billion by 2015.²²

The main Turkish products exported to Russia are: food products (25%), weaving products (20%), chemicals (9.6%) and automotive industry (7%). The main Russian products imported by Turkey are: oil and oil products (37.6%), natural gas, (32.4%) iron and steel (8%), coal (5.8%), and nonferrous metals. Turkish contractors have already undertaken 1191 projects in Russia of \$ 32 billion worth. According to the Russian Federal Customs Service, Turkey was the fifth largest trading partner of Russia with a total volume of 4.6% of Russia’s foreign trade in the January–September period of 2015. According to this data, Turkey was behind China, Germany, Holland, and Italy, but it was ahead of countries such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine.²³

The crisis between Russia and Turkey hit the businesses partially dependent on Russia and Turkish citizens working in Russia. According to unofficial information, when the crisis broke out, ninety thousand Turkish citizens worked in Russia, especially in the construction sector. In general, Russia was the second country where Turkish citizens entered into business transactions. Moreover, those who were in the tourism businesses in Turkey but mainly relied on Russia were also affected by the crisis. Moscow imposed a ban limiting travel of Russian tourists to the holiday destinations in Turkey. Natalie Tur, one of Russia’s biggest tour operators, immediately announced that it had stopped tour sales to

Turkey. Later, Brisco, a Russian tourism company, and other tour operators reported that they stopped selling their tours to Turkey. Likewise, Turkish–Russian financial relations were damaged by the crisis, since Turkey has been an important market not only for Gazprom, a Russian government-owned natural gas company, and tourism operators, but also for the financial sector. Good financial relations between Russia and Turkey had a strategic importance for the Russian Sberbank, which had purchased nearly 100% of Turkish DenizBank, one of the ten largest banks in Turkey, for 3.5 billion dollars in 2012. This deal was stated on Sberbank’s website as “the largest purchase of the bank’s 172-year history.”

The Russo–Turkish relations in the energy field could have been damaged as well, but Russia did not take risks because Russia is the biggest supplier of natural gas for Turkey. Normally, Turkey buys more than half of its annual natural gas from Russia. It receives natural gas from Russia via the West Pipeline, which comes from Ukraine and enters Turkey from Thrace and via Blue Stream, which comes through the Black Sea to Samsun in Turkey. According to 2014 Natural Gas Sector Report of the Energy Market Regulatory Authority of Turkey (EPDK), imports of natural gas came mostly from Russia at 54.76 percent, or 26 billion cubic meters of natural gas for needed 50 billion cubic meters. In 2014, Turkey paid \$ 16.5 billion to Russia for purchasing natural gas.

The decline of oil prices has been good for Turkey, whereas Russia’s economic power has weakened. Gaining a significant portion of its foreign exchange income from oil exports, Russia had to face a noteworthy cost by thirty percent decline in the price of oil in the summer of 2016. The situation for Turkey, which is an oil importer, developed in the opposite direction. Having faced an embargo to its goods by Russia, Turkey had historical opportunity to adopt a strategy of ending its extreme dependence on Russia’s oil and natural gas in the aftermath of the fighter jet crisis. Although the situation was ripe for making a necessary decision in this regard, the steps were delayed due to structural problems. Even if there were no restrictions on direct natural gas import by Turkey from Russia in the period of the crisis, there always existed certain risks. Therefore, Turkey began to take energy security more seriously and seek alternatives for its supply needs. The new energy alternatives included liquid natural gas from Qatar and natural gas from Iraq, Turkmenistan, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Since the existing natural gas relationship of Russia and Turkey was one of the most important elements of their bilateral relations, the decline or end of this trade transaction would have more permanent consequences on the relations of Moscow and Ankara.

Another important project between Russia and Turkey was related to the Akkuyu Nuclear Power project, which is also discussed in chapter 10. The consequences of the cancellation of the Akkuyu project would also affect Turkey to some extent since it relied on it for meeting its energy

needs and it was one of the main questions that both Moscow and Ankara pondered. It seemed that due to the economic contraction and difficulties experienced by the embargoes imposed by the EU, Russia would not easily give up on the Akkuyu project, which was worth \$20 billion value. However, the political reasons rather than economic ones for avoiding Russia's suspension of the project were stronger. Moscow didn't take any steps to harm Turkey directly in the energy sector because it not only needed valid arguments in terms of international law to cancel the project, but also it needed to protect its own interests. Also, in case Akkuyu project were cancelled, Turkey wouldn't lose much as it had alternatives like China, Japan, and South Korea for constructing the nuclear power plant.

In 2015, with an economy decreased by 3.8 percent, an industry decreased by 4.2 percent, a GDP declined by 2.8 percent, declining prices of energy resources, and being economically sanctioned by the West, Russia did not have enough power to start a total economic war against Turkey which was supported by the West. Such a war would deepen the economic and social crisis in Russia and increase real estate and consumption prices tremendously, which the Kremlin needed to avoid.

Due to the Western sanctions, 2015 was a difficult year for the Russian economy. It was expected that the economy would grow in Russia in 2016 and inflation decline by 6.4 percent. When we consider that the world oil prices reached their lowest level of 17 years in 2016 and that the Russian economy was also largely dependent on oil prices, we must say that the Russian government tried to rescue the economy through eliminating its dependence on oil, however, such a transition requires a few years to materialize. Due to the economic crisis in Russia, the government reduced the number of government employees by 10 percent. It seems the sanctions imposed by the Kremlin on Turkey had led to a rise in prices of many products in Russia. As a matter of fact, Russian Federation Ministry of Economic Development admitted that the Russian business was significantly dependent on Turkey.²⁴ The results of the crisis showed that Russia had a greater potential to get damaged from the crisis. Unlike Russia, Turkey's open trade and liberal investment policy could compensate for those losses more quickly. It appears that these two neighboring countries which attach great importance to security and stability, need to demonstrate their ability to work together for common interests on a regional and global level.

THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS IN TURKEY–RUSSIA RELATIONS

It was not believed that Russia would easily overcome its great anger from the shooting down of its aircraft. The future of the Russo–Turkish relations was not optimistic, however, President Putin and President Er-

dogan, managed to meet in St. Petersburg, Russia only nine months after the crises. At a press conference following the historic summit held at the Palace of Constantinople, the two leaders emphasized the need to improve economic relations between their countries and they discussed the Syrian issue in more detail. This visit had a special importance for Erdogan as it was his first overseas trip after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 in Turkey.

Both Putin and Erdogan put forward the importance of restoring relations. The normalization process was planned as follows:

Russia would gradually remove restrictions (sanctions) from the Turkish companies; Russia decided to prepare a cooperation plan with Turkey for 2016–2019. It was envisaged that their relations would fully be restored.

By eliminating restrictions from the Turkish companies and improving their relations, the sides were hoping to accomplish their 2016–2019 short-term program.

The key point in Turkish–Russian relations was energy. Serious steps must be taken to realize all the energy projects. “The nuclear power plant” and “Turkish Stream” issues would be back on the agenda.

Charter flights would resume and the old projects would continue.

According to both leaders, this meeting was important for restoring Russia–Turkey relations, which was in the interests of both countries. But how did normalization process work? In fact, the answer to the question of whether Moscow would relax its policy vis-à-vis Ankara was hidden in the three conditions proposed for the improvement of relations:

Turkey apologizes for the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet;

The offenders are punished;

Compensation is paid to Russia.

But while looking at the attitude of the Turkish side, the possibility of accepting all three of these conditions or some of them seemed extremely unlikely. President Erdogan on a number of occasions noted that the airplane incident happened owing to the mistake of the Russian pilots.

HOW LONG DID THE HIGH TENSION LAST?

The first contact with Russia after the fighter jet crisis happened when President Erdogan and Prime Minister Yildirim sent letters to their counterparts on 12 June 2016, Russian National Day. On June 27, the press service of the Kremlin said that Putin received a letter from President Erdogan. According to the Russian side, Erdogan expressed sadness about the incident and the pilot’s death, and also he was hoping that the problem would be resolved quickly. The Kremlin announced that Erdogan apologized and expressed deep condolences to the deceased Russian pilot’s family. One the same day, President Erdogan said that the letter

was a step to reduce tensions between the two countries. However, Prime Minister Yıldırım said that there would not be a compensation for the Russian Su-24M bomber aircraft, and Ankara expressed only sorrow, not an apology. At the same time, the trial of Alpaslan Celik, the alleged killer of the Russian pilot, resumed in Turkey.

“The apology of the Turkish side” has caused different interpretations in Russia. Some media organizations and experts emphasized that President Erdoğan’s use of the “no offense” expression was not to mean sorry. According to them, in the letter, only sadness and condolences were expressed to the family of the deceased Russian pilot, Oleg Peshkov. The main criticism was that no sadness was mentioned to Putin or Russia by Erdoğan.

President Erdoğan’s spokesman Ibrahim Kalin also announced an explanation about President Erdoğan’s letter to President Putin. He said that Erdoğan issued a call to his Russian counterpart for the re-establishment of friendly relations between Russia and Turkey, and for cooperation on the resolution of regional crises, such as the Syrian Civil War, and fighting terrorism. Kalin said that Erdoğan sent a letter to Putin saying that he was deeply saddened about the shooting down of the Russian military plane, and said: “I would like to express my condolence once again to the Russian pilot’s family, and I say—no offence.”²⁵ Kalin added that Turkey and Russia had agreed that necessary steps should be taken in order to improve relations.

President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine said that President Erdoğan had talked with him before he sent the letter to Putin. Poroshenko said he thought Erdoğan did not apologize to Russia in the letter.²⁶ President Putin and President Erdoğan had held a telephone conversation for 45 minutes on 28 June 2016, following a terrorist attack occurred at Atatürk Airport in Istanbul killing 45 and injuring more than 230 people. The Kremlin’s spokesman Peskov stated that Putin condemned the terrorist attack in Istanbul and noted that the leaders of the both countries expressed their determination to develop bilateral relations, and fight against terrorism and they also agreed to meet face-to-face. As an answer to the Russian public’s confusion about the apology, Peskov repeated the message that Erdoğan gave his condolences to the family of the pilot who died in the incident and “apologized.” According to Peskov, who knows the Turkish language well, there was no “philological subtlety” in the letter written by Erdoğan.²⁷ Peskov said that the letter sent by Turkey was an important step to improve bilateral relations, but that it was not possible to resolve the problem within a few days.

The first high level of face-to-face contact between the two countries after the normalization process was made in Sochi, Russia, on 1 July 2016. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met at the Foreign Ministers Meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Another round of talks took place during

the G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting in Shanghai, China. Turkish Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci and First Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia Aleksey Likhachev came together. Later, on July 13, a Turkish delegation of officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications, and Ministry of Interior as well as tourism sector representatives held talks with Russian counterparts in Moscow.

On July 17, two days after the coup attempt in Turkey, President Putin called President Erdogan and stated that he supported the elected government in Turkey. The two leaders agreed to have face-to-face talks during the first week of August. After these mutual steps between the two countries, a visit of Turkish ministers to Russia was planned. Despite the coup attempt that took place on July 15 in Turkey, ministers' visit to Russia was not canceled. Deputy Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli, Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci and officials from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Transport, Maritime and Communications, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism went to Moscow on July 25 and official talks were held on July 26. Bilateral talks were also held after the delegation talks under the chairmanship of Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Canikli and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkadiy Dvorkovic. Economy Minister Zeybekci held bilateral talks separately with Russian Economic Development Minister Alexey Ulyukayev and Energy Minister Aleksandr Novak. During this first official meeting in Russia after the fighter jet crisis, the commercial and economic relations between the two countries were evaluated. The necessary steps to revitalize economic relations and achieve the goals set before the crisis were discussed widely. On August 7, President Erdogan gave an interview to Mikhail Gusman from Russia's official news agency *Itar-Tass*. In the interview, Erdogan referred to Putin as "my friend" and stated that "a new page will be turned in their relations." On August 9, President Putin and Turkish President Erdogan met for the first time after the fighter jet crisis. The summit in St. Petersburg then continued with a meeting between the delegations from the both countries was a turning point in the improvement of Russo–Turkish relations. Later, Putin and Erdogan, who held a joint press conference, emphasized the improvement of economic relations.²⁸

President Putin stated that they gave priority to commercial issues and responding to the question of the visa exemption for Turks that Russia suspended, said "this problem needs to be solved. Our Turkish partners are experiencing economic problems due to the visa. We will solve the economic problems. Visa problems between us should be resolved. We should do this to overcome problems."²⁹ Erdogan, on the other hand, recalled that the economic cooperation between the two countries was affected by the fighter jet crisis and said that their last meetings had reestablished the \$100 billion volume in trade target.³⁰

After the Putin–Erdogan meeting the general atmosphere was very positive. There was a clear consensus on the normalization of relations between Turkey and Russia as both sides were trying to show that they were determined to take the relationship forward. With this visit, we can say that Turkey–Russia relations have entered a very positive stage.

Another development that accelerated the normalization process between the two countries was Putin’s visit to Turkey on 10 October 2016. It was a visit to join the 23rd World Energy Congress, during which the two presidents talked about bilateral and regional issues. The discussions included such topics as trade and economic relations between the two countries, visa and restrictions unilaterally applied by Russia, and the “Turkish Stream” natural gas pipeline. This visit was expected to accelerate the normalization process contributed to the further development of the cooperative relations between Russia and Turkey.

Following the meeting, an agreement was signed between the governments of Russia and Turkey on the “Turkish Stream” project. It was stated that as a part of the “Turkish Stream” Natural Gas Pipeline Project, the sides agreed to reduce the price of natural gas sold to Turkey. At the same time, it was stated that Russian restriction on some agricultural products that were forbidden by Russia was removed. These steps meant that Turkish exporters could again use the Russian market for their goods. The volume of exports of these goods before the crisis was \$500 million worth. This showed the importance of the talks. As Putin said, it was important that both sides had agreed that their bilateral relations were fully normalized.

The Kremlin’s spokesman Peskov also expressed that the possibility of Russia to provide air defense system to Turkey was discussed during the Putin–Erdogan debate. “If the Turkish side is willing, Russia can evaluate the air defense system shipment in different ways,” said Peskov.³¹ Finally, according to a report of the *Itar–Tass* news agency based on Russian newspaper *Izvestia*, Putin and Erdogan agreed to share intelligence for the Operation Euphrates Shield in Syria. Obviously, Putin and President Erdogan, who accelerated the contact traffic with the normalization of relations between Turkey and Russia, met twice face to face and four times on the phone in two months. While discussing all dimensions of Turkey–Russia relations, the leaders also discussed regional issues, especially the Syrian Civil War. In fact, such meetings of President Erdogan with President Putin were important in terms of managing the regional issues as well as improving the bilateral relations of the two countries.

CONCLUSION

By the 1990s, an opportunity opened to upgrade Turkish–Russian relations into a new dimension. In the 2000s, collaboration efforts at specific points had been improved, and the term, “strategic partnership” began to be coined to define the bilateral relationship.

First of all, the historical background of Turkish–Russian political and economic relations can be briefly summarized. The process that started with the natural gas treaty spread to various sectors. Interactions have occurred in sectors such as tourism, banking, and construction. These commercial activities also affected political relations between Russia and Turkey. Turkish–Russian relations have considerable political vulnerabilities besides economic cooperation. This is one of the factors that can hamper commercial relations and prevent the formation of complex interdependence.

The truth is that Russia, which was sanctioned by the West for annexing Crimea, has experienced significant economic problems for a few years since the crisis broke out in early 2014. The Central Bank of Russia predicted the oil prices would be 35 dollars in 2016, which is very low. Under these conditions, it was impossible for the Russian leadership to keep the political crisis with Turkey for a long time. For these reasons, the climb of the crisis between the two countries and the destruction of relations were not beneficial for both countries. On the other hand, Western countries as well as the Middle East and Asian countries have closely followed the perspectives of cooperation between Turkey and Russia for many years.

The two countries have complementary economic structures, and the depth of these bonds has emerged more clearly in the period when their relations experienced a crisis. Therefore, in order to increase commercial relations to a higher level in the new period, the next target will be to remove some sanctions in a short period of time and to increase the trade volume between the two countries to former target value. The success of energy projects, however, depends on the policies Russia will pursue. It is important to note that Turkey’s most important energy collateral is Russia, and Turkey is a serious energy consumer for Russia. For this reason, despite the crisis, commercial activity in the energy sector has not weakened, on the contrary it has continued. At the same time, problems such as food embargo, tourism sanctions, duties in customs, quality of submitted products, and bureaucratic obstacles can be solved easily and quickly. For this reason, we need to emphasize that the leaders of two countries have come to the point where they will have the political will to understand each other and solve the problems.

Even though the crisis encountered has caused serious economic problems for Turkey, it should be regarded as an opportunity. Especially in the crisis period, Turkey started to create alternatives to exporting

agricultural products to Russian markets, and the Turkish tourism sector, which is significantly dependent on Russian tourists. The improvement of bilateral relations can be considered an important step for Turkey's energy market. The starting of projects such as "Turkish Stream" and Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant has been brought to agenda. Most importantly, the improvement of Russia-Turkey relations, that may cause the resolution of regional problems and the reduction of tension, is not only positive development for the two countries, but also for all the regional states.

Cooperation of the countries is very important for the stability and peace environment in the region. Otherwise, we may face very serious problems in a large region extending from the Black Sea to the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and the Far East.

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FIVE

Effects of US PYD/YPG Policy on Russo–Turkish Relations

Ali Askerov, Sean Byrne, and Thomas Matyok

We witness dynamic and interesting international political developments in late modern era as the state institution faces serious challenges in various parts of the world. It has become apparent that intergovernmental coalitions not always are strong and reliable. In some cases, the states may prefer cooperating with non-state actors rather than with an ally state, which takes place especially in the Middle East at least because of abundance of opportunities for cooperation to fulfill national interests. This kind of policy generates a new set of problems emerging from grievances that force some regional actors to reconsider their foreign policies. In the 2010s, US-Turkey relations are affected by many factors, in particular by events in the Middle East. Both of these long-standing allies have been in search of new allies while ensuring that mutual relations don't break completely.

The Syrian Civil War has caused numerous socio-economic problems for Turkey, as it borders Syria. It currently hosts over four million refugees that are mostly from Syria, while it is vulnerable to terrorism, by both the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and ISIS. The Syrian crisis has generated a new problem for Turkey related to its existence within the current borders. Ankara regards the Kurdish militia in Syria, People's Protection Units (YPG)—the armed wing of Democratic Union Party (PYD)—to be a branch of the PKK, which is listed by the US as a terrorist organization. The Obama administration implemented a plan to arm Kurdish YPG fighters in northern Syria in preparation for the assault on Raqqa, the stronghold of ISIS. Later, the Trump administration took it a

step forward and announced that to fight ISIS the US would arm the YPG with heavy weapons which was realized in May 2017.

This move disturbed and displeased the Turks who started to think about developing alternative strategies to influence US policy. One of these new strategies was to change its policies toward Russia by eliminating existing tensions. Another approach was to increase their lobbying activities in the US to force the US Administration reconsider its strategy. The key person that Ankara relied on for assistance in the US was Michael T. Flynn who served as President Trump's security adviser for a very short term before resigning. This affected Ankara's plans to influence policies in the Trump White House. The Trump administration decided to continue the Obama plan to cooperate with the YPG against ISIS. The Trump administration's decision to arm the YPG with heavy weapons alarmed the Turkish government further, as Ankara sees the YPG as a branch of the PKK. On the other hand, the Kremlin doesn't see the YPG as a terrorist group, deepening the dilemma for Turkey. It's also important to note that the Kremlin hasn't listed the PKK as a terrorist organization. Therefore, claiming that Ankara's new political approach to Moscow was strictly conditioned by the US policies regarding the Kurds in Syria would be somehow confusing. The fact was that Ankara was very disappointed by the new Kurdish policies of the US, the strongest ally of Turkey for decades, and this contributed to the development of Turkish-Russian relations. Russia's position vis-à-vis the PYD/YPG was one of the main factors for the Turkish government's careful calculations about its further policies. President Erdogan tried to influence the US to reconsider its PYD/YPG policies in Syria when he made an official visit to Washington DC in May 2017.

This is not the first crisis between the US and Turkey over the Kurdish issue. Another incident took place when Turkey's PKK problem deteriorated in late 2007. At that time, the PKK intensified its attacks on Turkish soldiers and civilians from its bases on Iraqi soil that alarmed the Turkish government. In addition, the pressure of Turkish public opinion, the army, and the media on the government to commence cross-border military operations against the Kurdish guerillas exacerbated the political situation in Turkey. The US, Iraq, and Northern Iraqi Kurdish authorities were unhappy with the Turkish government's policy toward Iraq. The initial perception of the motive behind Turkey's would-be military operation was that Ankara wanted to retaliate against the US House of Representatives for voting in the summer of 2007 to recognize the 1915 Armenian tragedy as genocide. Others speculated that Ankara wanted to crush local Kurdish state structures in northern Iraq. However, the Turkish government's activities demonstrated that the target of its military operations was just the PKK. Yet, the crucial question was whether this was Turkey's next war on the PKK that could weaken this organization for a while, or in fact it was a military and political campaign to create the

necessary PKK-free conditions to transform the Kurdish issue in Turkey onto a new stage where the problem could be addressed by a peaceful approach to forge a permanent resolution. In the end, the Turkish government adopted a new Kurdish policy that promised a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Initially, Erdogan's government reached groundbreaking achievements but, unfortunately, it didn't or wasn't able to sustain the peaceful approach further. The Turkish government started a new conflict transformation process in 2013, the roots of which were in the 2000s. However, it ended in early 2015 terminating the ceasefire between Turkey and the PKK starting a new wave of violence.

Since mid-2016, Turkey has changed its policy toward both Russia and Syria at least partially due to the PYD/YPG factor, and it has swiftly become one of the key actors in negotiating the future of Syria. Turkey is part of NATO and that it has maintained an on-again/off-again relationship with Russia, evidenced most recently when Turkey shot down a Russian military aircraft over Turkish airspace in November 2015, and the resulting tensions that developed between both countries. Irrespective of these tensions, Turkey's policies in the Middle East have more in common with Russia than with the US and its NATO allies.

Modern-day Turkey is a Middle-Eastern country with long standing border with Iraq (206 miles) and Syria (511 miles). These three countries maintain historical and cultural ties that were established on the territories of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, Iraq and Syria existed as British and French mandates, respectively, from shortly after World War I to 1946 when they became independent states. During this period, they had numerous conflicts with the newly established Turkish Republic. For example, in 1938, the Hatay region of Syria seceded and became an independent state—the Republic of Hatay—that existed from 7 September 1938 to 29 June 1939. On 23 July 1939 Hatay reunited with Turkey through a referendum. The League of Nations played a role in this process. Ever since, the Hatay issue has been one of the major sources of tension between Turkey and Syria. One of the new issues emerged later was that Syria allowed Kurdish terrorists to establish bases within its territory to fight Turkey. This policy was mainly used as a means of deterring Turkey from military actions against Syria and having more leverage over the water conflict. The rivers of Euphrates and Tigris that start in Turkey and cross Syria and Iraq have been of a vital importance for all the three countries. The main problem started with Turkey's mega power generation projects that damaged the traditional water supply. Therefore, Damascus gave support to the PKK for a long time. Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK, remained in Damascus until 1998 when Ankara's pressure worked to force him out of Syria. Syria's support for PKK terror in Turkey has embroiled the Turkish government in a very costly struggle to maintain the country's integrity and to provide security to its citizens.

The first seeds of the Kurdish crisis were planted in the 1970 but despite the inexorable struggle of the Turkish armed forces against the PKK, the organization has survived, and has even grown to become stronger over time. The Turkish army conducted numerous operations into Northern Iraq in the 1990s against the PKK. One of the most important operations—Operation Sun—took place in February 2008, which was the first ground incursion into Northern Iraq after the 2003 Iraqi war. When the Turkish parliament on 17 October 2007 authorized to send Turkish troops into northern Iraq to deal with the PKK, the action was interpreted as retaliation against the US House of Representative's panel's vote on 10 October 2007 to officially recognize the mass killings of Armenians in 1915 as genocide.¹ Speaker Nancy Pelosi's promise to bring the non-binding resolution passed by the Foreign Affairs Committee by a 27 to 21 bipartisan vote to the full House alarmed the Turkish government which started to develop relevant counter-policies. President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates condemned the resolution stating that it was not the correct response to the historical tragedy and its passage would do serious harm to US-Turkish relations. When the Turkish Parliament passed a resolution authorizing the Turkish government to initiate a cross-border military incursion into Iraq, Ankara declared that the resolution was exclusively related to the PKK issue.² Now, some ten years later, the policy of the Trump administration vis-à-vis Turkey and the Kurds of the region has changed dramatically due mainly to the security challenges in the world, dramatic changes in the Middle East, and new administration in the US. Naturally, this shift in US policy has affected Turkish policy pushing it into new policy calculations.

THE EMERGENCE OF PKK AND SOME CRITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A Kurdish leftist nationalist named Abdullah Ocalan created the PKK in the late 1970s with the goal of achieving Kurdish autonomy with the ultimate goal of ending the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic and creating a Kurdish nation. The first military actions of the PKK took place in 1983. It is well-known that the PKK used Syrian territory as a base for many years.³ Syria's dictator Hafez al-Assad, father of current President Bashar al-Assad, provided political and financial support to the PKK for a long time and made his own Kurdish citizens support it too. Assad had problems with Turkey because of the water and the Hatay region of Turkey. As previously mentioned, this former Ottoman province of Alexandretta was part of the French protectorate of Syria until 1938 when it became the independent Republic of Hatay for a short period, before joining the Turkish Republic on 23 July 1939.⁴ The Hatay problem may be forgotten in Syria these days due to the civil war, but it has

been a sensitive issue in Turkey as Syria has been reluctant to recognize Turkish hegemony over the Hatay region, as evidenced by Syria's official maps that designated this region as a "temporary international boundary."⁵

In time, some other neighbors of Turkey such as Iran and Iraq entered the game of using the PKK to destabilize Turkey.⁶ Initially, Iran targeted the secular Turkish democracy portraying it as evil, in need of being replaced by an Islamic regime. Iraq supported the PKK on and off depending on its confrontation with NATO or the US. The fact that there is a Kurdish population in Iran, Iraq, and Syria, made it easier for these states to manipulate the PKK against Turkey who has a large Kurdish population. Over time, the PKK grew into a strong organization with military and political capacities. Abdullah Ocalan, the head of the PKK, even tried to eliminate Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani, Kurdish leaders from northern Iraq who later became President of Iraq and head of the regional Kurdish government, respectively, so that he could become the sole Kurdish leader. Eventually he was forced out of Syria in 1998, and captured in Nairobi in the following year by Turkish Special Forces, and brought to Turkey for trial. However, the PKK campaign of violence continued.

Most European countries, the US, and many Asian countries list the PKK as a terrorist group.⁷ The PKK is well organized in Europe. It has financed many of its activities with the money it extorts from Turkish-Kurdish migrant workers and businesses. The terrorist organization targets civilians as well as the military to provoke people in Turkey, especially those living in southeastern Anatolia, to protest the government.⁸ One of the most important tasks of the PKK is to organize a Kurdish rebellion in Eastern Anatolia, which could bring about Kurdish statehood.⁹

The Turkish Parliament resolution of 17 October 2007 was a turning point in the history of Turkey's PKK policy. Turkish politicians, media, and the public, as well as Iraq, and the US were never involved in the Kurdish problem as seriously as they were then. Turkey was frustrated with the increasing number of civilian and military casualties caused by PKK violence. Moreover, Ankara was worried about the possible future irredentist support of the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq for the PKK to be used against Turkey. Now, Ankara's worries increased when the PYD/YPG factor was added to the problem of the PKK. Throughout the history of the Turkish struggle against the PKK more than thirty cross-border military operations took place into northern Iraq, establishing a legal precedent for the incursion tradition of the Turks into northern Iraq. Whenever the attacks by PKK militants on Turkish troops intensified, this put the Turkish government on the spot, as the Turkish media, military, opposition, and public demanded serious and immediate steps against the PKK. These wishes constituted an irresistible pres-

sure on the Turkish government to produce new policies to address the question successfully.

The regional developments are very dynamic. It is interesting to observe how these developments affect the policies of Western states, including the US. If the US government was alarmed some ten years ago by Turkey's October 17 resolution, today it is alarmed by the Turkish government's policies toward PYD/YPG, since it is a US ally. At that time, the first reaction came from President of the US, George W. Bush, who in a press conference stated that sending Turkish troops into Iraq wouldn't bring any benefits to Turkey. His quick reaction to the decision of the Turkish parliament was a sign of the White House's anxiety about the matter because a Turkish incursion into northern Iraq would complicate the already complicated US presence in Iraq.¹⁰ Prime Minister Erdogan's reply was immediate. He noted that, "Nothing but what the parliament said is important."¹¹ Under pressure from an outraged Turkish public opinion as a result of the PKK's deadly attacks that cost the lives of fifteen soldiers on October 14 and 15, 2007, Prime Minister Erdogan added that the government was determined to end this terror by doing whatever was necessary to defeat the PKK.

In the late 2000s, Turkey still was a strong and leading regional actor that could influence developments in the region, including in Iraq. The attitude of the Iraqi government and the northern Iraqi Kurds toward the 2007 Turkish resolution was a sign of their anxiety. The Iraqi parliament condemned the Turkish policy by specifying that it was becoming a military threat to Iraq.¹² Iraq's President Talabani's explanations to a Turkish TV channel about the PKK's willingness for a ceasefire were evaluated by Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan as nice but unreliable words.¹³ In a press conference in Ankara after the summit on terrorism with President Gul and a number of top army generals, Prime Minister Erdogan clarified that President Talabani's statements didn't satisfy him at all because he wanted to see a solid result rather than listening to unrealistic rhetoric.¹⁴

On 21 October 2007 in a joint press conference in Selahaddin, Iraq, President Talabani demanded that the PKK surrender its arms immediately. This was happened because Talabani wanted to satisfy Turkey and also because he saw the Autonomous Kurdish Administration as the legitimate authority representing the Kurds of the region. Furthermore, Barzani, the leader of the Autonomous Kurdish Administration, stated that if Turkey offers a peace proposal, and the PKK rejects it, then northern Iraq's Kurdish authorities would also see the PKK as a terrorist organization.¹⁵ He then added that if Turkey enters Iraqi borders, the northern Iraqi authority would use its legitimate rights to self-defense. President Talabani stressed that despite its great might, Turkey could not catch the PKK militants in the mountains and added that it exceeded Iraq's capabilities.¹⁶ Now, some ten years later, the situation is quite different, as Turkey has lost its leverage in the region to a significant degree

partly because of the complexities of the regional developments and the involvement of more actors, both legal and illegal, in the regional affairs, as well as due to its shifting policies.¹⁷ Although the PKK is still listed as a terrorist organization by the major states, its branches are not, which creates a real dilemma for Ankara.

Some ten years ago, Turkish domestic and foreign policy was overwhelmed with the PKK issue, whereas today it is preoccupied with the YPG issue. Ankara worked hard to explain the dangers of the issue both abroad and domestically. Now, the government tries to explain the problem to the US and Russia. Some ten years ago, the Turkish military tried to save soldiers from ambushes organized by PKK guerillas. Today, they worry about future attacks with US weapons provided to the YPG to be used against ISIS. Obviously, in the past ten years, the Turkish government hasn't been able to improve the PKK-related situation, although it has introduced numerous reforms to address structural and cultural problems in the eastern part of the country.

Some ten years ago, Turkey's PKK policy was mainly related to the PKK itself. Today, however, it is also very much about some other formations in the region, including the PYD/YPG. This fact indicates that the PKK problem of Turkey has enlarged and it marks a new era in the history of the Kurdish problem. In this sense, the policy the Turkish government will pursue to address the problem is crucial about the further developments. But is it about Turkish readiness to do whatever it takes to destroy the existing PKK/PYD/YPG networks, or to introduce new policies to transform the Kurdish problem peacefully? Just to mention, despite the resolution issued in the Turkish parliament some 10-years ago, the Turkish government gave priority to using diplomacy, signaling some radical policy shifts to end the PKK problem peacefully. On 21 November 2007, Ali Babacan, Turkish foreign minister at the time, implied the government's undergoing reforms related to the Kurdish question without giving any concrete information about it.¹⁸ Today, however, Turkey isn't in the position of starting initiatives and leading them, instead it acts according to the events that develop in the region contrary to its will. Therefore, Ankara needs to develop a new radical policy toward the PYD/YPG. The best strategy for Ankara would be in radically changing its views about the PYD/YPG in order to initiate limited cooperation with it to increase chances for applying similar constructive policies to the case what was done in regards to the PKK some ten years ago.

SURVIVING DESPITE DOWNFALLS

The PKK has survived repeated attacks by the Turkish army, which is the second largest standing force within NATO. The Turkish army's struggle with the PKK has lasted for more than three decades. In the past, the PKK

suffered heavy losses, yet it managed to survive. It could be assumed that the arrest of Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader, and Semdin Sakik, another important leader of the organization, would lead to its gradual decline and eventual dissolution. However, it regained strength and even became a more powerful and cohesive organization over time. It enlarged itself in Syria through the PYD, which was formed in 2003, and its armed wing, the YPG that was established the following year. In early 2015, the PYD/YPG defended Kobani, a Syrian city on the border with Turkey and mainly populated by Kurds, against ISIS. This important victory had strategic importance for the Western allies, and it was the main reason why the YPG received air and ground support from the US and other coalition nations. Ankara pursued a passive policy ostensibly displaying its reluctance to get involved in this crisis. This event was a turning point in US-Turkish relations, and one of the key events that empowered the PYD/YPG to win US admiration as a potential strategic partner in the region. Since the Kobani events, the YPG has primarily fought against ISIS while strengthening its positions in northern Syria. Apparently, Ankara wants the West to denounce the PYD as a terrorist organization and as a continuation of the PKK in Syria, yet, the US considers the PYD/YPG as a strategic partner. It wouldn't be surprising at all if the West removes the PKK from its list of terrorist organizations sometime in the near future. Perhaps, one of the best policies for Ankara would be changing its attitude to the PYD/YPG and developing a new approach to establish a solid ground to influence this US-backed organization directly. However, the turbulent political conditions in Turkey and the affiliation of the PYD/YPG with the PKK are the main obstacles for Ankara to go to any radical policy change.

Time has revealed that the powerful Turkish army hasn't been totally effective against the PKK because of the region's geographical conditions allowing the PKK to find natural shelters in the mountains. The PKK has adapted to insurmountable conditions in order to survive. In fact, its familiarity with the geography of the region is always an advantage to avoid dangers. Also, the support the PKK has received from neighboring countries such as Iraq, and until recently Iran and Syria, has been very important to ensuring its survival. Also, the PKK has the ability to finance itself through illicit businesses, as it collects money from mostly ethnic Kurdish traders both voluntarily and forcefully, while also successfully raising funds in Western Europe. It would be very hard to draw a line between where the organization forcefully extorts money from people and where people voluntarily contribute money to it. Perhaps, the most important reason why the PKK has succeeded to survive against all odds is because it has received support from the local people in the region, the majority of whom are Kurds. This helped to keep the organization alive so that it was able to recover from several heavy losses inflicted on it by the Turkish army in the 1990s. In other words, the PKK draws its

strength from its cultural and historical ties to the Kurdish groups, who desire to obtain more cultural and political autonomy if not independence from Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

During the 2000s, Erdogan was popular in the part of the country populated mostly by Kurds, and his personal popularity played a significant role in his party's successes in the elections. People believed that he had the power necessary to stop the violence and bring a permanent peace. Since he came to power in 2002, Erdogan's government's policy gradually moved away from authoritarian methods dealing with the Kurdish issue. He passed laws that for the first time allowed the Kurdish language to be used in the mass media, and in private educational facilities which increased the AKP's votes from Kurds in southeastern Anatolia in the July 2007 elections. However, these actions didn't save the AKP's leader from being accused in a Diyarbakir rally on 25 November 2007 by Emine Ayna, a parliamentarian from the Democratic Society Party (DTP) (a Kurdish nationalist political party in Turkey) of trying to lynch the Kurdish people politically.¹⁹ Remarkably, the AKP lost all of the municipalities to the DTP in Eastern Anatolia in the 2009 local elections.

The population of some of the areas of both north and south of the Turkish borders with Iraq and Syria is predominantly Kurdish who became split after many centuries of living together by nation-state building processes following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Shortly after the demise of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, Turkey and Iraq, under the British mandate, and Turkey and Syria, under the French mandate, faced border demarcation problems starting in the early 1920s and lasting until the late 1920s. The borders between Turkey and Iraq, as well as Turkey and Syria, were determined by the League of Nations and the problems related to them were ethnic, economic, and strategic. Rich oil reserves in the Mosul region played an important role in the British-French Sykes-Picot process in determining of the boundary between Iraq and Turkey. However, as the past four decades has illustrated, the key problem between Turkey and its southern neighbors with regards to their borders is related more to security issues, as the cross-border movements of PKK guerilla groups have created problems for Turkey since the early 1980s. A significant part of the 139 out of 206 miles border between Turkey and Iraq is in the mountainous area, which is extremely difficult to control.²⁰ During the Iran-Iraq war, Turkey and Iraq concluded an agreement that gave Turkey the right of hot pursuit of PKK militia three miles across the border.²¹ However, Iraq didn't extend the courtesy of hot pursuit to Turkey after the first Gulf war (1990–1991) because of the Turkish support of allied forces. When Baghdad lost its effective control over the northern part of the country after the imposition of "no fly zones" in the wake of the first Gulf war, Turkey became more vulnerable to cross-border PKK attacks. Ankara interpreted this action as a justification for

its cross-border hot pursuit operations.²² The Arab countries have criticized Turkish cross-border operations labeling them as an attempt to control the oil-rich Mosul region.²³

With the changing geo-political circumstances in the region, Iran and Syria's PKK policies have also changed radically. Ten years ago, Iran and Syria were always ready to organize a joint operation against the PKK. Today, however, Syria is struggling with civil war, Iran is too busy with the crisis in Syria, and Iraq is trying to survive as a state without losing its national unity and territorial integrity, although it has lately managed to change the situation in its favor significantly. At one time, the possibility of Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq alarmed Turkey's neighbors who have large Kurdish populations, who at some point supported the PKK. Today, the circumstances in the region have changed due to the emergence of ISIS and Syrian Civil War. It might be surprising but it is true that today numerous Kurdish actors play a more influential role in regional affairs than most state actors in the region.

The new Turkish approach to the old problem is the same: defending state sovereignty against external aggression. However, in this case, it is a quite complex situation because, above all, the PKK exists within Turkey as well, and it primarily is an internal problem rather than an external problem of Turkey. The PKK issue is a conflict between the Turkish state and an organized group of people defined by ethnicity. A clear battlefield is absent in this conflict and for decades it has been very difficult to draw a line among Kurds, combatants, and civilians. The deep sentiments of the Kurdish people about autonomy have made a cessation of violence nearly impossible for over thirty years. Therefore, the problem shouldn't be defined by limiting it to the PKK factor alone, rather it should be considered as that of an ethnic group with a Kurdish identity. Unlike the PKK, the PYD/YPG are external to Turkey, and pose an immediate threat to Damascus rather than Ankara, at least at this point. However, receiving strong support from the Western coalition, the PYD/YPG has been encouraged to challenge Turkey as well. Since the PYD/YPG enjoys support from the West, including the US, fighting it back just like that of the PKK would be harder for Ankara which would be better off to adjust its old strategy to the new conditions in the region that are truly dynamic. However, Turkey chose the riskiest and began a land operation—the "Olive Branch Operation,"—against the YPG with its troops crossing the border on 20 January 2018. The Turkish units entered Afrin, northern Syria with the help of the Free Syrian Army in order to create a safe zone with a depth of 30 kilometers. The purpose of the operation was to crush the YPG troops, demonstrate Turkish decisiveness and motivation about its struggle with the PYD/YPG, and return those lands to the true owners who are Arab majority, and Kurds and Turkmen minority. When the US-led coalition announced on 14 January 2018 that it was working with its Syrian allies to create a 30,000-strong border security force in northern

Syria, Turkey reacted to it sharply and stated that it would mean legitimizing the terror organization (PYD/YPG). The coalition's announcement of creating the border force led to the Turkish "Olive Branch Operation." In other words, the US-led coalition provoked Turkey for his operation.

THE ROLE OF THE US IN TURKEY'S PKK POLICY IN THE 2000S

In the early 2000s, the US had vital interests in Iraq's security with its military presence there. President Bush's administration didn't tolerate any outside intervention into any part of Iraq, and made its policy regarding Turkey's northern Iraq policy well known. When the US warned against any further Turkish attacks in northern Iraq, Prime Minister Erdogan said that he was prepared for a rupture in relations with the US if Turkey chose to opt for a cross border military incursion.²⁴ He also criticized the US for not taking action against the Kurdish separatists who have functioned freely in the northern part of Iraq since the Iraq war started in 2003. A new wave of Turkish criticism of the US commenced in late June 2007 and escalated in early July of the same year when four PKK deserters claimed that US armored vehicles carried weapons to the Kandil Mountain for use by the PKK.²⁵ This action coincided with the words of Yashar Buyukanit, former Turkish Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, who said that Turkey's allies provided the PKK with weapons.²⁶ Ross Wilson, US ambassador to Turkey at the time, denied the accusation immediately.²⁷ However, this event had a major impact on Turkish public opinion toward the US.

The US and Turkey, two long-time NATO allies, naturally, had expectations from each other about meeting their immediate interests. The US's primary concern was Turkish respect for and assistance toward Iraq's security, whereas Turkey demanded that the US didn't let the Kurdish separatists use Iraqi territory for attacks against Turkey. Turkey also wanted more effective cooperation with the US and Iraq, to eliminate the Kurdish guerillas on Iraqi soil. The problem took on a more complex character as a result of new developments in the region early in October 2007. US officials predicted that the repercussions of an incursion of Turkish troops into northern Iraq would be tremendous for instability in the region. To overcome the crisis between the US and Turkey, Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State, said that the US needed to focus with Turkey on their long-term mutual interests.²⁸ Fried's efforts to reassure Turkish officials that the US valued the relationship with Turkey didn't make the expected impact on Ankara. When Prime Minister Erdogan spoke at a rally in Istanbul on 13 October 2007, he urged the parliament to vote for the authorization to take action against the PKK in northern Iraq. Obviously, in addition to the tensions between the US and Turkey, Ankara developed some mistrust in the US some ten years earlier as well.

Although today's differences between these countries are more complex, their roots extend back to this era.

Turkish authorities as well as civilians believed that the US and Iraq did very little to prevent PKK activities in northern Iraq. This point was not groundless, because the number of PKK attacks on Turkey has increased since the US led 2003 invasion of Iraq. The main reason for this, it was believed in Turkey, was that the US pressured Turkey not to cross the border to destroy the strongholds of PKK separatists.²⁹ On the other hand, Turkish top leadership tried to assure everybody that the incursion would only target the PKK to prevent further attacks on Turkey. In fact, this was initially one of the most important concerns of northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders as well as global public opinion. Cemil Cicek, the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister at the time, noted that Turkey had always respected the sovereignty of Iraq, which was perceived as a friendly and brotherly country to them.³⁰ However, many different ideas circulated around the world about Turkey's real intentions regarding its would-be cross border activities. The Turks objected to all but one—intervention—military incursion against the PKK. Today, the situation is not different. Ankara does not target Syria's Kurds; its only target is the PYD/YPG.

On different occasions, the Iraqi government urged Ankara to resolve its problems with the PKK through diplomacy. For example, former Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi who visited Turkey on 16 October 2007, told reporters that priority must be given to a political solution. Before al-Hashimi came to Turkey, Ankara blamed Baghdad for not being able to distance Iraq from terrorism, and demanded that it closed PKK offices in northern Iraq and Baghdad, and turned over the top PKK leaders to Turkey. Ankara apparently ignored the fact that Baghdad was neither capable of controlling northern Iraq, nor fighting the PKK. Ankara also believed the local Kurdish authority in northern Iraq could deal with the PKK, but it was reluctant to do so for a number of reasons including a shared Kurdish identity. The Kurdish authority in northern Iraq received its power and legitimacy from the US, which, invaded Iraq in 2003 by relying on a Kurdish alliance.³¹ Thus, each time a Turkish soldier was killed by the PKK, Turkish people held the US responsible for it. Research by the US's German Marshall Fund in 2007 found that Turkish attitudes toward the US became worse.³² Now, after ten years, the situation with the Kurds is a disaster for Turkey as the PYD/YPG receives full support from Washington. Even the worst-case scenario promises the Kurds of Syria autonomy within Syria which Ankara perceives as dangerous for Turkey's security due to potential terrorist or irredentist actions in the future. As Washington doesn't want to lose Turkey as an ally, it tried to relieve Ankara's anxiety with some promises. For example, Ankara was assured that the weapons the YPG received from the US will not be directed against Turkey after their use against ISIS. Ankara has repeatedly expressed its concerns and disbelief about the issue.

On different occasions, Prime Minister Erdogan warned that Turkey couldn't wait forever to curb PKK attacks. On 23 October 2007, he told reporters in London after talks with former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, that they were in a waiting game, but Iraq should know it could use the mandate for cross-border operations at any time.³³ On 24 October 2007, then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that the US planned to activate a trilateral commission to bring together the US, Turkey, and Iraq to prevent future cross-border attacks. She acknowledged that it was very difficult to contain the PKK infiltration of Turkey because of the mountainous geography of the region. Meanwhile, former US ambassador to Iraq, Ryan C. Crocker, called on the Iraqi government to make it clear that it wouldn't accept a terrorist organization attacking other countries using Iraqi soil.³⁴ However, at the same time, he added that nobody should expect that the Iraqis would go into the mountains to look for the PKK because it would be impossible to do so, but Iraqis should use all possibilities to monitor PKK movements. Obviously, in the past ten years US policies toward the issue have changed dramatically.

According to Henri J. Barkey, a member of the State Department's policy planning staff from 1998 to 2000, the Bush administration tried but failed to mediate a dialogue between the Kurds of northern Iraq and Turkey by using good offices, although there were some signals from both sides that "they were interested in a deal."³⁵ Such a dialogue, he argued, would have required the Kurdish local government to oust the PKK from northern Iraq, and the Turks to guarantee security for Iraqi Kurds. The conflict escalated until Ankara made it known on 26 October 2007 that it would not launch a cross-border offensive into northern Iraq until 5 November 2007 when Prime Minister Erdogan met with President Bush. After this point, the conflict started to deescalate. If used effectively, a ten-day period could have brought new opportunities for the Turks and the Iraqis to work together, so the news delighted the White House. It angered the Turkish opposition, however, who interpreted it as the government's reluctance to execute the expected military operation. Any delay in launching the military operation was considered difficult because of the approaching winter when the conditions become more adverse and less favorable for operations in the mountainous area.

Nouri Al-Maliki, Iraq's Prime Minister at the time, indicated that Iraq was ready to cooperate against terrorism, and wanted dialogue with the sides to conflict to handle the problem.³⁶ This knowledge made them demand that the US put pressure on Iraq to take effective measures, or send its troops against the PKK. Aware of Baghdad's ineffectiveness, Ankara wanted the US forces get involved in the struggle against the PKK. But the US forces in Iraq tried hard to avoid being part of this conflict as it would jeopardize the US interests in the region. Condoleezza Rice's words that the US clearly was going to have to take actions to deal

with the PKK threat were optimistic but didn't mean much to the Turks who did not expect a military involvement of the US in the problem.³⁷

On 5 November 2007, President Bush and Prime Minister Erdogan met to discuss the conflict between the PKK and Turkey. George W. Bush urged Erdogan not to enter northern Iraq but instead the US furnished Turkey with instantaneous intelligence on PKK activities and plans that enabled Turkey to contain the PKK effectively.³⁸ The importance of the meeting indicated that President Bush reconfirmed that the PKK was a terrorist organization, and Prime Minister Erdogan reassured the US that northern Iraq was not a direct target for a Turkish military incursion. Today, regarding the PYD/YPG issue, the situation is very different; Ankara insists that the PYD/YPG is a terrorist organization and the fact that the US is using this terrorist organization to fight another—ISIS—is a fundamental mistake. The key problem is that Washington disagrees with the Turkish argument that the PYD/YPG is a terrorist organization. Forging a strong alliance of the US and PYD/YPG has been possible due partly to their need for strategic partnership with each other.

ANKARA'S INITIAL SYRIA POLICY AFTER THE CRISIS OF 2011

When President Hafez Assad of Syria died in 2000, Ankara and Damascus had a remarkable opportunity to open a new page in their history. Bashar al-Assad, the new president of Syria, visited Turkey in 2004, and a year later, despite international pressures, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer of Turkey visited Syria. Later, President Bashar Assad of Syria and Prime Minister Erdogan (now president) of Turkey initiated new efforts to improve Turkish-Syrian relations, the warmth of which was reflected in their personal interactions. However, the favorable state of their relations did not last long but instead began to worsen with the Arab Spring coming to Syria in 2011. The dramatic change of Ankara's policy vis-à-vis Damascus was partially a result of Syria's antagonistic approach toward Turkey. One demonstration of Syria's hostile strategy toward Turkey was the downing of a Turkish aircraft in June 2012, which slightly violated Syria's air space. Moreover, Ankara had serious concerns about human rights issues in Syria, and Turkish officials have repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the scope of civilian casualties in the Syrian Civil War. Clearly, Syria and Turkey maintained a tense and shifting relationship. Nonetheless, Turkey's ambiguous policy toward Syria have persisted for some time, and has offered neither opportunities for cooperation, nor challenges for building peace.

Yet, influenced by US policy toward Syria to support the Free Syrian Army (FSA) against the Assad regime, Ankara made an uncalculated and hasty decisions to sever ties with the Syrian government. Erdogan started to use very heavy language regarding the Syrian leadership in an effort to

justify Ankara's fluctuating policy toward Syria.³⁹ On a number of occasions, he publicly stated his belief that in short order he would be praying in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, thus implying his confidence of a rapid removal of the Assad regime.⁴⁰ Intentional or unintentional, Turkey's initial approach to Syria was in line with the US strategy, if not formally articulated by both countries.

Ankara must have developed a strong belief regarding the support it would receive from its Western allies, including the US, while cutting off high-level diplomatic ties with Damascus. Yet, it remains questionable how this step would benefit Ankara. Rather, by withdrawing its ambassador from Damascus, Turkey disabled itself by reducing its ability to reach Syria's top leadership through formal diplomatic channels that were crucially important in exercising some influence through direct expressions of its concerns. More importantly, ties were necessary to ensure dialogue, as during a crisis, it is a necessary tool for managing conflicts peacefully. For a country that claimed zero problems with others, the availability of more methods for peaceful engagement between the disputants are crucial. Thus, although somehow justified, Ankara's hasty decision wasn't supportive of its policy of zero problems toward its neighbors.

As the civil war had continued in Syria, its costs for Turkey have swollen. Turkey's economy has been affected more adversely than that of any other country in the region. Today, Turkey hosts over three million refugees from Syria, which imposes extreme costs and stretches the capacity of Turkey to respond to the humanitarian crisis. In such circumstances, having no political leverage over Syria is a serious loss for Ankara. Turkey, as a regional power, weakened its own influence in Syria, and the region as a whole, by initially removing itself from the Syrian conflict. Later, Ankara worked hard to reverse the situation which became possible after the change of the prime minister of the country, Ahmet Davutoglu.

Erdogan, as former prime minister of Turkey, excluded all foreign policy options by advocating for the removal of Bashar al-Assad from power, and all of his public speeches at the time demonstrated how he was quite sure of his imminent success in eliminating the Assad regime. His obsessive usage of religious rhetoric, while condemning Syria's government for all the tragedies the Syrian people faced has undermined Turkey's credibility as a fair and impartial actor in the region. Over time, it has become clear that Iran, as well as Russia, exercised more power and influence in Syria than Turkey, who deprived itself of the opportunities to provide a political counter-weight to its neighboring country. Occasionally, Erdogan defends this policy by employing a justice and human rights narrative, which, naturally, Damascus rejects implying that Turkey's position of supporting the Syrian rebels is not compatible with

justice. Obviously, notions of justice and human rights mean different things to different people.

Turkey, an ally of the Western states, has faced new challenges for its security as it pursues a policy in accordance with that of its allies. At some point, Ankara's policy toward Syria severely strained its relations with Russia, along with Iran, two primary supporters of the Assad regime. The crisis between Ankara and Moscow culminated in the downing of a Russian war jet by the Turkish armed forces on the Turkish-Syrian border on 24 November 2015. Before the crisis, Ankara maintained strong ties with Moscow. Both countries had numerous projects together in the energy sector, in addition to trade and tourism. Irrespective of their growing relationship, Russia's Syrian policies did not overlap with Turkey's, as Turkey represented the Western approach of dealing with Assad, while Russia had its own strategic interests in supporting the regime.

Although there were certain disagreements between Ankara and Moscow before the downing of the Russian military jet in late 2015, this event became the turning point that led to a deterioration in Turkey–Russia relations. Moscow blamed Ankara for the deliberate shooting down of the jet, whereas Turkey blamed Russia for being irresponsible, accusing the Russian pilot of violating the Turkish border and airspace. The crisis escalated rapidly with Russia imposing economic sanctions against Turkey as a form of retaliation. Although the consequences of the crisis adversely affected the economies of both nations, the political leadership in both countries made repeated declarations about their intentions not to change their positions. Russia made it very clear that an official apology from Ankara, and compensation for both the loss of the jet and the life of its pilot, would be a step forward in its reconsideration of its policies toward Turkey. Ankara, on several occasions, repeated how it would act in the same way again, if need be. However, subsequent developments have demonstrated that both countries desired a minor push to remove all the barriers placed in front of them to begin a new phase of cooperation due to the fact that they had mutual interests at stake. With the apology of President Erdogan in June 2016, the latest Russo-Turkish crisis entered a new phase of de-escalation offering new opportunities for cooperation. The ongoing crisis in Syria has instigated a new set of problems for Turkey's security, and more importantly, for its existence due to the emergence of new and more critical conditions that offer actual and potential support for the Kurdish dimension of the conflict. Turkey clearly views the PKK and its offshoots as the main threat to its national unity and territorial integrity. Ankara supports the Syrian opposition against the Assad government, whereas Moscow backs the Assad regime. Obviously, the complexities of the crisis between Ankara and Moscow originate from multifaceted regional issues, rather than from strained bilateral relations. Similarly, managing the conflict necessitates a policy based on multilevel and multimodal intervention approaches based on realistic

moves that recognizes the three components of the crisis—Turkey, Russia, and the Kurds.

WHY DID ANKARA CHANGE ITS POLICY?

Apparently, the main reasons for Ankara's policy change vis-à-vis Russia, includes economic loss, losing trust in its Western allies, trying to (re)gain a new strategic ally to deal with regional issues, and decreasing domestic unhappiness, among others. The significant economic impacts of the crisis have hit Turkey's tourism, construction, energy, and agriculture sectors gravely leading to the loss of billions of dollars from its economy. The government tried to find alternative ways to fill the gap hollowed out by the conflict with Russia, but this was possible only partially because of time strains.

One of the main factors leading Ankara to reconsider its position toward Russia was the strategic approach of its Western allies to the region's problems. Turkey considered its interests as divergent from those of its Western allies. Over time, Ankara concluded that the West was not willing to remove Assad from power, despite its initial attempts. The impact of the West's tentative response to the Assad regime was significant, and it considerably influenced Ankara's policy toward Russia as an ally. Turkey's options were limited as it had already burned all its bridges with Damascus. A policy change on the part of its Western allies put Ankara in an unfavorable position within the region, and it found itself in a circumstance that was neither good for proceeding, nor for withdrawing. Turkey expected the West to continue wide-scale military operations against the regime in Syria through their alliance with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) as a way of obtaining Western strategic goals in the region. The priorities of the West, however, changed with the changing circumstances in the region. Over time, the West, especially the US, began to view the Assad regime as less dangerous than ISIS, and it looked for new strategies for dealing with ISIS and the regime. The PYD/YPG has become the indispensable part of the US policy.

As aforementioned, the friction between the US and Turkey developed over the YPG, the military wing of the Syrian Kurdish PYD, an organization which Ankara sees as an extension of the PKK, which is recognized as a terrorist organization by most countries, including the US.⁴¹ The US, however, declared that it doesn't share Turkish views about the YPG, a declaration that displeased Ankara.⁴² Ostensibly, Washington preferred cooperating with the YPG/PYD instead of Turkey in its fight with the so-called Islamic State.⁴³ To this end, Ankara's claims that the US supported YPG/PYD with weapons later turned into an open policy of the White House.⁴⁴ Ankara repeatedly declared that the US weapons in YPG possession would be used against Turkey in both short

and long run. The discrepancy between the policies of Ankara and those of Washington has deepened over time, seriously damaging trust between both nations. The US/Turkey disagreement over the approach toward Syria has had a serious impact on Ankara's policies. In various declarations, President Erdogan of Turkey has made clear his concerns regarding the tensions in the US/Turkey relationship.⁴⁵ Ankara's search for new policies and new partners led its way to Moscow. Always open to new ways of responding to an expanding NATO and EU, Russia jumped at the chance to repair relations with Turkey.

The dramatic developments in Syria pointed to Ankara's belief that it needed a new strategic ally, at the very least, an alternative partner that could be trusted. After a thirty-year absence in the region, Russia jumped at the opportunity of reestablishing itself as a regional power in the Middle East. By intervening militarily in 2015 to support the Assad regime, Russia has established itself as a major actor in the Syrian conflict, beating the nearly inactive Western countries and establishing itself as a reliable partner for Syria. The US started to gain some leverage in Syria recently only after launching Tomahawk cruise missiles at the Syrian air base over the alleged use of chemical weapons by the forces of the Assad regime in April 2017.

Turkish and Russian relations were stuck and at an impasse for several months. To break the impasse required a high level of readiness by both parties to engage in mutual problem-solving; a readiness that didn't initially exist. To be Russia's strategic ally meant Turkey would be obliged to significantly change its policy toward Syria. Both of these factors generated new challenges for Ankara, but it succeeded in producing a new strategy that would change the situation in its favor. Forming a new government in Ankara was developed as a solution to the problem. Prime Minister Davutoglu, the architect of the ardent but unproductive *zero problems* policy, resigned from his position after a meeting with President Erdogan on 3 May 2016. Before long, the new prime minister, Binali Yildirim, announced a rapprochement policy toward those with whom Turkey was in conflict, including Russia. The steps taken by the new Turkish government facilitated addressing some of the country's deep-rooted foreign policy issues, which meant rejecting the US as a partner.

From the moment Russia imposed sanctions against Turkey in late 2015, mutual projects in the energy and construction sectors halted. More importantly, Russia had to pause the process of developing strategic partnerships with Turkey because of the crisis. Putin had tried to build a special strategic relationship with Ankara to form a new regional alliance; irrespective of the fact that Turkey is a NATO country. When Turkey offered an olive branch Russia didn't miss that opportunity, as it was the exact moment to recover the relations.

Moscow wants Turkey to be part of its new regional security formation. One of Putin's priorities is to build a new and enduring strategic

partnership with Turkey. This seems an odd desire due to Turkey's NATO membership. Nonetheless, Putin likes to formulate his country's foreign policy both through realistic calculations, and unforeseen, but potential developments. Apparently, Ankara has abandoned its Washington-centered policy vis-à-vis Moscow and formulated a new foreign policy around its national interests alone. The renewed desire on the part of both Russia and Turkey to cooperate is strong. Despite the events such as the assassination of the Russian ambassador, Andrey Karlov, in Ankara on 19 December 2016, the leadership of both countries made supporting and strong statements regarding their further cooperation.

MOSCOW MEETING, AFTERWARD, AND CHANGE IN US POLICY

On 20 December 2016, the foreign ministers of Russia, Iran, and Turkey met in Moscow to work on a joint political solution to the violent conflict in Syria. One crucial aspect of the meeting was that it was organized after Syrian government forces made progress in and around Aleppo, the biggest city of Syria, on 12 December 2016. Another was that the US wasn't invited to participate in the meeting. The absence of the US worked only to demonstrate Washington's growing irrelevance in the region, and highlighted the expanding role Moscow was claiming. Two of the three states at the table, Russia and Iran, are strong supporters of the Assad regime. Bashar Assad recognizes that for the past five years his personal survival, and that of his government, has been guaranteed by Russia and Iran. The third state, Turkey, appeared at the table only due to its recent policy change vis-à-vis Syria which does not target Assad as much as it did before. It meant that any solution toward the crisis in Syria would be built around President Assad's continuation to rule the country. Obviously, this was a sign of a breakdown of US foreign policy in the region that was built on the claim that Assad had lost legitimacy. Later, it was true that Washington had seriously lost its interest in fighting the Assad regime, instead giving closer attention to fighting ISIS, and always with its eyes on Asia.

Russia, Iran, and Turkey framed the Moscow Declaration to end the Syrian conflict, and Russia proposed new peace talks in Kazakhstan. Cavushoglu, the foreign minister of Turkey, said that to reach a permanent ceasefire in Syria a political solution to the conflict would need to be negotiated. Therefore, the representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition forces must get together at the table to negotiate their differences. Although the decisive members organizing the conference were Ankara and Moscow, Washington had to find a way to the table to also participate on a high level in the meeting or it would risk being further marginalized in the region.

Nonetheless, the later developments showed that Washington had other plans. On 6 April 2017, the Trump's administration entered the Syrian crisis inflicting a military strike on Assad forces by launching 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a Syrian air base overnight in response to what it believed was a chemical weapons attack that killed more than 100 civilians in Syria. The military strike was a clear and decisive manifestation of a policy reversal under President Trump, who warned America to stay out of the conflict before he was elected as president. This move overturned not only the balance of power in the region but it also seriously disturbed the Russia-led political and strategic course of development, since it became clear that the US did not intend to leave the region. The angry responses from Damascus and Moscow revealed their displeasure with the unexpected change in the US policy. To continue to stay in Syria permanently, the US needed an ally that would never negotiate contest with Washington and that ally was the PYD/YPG.

President Trump's decision to continue with the US's old strategy to cooperate with the YPG displeased Turkey. Although it has suffered from numerous ISIS-led bloody terrorist attacks, Turkey doesn't see it as a threat to its survival because ISIS does not threaten Turkey's territorial integrity which is Ankara's main concern. Only the Kurds in the region have posed a threat on Turkey's integrity. Therefore, Ankara and Washington have some conflict over their approaches to the PYD/YPG, which the US closely cooperates with. Ankara's attempts to align its policy with Moscow in order to deter US plans to cooperate with the Kurdish paramilitaries in Syria added to the dynamism of regional politics quite a bit. However, the Kremlin's amiable attitude to the Kurdish Rojava became apparent before long. Ankara found itself in between a rock and a hard place.

In the hopes of changing the US PYD/YPG policy Erdogan made an official visit to Washington in mid-May 2017. Ankara's unhappiness with both the Russian and US approach to the PYD/YPG has created a certain hesitation by the government about how to proceed. Certainly, abandoning the US as an ally, whatever the reason, would be a courageous step with unexpected results. Just before the visit to the US, President Erdogan declared that Turkey would "put a period to everything, not a comma," if the US doesn't reconsider its YPG policy. He meant that Ankara was ready to end its strategic relationships with Washington due to the PYD/YPG policies of the US. While in Washington, Erdogan explained Turkish concerns about the YPG. He offered a joint military campaign against ISIS in Raqqa but didn't receive positive reactions to his suggestions. Obviously, the US did not want to change its policy of fighting ISIS with the help of the PYD/YPG. Interestingly, Trump received Erdogan very warmly but didn't promise to change his policy, and Erdogan didn't dare to end the relations with the US as he warned before the meeting. Now Ankara was left with making some radical moves to justify its poli-

cy of continuing with the US partnership in the eyes of the public, which is something that Erdogan has mastered over the last fifteen years.

CONCLUSION

Turkey and the US have been allies since the end of World War II. The geostrategic location of Turkey has offered invaluable opportunities to the US to defend its geopolitical interests. Turkey has relied on its Western allies during the Cold War era to contain potential Soviet threats. These good relations had continued into the post–Cold War period. The Obama administration and Erdogan’s government in Turkey initially maintained a cooperative relationship, which began to deteriorate with the escalation of the crisis of 2011 in Syria. Under Washington’s influence, Ankara formulated a hasty policy against the Assad regime. Later on, Turkey had to reconsider its initial foreign policy vis-à-vis Syria, in which its diminishing trust in the US played a decisive role. The US shifted its policy priorities from fighting Assad to fighting ISIS which explains President Obama’s decision to collaborate with the PYD/YPG in Syria to fight the ISIS terror. This policy of the White House had contributed to Ankara’s new policy of ending the crisis with Moscow and building closer ties with it, despite Russia’s unwillingness to recognize the PKK as a terrorist organization. Erdogan made the necessary steps to please Russia and their quick relationship turnabout almost developed to the point of creating a strategic partnership. However, Russia’s attitude toward the PYD/YPG wasn’t any different from that of the Obama Administration and this made Ankara feel uncertain about its further strategic moves. Nonetheless, Ankara has managed to establish a certain balance of power in the region keeping the US and Russia on opposite sides of the conflict. Erdogan hoped for a positive change and improving relations with the US once Obama left office but with Trump not much has changed. Currently, Washington and Ankara hold, arguably, irreconcilable differences about PYD/YPG, despite the fact that neither of them wants to lose the other. According to the declarations of Binali Yildirim, Turkey’s Prime Minister, Washington tried to assure Ankara that cooperating with the YPG was not a choice but a necessity and a tactical collaboration that would last only until ISIS gets destroyed.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Ankara still has its own anxieties due to the lack of trust in Washington. Therefore, President Erdogan asked Trump for three important things. First, the US would deter the YPG from violating Turkey’s borders. Second, Erdogan asked President Trump to provide him with the full list of the weapons provided to the YPG so that he could follow up the situation after the operation to Raqqa. Finally, Erdogan asked Trump about organizing an all-inclusive regional administration in the post-ISIS Raqqa.⁴⁷ Trump’s

efforts to satisfy Erdogan are well known, but it is hard to predict the extent to which he will satisfy Erdogan's requests.

Concerns within Turkey resulting from the emergence of ISIS, and the civil war in Syria, have increased tremendously, obliging Ankara to change its old policies and develop new strategies to address the related ongoing and emerging security issues threatening the country. Ankara's expectations for a new regional order to develop haven't materialized, and recent developments in Syria, including the fall of Aleppo, have shown the signs of the Assad regime's potential to consolidate its rule in Syria. However, active involvement of the US in the Syrian Civil War created new uncertainties in the region. The US's \$110-billion contract with Saudi Arabia, Iran's enemy, to sell weapons makes the region look more insecure. Likewise, the recent sanctions of numerous Muslim states against Qatar, a strong ally of Turkey, the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the White House, and the declaration of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to recognize East Jerusalem as Palestinian capital are examples that have made 2017 a year of tensions. It is certain that any major change in the region will affect Turkey significantly; but also its future will be affected by the new place of the Kurds in the Middle East. Therefore, it is important for Turkey to keep cordial relations with Russia to have a reliable ally.

Ostensibly, in addition to the concerns about continuing threats from the terrorists based on Syrian soil, Turkey has faced new threats from the US-backed YPG's increasing role in regional affairs. As a continuation of the PKK in Syria, the PYD/YPG in the long-run directly targets Turkey's territorial integrity. Although Ankara has repeatedly objected to US cooperation with the YPG, declaring it a branch of the PKK, it hasn't been successful in changing the views of the Trump Administration. This has contributed to a significant change in Ankara's foreign policy damaging the historical trust Turkey had in the US as an ally. Turkey then tried to engineer strategic ties with Russia through reviving their economic relations and collaborating in seeking to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis through the talks in Moscow and Astana. Interestingly, the Trump Administration didn't change US policy toward the PYD/YPG, although it doesn't want to lose Turkey as an ally. Rather, in early January of 2018, the US decided to build a new US-backed 30,000 border security force with the YPG in order to secure Turkish and Iraqi borders with Syria. Ankara has found this approach wrong and condemned US insistence on this approach and reminded that Turkey was determined to and capable of eliminating any threats against the country. Due to these developments, Ankara has found itself in an uncomfortable situation starting a risky cross-border operation as its long-term consequences are not foreseen. Currently, the visible policy Ankara is pursuing is a classic version of building a balance of power between the West and Russia to gain some advantages in the struggle against the PYD/YPG.

One of the consequences of the US PYD/YPG policy is that the conflict in the Middle East enlarged through new conflict issues. Another is that the US PYD/YPG policy accelerated the normalization of the Russo-Turkish crisis. Also, US pro-Kurdish policies made Turkey rediscover its own power and growing importance for the settlement of the regional issues.

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SIX

The Military-Strategic Dimensions of Turkey–Russian Relations

Aydın Çetiner

Post–Cold War relations between Turkey and Russia have been marked by a set of anxieties and rivalries in terms of security policies, and growth and cooperation in terms of economic and social policies. The efforts of the Russian Federation to maintain its own security and great power status have been manifested in the “Near Abroad Doctrine,” while Turkey, as a NATO member, had pursued pro-Western policies during the Cold War. Near Abroad Doctrine is the first foreign policy concept of Russia and was demonstrated by then Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kojirev, Minister of Defense Pavel Graçev, and the Head of Foreign Affairs Commission Evgeny Ambartsumov. The use of this concept evolved in years and Russia adopted this policy more and more in time. After many additions and changes, it was accepted as Russia’s official policy for near abroad in 1993.¹ This concept suggests taking back former Soviet lands and defending Russia’s mainland from distance in order to prevent attacks sooner. The latter suggestion is a policy called “forward defense.”

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened up new opportunities for Turkey to establish its authority over significantly big part of the former Soviet Union that covers the major part of the Turkic world, including such countries as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Tatarstan, and Bashkordstan. Since 1991 when Russia gained its independence from the Soviet Union, Moscow’s geostrategic policies have created concerns for Turkey.

Today, it is easily observable that Russia aims to complete its geostrategic steps with military actions. Russia’s role in the Ukrainian crisis, its

occupation of Crimea, its military operations in Azerbaijan, and its aggression in Georgia has had a profound impact on Turkey.² Nevertheless, Turkey continued to develop its relations with Russia, which started in the aftermath of the Cold War, entering into many transactions with it ranging from tourism to importing goods, exporting food, and energy cooperation.³ Turkey and Russia have managed to continuously broaden their cooperation through tourism, and food exports, and especially energy investments. But the major issue that contributed to the development of relations was bilateral strategic partnership. While Russia's relations with the West had been getting worse with the sanctions against it due to the Crimean crisis and other unfavorable developments, Turkey had experienced a similar pattern in its relations with its Western allies due to the chaotic situation in the Middle East. Turkey's relations primarily with the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) has become very delicate, both politically and strategically. The situations in which Russia and Turkey both found themselves brought them closer to each other. Finally, Russia's increasing clout in Syrian politics, the negative attitude of in the West toward Turkey, the close cooperation of the US with the local Kurdish groups that Turkey considers to be hostile to it, and the rising anti-American sentiments in the region have brought Turkey and the Russia closer to each other.

In this chapter, the military-strategic dimensions of Russo-Turkish relations will be discussed, and the possible scenarios as to how these relations can develop in the future will be evaluated in bilateral, regional, and global contexts.

THE PATH OF TURKEY-RUSSIA RELATIONS AND NEW DISPUTE AREAS IN THE NEW ERA

As chapter 1 discusses, Turkish-Russian relations have a long historical background. After World War II, Turkey had serious security concerns due to threats from the Soviet Union. Turkey had no better choice than adopting a policy of reconciliation with the West in order to protect its independence and territorial integrity. In fact, the Ottoman Empire had also often followed a policy of forging alliances after its power started to diminish in the last two hundred fifty years of its existence, which it used to have through the 15th and 16th centuries. It was trying to survive by observing global alliance formations and joining an appropriate front in that sense.⁴

Communist Russia, a supporter of Turkey during its War of Independence (1919–1923), provided help in the period of the war. In fact, Soviet Russia, which could not be able to answer to the Turkish request of help by itself, transmitted this request to Bukhara which was an independent Turkish republic. Bukhara Turks, rich with gold, transferred help of an

amount of 110 million gold to Turkey over Russia; but Russians forwarded only a small amount of this help to Turks.⁵

Russia began to implement policies in the following years that threatened the independence and integrity of Turkey that desired to develop relations with the West. Russia also made territorial claims over the Kars and Ardahan regions of Turkey as well as demand for a right to free passage through the Istanbul and Dardanelles Straits. The insecurity and threats from the Soviet Union led Turkey to develop close relations with the West.

While Turkey was facing the threat from Soviet policies, it was in fact the same threat that Europe faced, and NATO was created to contain that threat. The US argued that Turkey, having a crucial geostrategic location, should be part of the alliance against the Soviet Union's expansionism.⁶ However, some of the NATO countries were hesitant on this, despite the dire threat of the Soviet Union, believing that Turkey's membership would not contribute to the strength of the organization.

Initially, Turkey's request to join NATO was declined.⁷ Despite the Truman Doctrine, which offered assistance to the countries under Soviet threat, Turkey was not accepted to the NATO until it joined the Korean War in October 1950 on the side of the US. While accepting Turkey's membership, NATO, indeed, sought a way of guaranteeing the security of Greece, since a way to provide security to Greece was including Turkey in the alliance as a new member, which would ensure their coordinated military actions in the future.⁸

The border between Turkey and the Soviet Union, the two states that belonged to the opposing blocs during the Cold War, was also the border separating NATO and the Soviet Union. Turkey provided a unique help to NATO alliance alongside a long sea and land border and in general to the West's defense and security. During the Cold War, the Warsaw Pact armies in the Caucasus and Balkans were restrained thanks to the Turkish army. Arguably, twenty-six Warsaw pact divisions were tied in their places thanks to Turkey, which was the country that ensured the safety of oil and the Eastern Mediterranean region.⁹

Today, as it was in the past, Turkey means a lot for Russia's geostrategic policies. Russia's policy of reaching to the ports of warm waters of the Mediterranean was developed during the reign of Tsar Peter I (1682–1725), but the situation remained the same in the Communist era, and it is the same today. The tensions of Russia's long-held "reaching to the warm waters" policy are still imposing threats on Turkey with all its security implications.¹⁰

With the end of the Cold War, Turkey felt insecure and under the threat of uncertainty. It continued its peaceful missions in the region and throughout the world as a NATO member, but it also started to question the contributions it made to NATO in terms of its own national interests. Thirteen out of the sixteen critical points important to the NATO and

Western Europe in terms of defense and security are located in the hinterland of Turkey. Although even today Turkey's effective role in the European defense and security is significantly ignored, it preserves its strategic importance to the West.¹¹

The tension that prevailed in the Turkish–Russian relations during the Cold War was replaced with the gradually developing trade relations. The economic and political relations between them which are developing and getting better, grew stronger especially in the fields of “suitcase trade” and energy. In the post–Cold War era, Turkey and Russia managed to develop good relations, despite the problems that resulted from their own internal affairs.¹² While important activities for Turkey such as agriculture products exportation, construction activities and for Russia natural gas and oil route activities were improving, inside, Turkey was dealing with PKK terror and Russia was dealing with Chechen separatism.

An agreement on friendship, good neighborhood, and cooperation was signed between Turkey and Russia in 1992.¹³ While Turkey worried about Russia's support to the Kurdish PKK terror, Russia was dealing with the crisis of Chechnya seeking independence from the Russian Federation and accused Turkey of supporting the Chechen insurgents. Although the Kremlin made some initial attempts to develop pro-Western policies and establish good relations with the neighbors, it did not last long. According to the new government under Vladimir Putin, survival of the Russian state as a great power couldn't be possible by a mere defense of the Russian mainland and it was necessary to develop a “Near Abroad Doctrine,” which meant taking the boundaries of the former Soviet Union as the basis for Russia's sphere of influence and then expand to remote areas to the possible extent. In fact, the “Russian strategic-mind” has advocated and developed policies in line with its own security and interests, and it developed a national military strategic concept in accordance with its national power.¹⁴

The comments that Turkey supported Chechens against Russia and the controversy that Russia covertly supported PKK affected their relations negatively. The fact that Russia initiated explicit military campaigns against Georgia and Azerbaijan, and provided significant military and logistic help to Armenia to invade Azerbaijani lands also affected Russo–Turkish relations adversely.¹⁵ The development showed that Russia had gradually regained its dominance in the former Soviet area. The overthrow of President Ebulfez Elçibey of Azerbaijan in 1993, who pursued pro-Turkey policies, from the power evidenced that Turkey didn't have sufficient influence on the regional countries; nor had it a strong position against Russia.

INITIAL PERCEPTION OF RUSSIAN “NEW EURASIANISM”
POLICIES BY TURKEY: “ETHNOPOLITICS” AND “THEOPOLITICS”

Russia closely supported the Serbs in the Balkans through using the ethnic and religious closeness and historical affinities to them. The sale of weapons and the deployment of the S-300 missiles by Russia to Greece, a NATO member, that still constitutes a significant threat to Turkish air force, have led to a serious crisis. Due to the harsh objections of Turkey, Russia's S-300 missiles could not be deployed to the Greek part of Cyprus; but they were deployed to the Crete Island of Greece. Turkey's concerns with the Russian policies further increased with the sale to Greece of the TOR M1s, which are low altitude anti-aircraft tornadoes, Zubr airbag assault boats, hundreds of Cornet-E anti-tank missiles, and SA 8 Gecko missile systems.¹⁶ Having felt the strains of these military developments on itself, Turkey has started to play an important political role in Georgia, which pursued pro-Western policies, by supporting the construction of a pipeline through Azerbaijan and Georgia with the support of the US. Moreover, Ankara clandestinely joined the modernization efforts of the Georgian Army with the support of the US. Turkey contributed to the construction of the Marneuli military airport and provided training to the Georgian Army, thus assisting in the defense of Georgia. Turkey's activities in Georgia and Azerbaijan were not welcomed by Russia as Moscow sees them as its own backyard.¹⁷

In the 1990s, the Chechen issue of Russia and the PKK issue of Turkey had become decisive factors in Turkish–Russian relations. Moscow and Ankara who have blamed each other on supporting the separatists have always denied the accusations. The Chechen independence movement, which was welcomed in Turkey, seriously frightened Russia which was competing with Turkey in the Turkic world (especially, in Central Asia), due to the millions of people of the Turkic origin living in those former Soviet republics. Also, the intelligence war led by the political issues needs to be addressed here. Russia has accused Turkey of carrying out intelligence activities inciting separatist actions on its territory. It was a vivid and serious fear in Russia, which with the concept of forward intervention, started to assassinate Chechen separatists seeking safe haven in Turkey and other countries, such as Qatar, Azerbaijan, and Austria. But Turkish intelligence has caught some Russian spies and has publicized some of them. These developments have implicitly or explicitly shown the extent of Russia's fear and anxieties the roots of which were in Turkey. Turkey's initiatives and activities toward the Turkic world, the main part of which is in the Central Asia, have always been viewed with concerns in Russia as the latter has dominated it until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In addition to the negative attitudes to the Turkic world and the Turkic communities within Russia, Moscow has been suspicious about the policies of Ankara, who pursues pro-Western policies,

as a Western agent to destroy Russia. Nevertheless, Ankara and Moscow have tried to establish good relations with Turkey in late 1990s and early 2000s as it was necessitated by their national interests.

From time to time, Turkey has tried to start bonding policies in the Turkic world which it expressed aloud, but the implementation of these policies failed to success. Turkey has not been able to establish and strongly support the necessary bonds between the Turkic states and itself; because it couldn't support this attempt financially and strategically. This is the main reason why the Turkic world cautiously approaches Turkey's "big brother" thesis.

Turkey's approach that was built on the "big brother" concept and the kinship with the Turkic word, highlighted with a loud voice but with low content, was not welcomed. Over the last fifteen years "Neo-Ottomanism" approach that has been developed in the Turkish domestic politics has come to the forefront in Turkey's perception of the Turkic and the Islamic world. The "Neo-Ottomanism" approach has had a negative impact on the Turkish foreign policy with the Arab world first and then the Turkic world as well.¹⁸ Even though its impact on the Turkic world was not that big; the Neo-Ottomanism gained sympathy of the poor population of the Arab world; but in contrast caused a quick reaction of the intelligentsia. Interpretations of whether this was out of the desire to revive Ottoman Empire's imperial approach started right away.

While the Islamic world once again criticized these policies of Turkey with the concern that the conquest policies of the Turks would surge, the Turkic world remained irrelevant because there was no significant similarity of action or statement between these policies of conquest and Neo-Ottomanism. Neo-Ottomanism political discourse which is weak in real policy didn't achieve much, moreover, many questions were raised about Turkey's foreign policy all over the world.

Perhaps, the most decisive element of the relations between Russia and Turkey in the post-Cold War era is related to two important developments that are Russian occupation of Crimea and its strong support to the pro-Russian separatists in the Ukraine, and its involvement of Syrian Civil War on the side of Bashar Al-Assad. Crimea's invasion in 2014 was how Russia put an end to a problem it was feeling the pressure of for many years, with its own one sided solutions. The policies and the "forward defense" moves pursued in Abkhazia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and even in the Transnistria region before the invasion of Crimea, were indeed an application of the "Near Abroad Doctrine." In fact, this is the new era's Eurasianist, geopolitical application of the policy which has emerged in the times of Tsar Peter the Great and pursued through the Soviet era.

On the other hand, the Turkic republics, which were accustomed to living under full or at least partial Russian influence after the Second World War, were able to establish friendly relations with Russia and able

to help to each other to some extent. Unlike this, Turkey with the incompetent, unprepared US support it had behind was not successful, with the exception of two events. The first was maintaining Georgia as a pro-Western regime in the Caucasus, and the second was the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline as an alternative energy transmission route. Perhaps, Russia's inability to dominate Azerbaijan completely, despite the support of Armenia can be included, too.

In fact, while Russia has occupied Crimea and conducted a separatist struggle with Ukraine, it makes an Eurasianist geopolitical application of a policy which has been pursued since the reign of Tsar Peter I (1682–1725). During the times when the Ottoman Empire controlled the Crimean Khanate, it placed its navy on the port of Sevastopol. Later, when the Russians took control of Crimea, they used the same port. When they occupied the Crimea in 2014, one of their important actions was to seize the port of Sevastopol once again. During the entire Cold War era, an 88-pieced Soviet navy was floating in the Black Sea. This geopolitical necessity was in reality a forward defense step to secure Moscow.

Russian policymakers are well aware of the importance of Crimea for Moscow's defense. Russians unable to defend Crimea soon would find Western forces in front of Moscow and even inside it. Russian occupation of Crimea and the struggle in Ukraine are in fact the steps of forward defense of the Russian mainland. In this great picture, Russians see pro-Western Turkey, along with the United States, as a practitioner of possible negative things that could happen against Russia in the region. The Turkic presence in the region makes every step of Turkey a major threat to the existence of Russia. The threat for Russians grows when the USA's possibility of cooperating with Turkey in regional policies is considered.

SYRIA FACTOR IN TURKEY–RUSSIA RELATIONS

The developments we have tried to explain so far are the first leg of the defense of Russia. However, a careful analysis of the regional defense issues reveals that in order to defend the Russian mainland, even further steps are needed in the defense, further than Crimea, as well as Sevastopol. The Russians evaluated Syria from this point of view and turned their face to it which they supported in the traditional alliance relations. Russia which has already been using Tartus naval base located near Latakia in Syria, began to monitor the steps taken together by the US and Turkey carefully in their region when the civil war in Syria broke out.

In the beginning of the 2000s, the navies of the US and Western countries had tactical and strategic advantages over Russia in the territory from the Azov Sea to the Black Sea, the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. Russia was at a disadvantage in terms of both its navy and air force

operations. Russia which has increased its military activity with its navy and air forces in the Black Sea after the occupations of Crimea, first possessed Tartus naval base near Latakia in Syria and expanded it through the policies it followed during the Syrian Civil War. Again, it increased its military activity in the Eastern Mediterranean by creating the Khumeymim air base near Tartus. More importantly, Russian military officials have been thinking that Russia will be more active and powerful in the eyes of the world with a mainland defense starting from the East Mediterranean and expanding to the Russian mainland by completing its military presence in Crimea with military bases in the East Mediterranean. Increasing Russian presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, being complementary of Russian policies, as in Syria could make Russia more effective on Turkey and Egypt.

The Russians already disturbed by the developments experienced before the Syrian Civil War, began to support the Assad regime at a higher level. In the light of strategic evaluations, the situation that emerged in Syria contained the requirements for the continuation of the steps that Russia has taken on to create the defense of the mainland. Accordingly, Russia occupied Crimea in order to be able to defend the mainland and to achieve a great and strong Russian ideal. The ports of Crimea and Sevastopol have strategic priorities for it. Of course, in order to develop its dominance in the Black Sea and Crimea, and to become a global power, Russia has formed a strategic naval base in Syria. Thus, Russia will both be able to sustain its effective support received from Syria and obtain an effective naval power in the Eastern Mediterranean, which is necessary to make Russia a big and powerful country. Russians have accomplished this and they have even acquired an advantageous position in Syria by establishing an air base in Khumeymim near the strategic naval base in Tartus. The naval and air bases established in Tartus and Khumeymim in the Eastern Mediterranean near Lazkaya provided Russia with a double advantage over the US and the West. Russians have the opportunity to be influential in a whole southwest Asian region through Syria; on the other hand, the more important achievement lies in the future at this point. Having gained a significant share in the future political design of Syria, the Russians have actualised both the naval base and the air force in the Eastern Mediterranean and strengthened the defense of their mainland with the activities initially formed on the Black Sea-Crimea-Sevastopol line. The second advantage is the opportunity to open up new horizons both in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the region of South West Asia.¹⁹

When all this happened, some important details have occurred. In accordance with a treaty signed in 2007, Russians have delivered the SSN26 Yakhont missiles named P800 in the West to Syria in 2011. On 5 July 2013, Israel bombed the weapon warehouses in Latakia, as it had done several times before. Because Israel did not want to experience once

again the incident of INS Hanit Corvetin hit by a CSS 802 Silkworm missile used by Hezbollah militants in 2006.

The developments experienced before the Syrian Civil War led efforts to achieve a strategic advantage in this region and to gain superiority in the region. Russian activities were to continue on the Eastern Mediterranean especially on the Southern Cyprus region as in Syria. Like the effort to obtain bases from the ports of Southern Cyprus, the efficiency effort in the Eastern Mediterranean was multifaceted and at the same time it was closely related to the control of the energy and energy transport routes.

At the start of the Syrian Civil War, Turkey who monitored the developments in Syria closely together with its traditional ally US; it has remained trapped between the humanitarian policies and realpolitik. Turkey gradually took a stand against the massacres that the Assad regime imposed on its own people on the one hand, while on the other hand, it dealt with the issue in terms of its own national interests and national unity and integrity.

There is a 566 mile-long land border between Turkey and Syria. The Turkmen, Ottoman Kurds, and Arabs live on both sides of this border, especially on the Syrian side. These communities which are relatives of one another continue their lives separated by the artificially created borders. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, it has annexed Hatay, and the government in Syria has made this a state propaganda against Turkey. The Nusayri minority which is effective in the government has been holding the regime in the country with the Baas politics. The government in Syria has always been active against Turkey, it has trained and hosted numerous terrorist organizations effective in the region in the survival camps between Lebanon and Syria. The Kurdistan Worker Party's (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan who was involved in terrorist acts in Turkey resided in Damascus and was preserved by the regime until the end of 1998.

Turkey, already with many problems in its eastern and southeastern borders, began to deal with the United States that became a new neighbor in Iraq due to the fact that Iraq was occupied by the US in 2003. With the start of the Syrian Civil War, in a sense, Turkey and Russia became neighbors in Syria as well. Turkey handled its close ally relations with the US at the beginning of the Syrian Civil War. That the dimensions of Russia's support to Syria could not be quantified primarily, the confidence in the United States, the first talks between the Turkish and US officials on the Syrian crisis have had a very positive effect on the Turkish side. The Turks were probably overly impressed and this led to the evaluations to be exaggerated, eventually, the comments that the Assad regime in Syria could easily be overthrown by the emerged Syrian opposition forces. Regarding the Syrian Civil War, it is necessary to first establish the agreement done between the US and Russia. In particular, the view that the US

and Russia are acting in cooperation in terms of determining the future political shape of Syria is dominant.

At the beginning of the war, armed opposition groups to Assad with a total number of 1,200 were mainly composed of Al-Qaeda and ISIS members. The United States and Russia preferred to keep the Assad regime at work as a way not to leave the future of Syria to the “Radical Islamist Jihadists.” The regions in which the regime could defend itself particularly effectively were the regions near the Mediterranean coasts of Syria and the region of Latakia, where the Assad regime has more close relations with the local communities. Latakia is the region that is the center of support that Russia gives to the Assad army which has lost its fighting capacity significantly. Both the Tartus naval base and the Khumeymin air base are in this region. Historically, the northern part of Latakia is neighbour to the area where Syrian Turkmen live intensely. At a time of the civil war, opposing Turkmen warriors took part in military operations from the Turkish border and Turkmendag region especially into the rural parts of Latakia. In those days, the US fervently supported and armed opposition Turkmen groups.

But the military mobility in this region has gone far beyond the struggle against Assad regime and encouraged by the Americans working in the region, so that Tartus naval base and the Khumeymin air base were to be removed from the military safe zone in Latakia region by the Russian forces in this region. That the United States agreed with Russia on the one hand, but it put Russia’s military presence there at risk via Turkey and Turkmen fighters on the other hand changed the outlook of both Russia and Turkey to Syria Civil War.

There is a de facto agreement in force between the United States and Russia not to leave the future of Syria to the groups of Radical Islamic Jihadists. Russia has tried to support the Assad regime with all its might. While Turkey followed a quite wrong policy at the early stage of outbreak of war in Syria and showed a very close collaboration with the US by opening the Incirlik air base to the coalition forces. The US’ blaming Turkey of supporting Sunni radical jihadist groups and its giving weapons to PKK/PYD/YPG forces urged Turkey to have a talk with Russia. With this step, Russia was drawing both a strong ally of the United States—Turkey—closer and convincing this strong regional country to act together in regional politics. With its Tartus and Khumeymin military bases in Latakia region, Russia, in general, showed support to the Syrian policy and regime and worked against ISIS by intensifying its military actions.

The warships of the Russian navy in the Caspian Sea launched missiles at 1500 km, upon agreeing with Iran, and Russian planes took off from Hemedan military base and bombed the terrorists in Syria. By bringing its most heavy vessels belonging to the Russian navy from the Baltic Sea to the Syrian coasts in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Kremlin

gave a message that it will defend its strategic positions achieved in the Eastern Mediterranean.

RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO TURKEY

On 24 November 2015, one Sukhoi Su-24 type fighter jet of the Russian air force was shot down by the Turkish air force in Hatay, on the border of Turkey and Syria. Today, the Turkish-Russian relations are good despite the fighter jet crisis. If the Kremlin can gain the friendship of Turkey in terms of its strategic interests, Russia can achieve very significant advantages against the US. These gains can be strengthening Russia's position in the Southwest Asia region to the Eastern Mediterranean that would open new horizons to Russia in the distant future.

Although US was involved in the Syrian issue as an ally of Turkey since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, it blamed Turkey indirectly for supporting Radical Islamist jihadists and for the trucks of Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) with weapons that were stopped, detained, and deciphered in Tarsus in January 2014. The activities of Fethullah Terror Organization (FETO), whose leader resides in the US, were crucial in the plot to degrade the Turkish government. There were speculations that FETO organization executed this action with the help of the US. Turkish policy makers have considered that FETO organization could not have done this operation on its own and there must have been a secret power behind. While suggestions for a "safe area" and "no-fly zone" that Turkey has put forward to be declared from Aleppo region and Mare Jarabulus line to especially Al-Bab town have been expected to bring intensity to the relations between Turkey and the US, in an interesting way, Russia who keeps the Syrian regime under control has opened the way for Turkey about it. Turkey took control of the area between Al-Bab and Mare-Jarabulus with its own military capability and air supports of the United States and Russia from time to time.

In fact, the US and Russia are carrying out a secret struggle while acting in agreement with each other on the main issues. They have agreed on the issues to terminate the risks that marginal radical religious armed groups threaten the West and Israel. Each of these two big countries has tried to withdraw Turkey to its own side because Turkey has the potential to create effects in favor of the party it supports both in Syria and Sunni world.

CONVENTIONAL DIMENSION OF THE TURKEY–RUSSIA CLOSURE

Turkey has had some valuable experiences thanks to its long held relations with the US and the West. Turkey has looked at its allies of the US and the West suspiciously due to constant blockage of the arms embar-

goes it is exposed to and it is constantly blocked to acquire “know-how” efforts to establish the defense industry to become a regional power. Turkey was aiming to develop its own native and national defense systems without having foreign systems imported, but it was prevented from achieving that. In the past, Turkey was offered “Erdogan” helicopters with the Russia-Israel joint production. The helicopter would receive a political name. Increasing attacks from Syria to Turkey made Ankara feel itself like “needy step-child” once again. Turkey did not have the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) capacity to prevent the possible threat of ballistic missiles that would be directed to it. As a NATO member, it asked for help. NATO allies agreed to have set up ABM systems on Turkish land for money.

Turkey had undertaken an effort to ensure to get the Chinese ballistic missile systems which it needed, however, after it analyzed that it would be no use both technologically and politically, it gave up the idea because the Chinese Hd 2000 missile systems were actually a model of the Russian S-300 missile systems manufactured in China. The systems that Europeans wanted to sell to Turkey had low capacity in defense and expensive, and it would not give anything on knowhow. The rapprochement gained over Syria with Russia, which is known to be very successful in producing air defense missiles from land to air, made Ankara desire to develop cooperation with Moscow in the field of defense systems. Turkey plans to buy the missile system S-400 from Russia. Because Americans do not offer sufficient technology transfers to Turkey for Patriot missiles has made Turkey come closer to Russia one more time. Turkey who makes efforts to be sufficient in ABM systems as in other defense areas has once again found itself next to Russia. Apparently, the future of Turkish–Russian relations will be affected not only by the attitudes of Russia but also the politics that the US and Europe will pursue toward Turkey.

Certain parameters of the new US policies will ultimately affect Turkish–Russian relations. First of all, the new US administration is taking steps to wake up the impression that it has returned to its traditional alliances in this region. Israel is the strategic foothold of the United States. It is the priority of the United States to ensure that what is happening in Syria does not pose a threat to Israel’s future. The question of the safety of energy and energy transmission routes is also an important issue for the United States. Both Israel’s safe gas transport to Europe through the Mediterranean and controlling power lines have led the US, Israel, and Turkey to the cooperation in many fields. The rapprochement of the Turkish–Israeli relations is like the news of the convergence of the Turkish–US relations. These initiatives are a big blow on the Russia’s dream to be the only energy supplier in the region for both Turkey and Europe.

Iran is the other country where the new US administration is likely to handle different policies toward than the predecessor Obama administration. The policy of shielding Persian geopolitics of Shiism which Iran has

been executing over Southwest Asia geography will now be prevented by the United States. This issue increases the closer cooperation between Iran and Russia.²⁰

An important area of influence is what policies both the US and Russia will follow regarding the masses that exist in Syria and Iraq. This situation is closely related to Turkey. Actually, Turkey closely monitors the US relations with the Iraqi Kurds and it is very disturbing for Turkey to observe how the US arms PKK/PYD/YPG and cooperates with them.

Turkey repeatedly expressed to the US the need to retreat of the elements it sees as terrorist elements in Munbij to the east of the Euphrates river, while US officials continued to provide PKK/PYD/YPG with the Javelin guided antitank missiles, Milan antitank missiles, and armored vehicles. The US also supported the Kurds with military personnel in the Munbij region. The US preferred Syria's local Kurdish armed groups to its 50-year-old NATO ally, Turkey. On the other hand, Russia organized a Kurdish conference in Moscow by disregarding Turkey's sensitivity and brought numerous organizations and individuals together that are regarded enemies by Turkey. In addition, after the Moscow meeting, Russia angered Turkey by wanting to bring PKK/PYD/YPG representatives to Kazakhstan's capital Astana first and later claiming that these groups should have been represented on the table of Syrian peace negotiations in Geneva. The litmus paper which will determine the color of the future of Turkey-Russia relations is the steps to be taken in Syria and in the energy sector.

CONCLUSION

Russia-Turkey relations that started to develop especially in the 2000s have reached the strategic levels due to the complementary and integrating characteristics of the economic relations existing between the two countries. It can be predicted that economic relations between Russia and Turkey will continue to grow steadily for many years, especially in the field of energy. To sustain relations, it is especially important that Russia is able to remain as an energy supplier for Turkey, and at the same time it recognizes Turkey as its energy terminal for Europe's energy needs. Israel's desire to market the gas obtained in the East Mediterranean to Europe by transporting it through Turkey can damage Russian energy monopoly and also can affect Russian-Turkish relations negatively. Israel plans to import the gas it obtains in Tamar and Leviathan regions in East Mediterranean to Europe through a route of Greek Cypriot State-Greece, excluding Turkey. This incident has put Turkey in distress and, on the other hand, Russia felt discomfort about the appearance of a new supplier to meet Europe's need of natural gas. This can also be an incident to converge Russia and Turkey indirectly.

As it is experiencing serious difficulties in its relation with the US and the West, Turkey has been trying to change these problems into opportunities by forging closer ties with Russia, but also it may change its side completely. However, Turkey is getting as close as possible to Russia as a way of overcoming the problems experienced in relations with the US and the West. In the near future, it should be considered that Turkey can return to its pro-US and pro-Western policies, if the US takes convincing steps and especially if Israel uses its rapidly improving political relations with Turkey to control energy and energy transmission routes.

While living in an extremely insecure border environment, Turkey has not been able to eliminate the source of the domestic terror, with which it has been struggling for many years inside the country. In such insecure environment, the security policies gain priority. The definitive point for the future of the relations between Russia and Turkey is whether the US will take satisfactory steps toward Turkey or not. By the year 2018, while Turkey-Russia relations are seen to be warm and accelerated, Turkey-US relations are seen to be quite problematic, however, the critical issue here will take place depending on the policy that the US will implement against Turkey. In other words, the future of Turkish-Russian relations depends on the US's Turkey policy. There are two very important centers in Turkey for both the US and Russia. The first one is the Incirlik air base, which causes ups and downs in Turkey-US relations from time to time. The second important center is the military base that contains the AN/TPY-2 Radar that was placed in Kürecik, Malatya, Turkey which also has strategic importance for the US, the West, and Israel. It is also important to Russia because it is also built against Russian missiles.

Finally, despite the improvements in the Turkish-Russian relations, the warm messages of President Putin and his advisor and author of the Russian Eurasianism ideas Aleksandr Dugin to Turkey, the main determining factor of the Turkish-Russian relations will be the political approach of the US to Turkey.

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SEVEN

The Black Sea Question in Russo–Turkish Relations

Lasha Tchantouridze

Stability and predictability in the Black Sea region are decided by relations between the two main players in the region, the Russian Federation and Turkey, with other regional states, and global powers making ad hoc contributions. Players have to contribute voluntarily toward a public good, which in this case can be expressed as peace and stability in the region. Among these contributors are Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, as well as the United States, and NATO member states, two of whom, Romania and Bulgaria, are littorals of the Black Sea. In an anarchic system, contributing to the public good is a risky business, as some critical mass of actors is expected to participate regularly to generate expected outcomes. If most actors are reluctant to participate; however, a project aiming at developing mutually beneficial arrangements will fail because in a system composed of sovereign states, nothing durable can be forced upon them unless they agree to participate and contribute voluntarily. In addition, forcing issues upon others involves using a threat of military or economic power, which is by definition contradictory to peace and stability as the desired outcome. Bargaining in the Black Sea region should be a straightforward affair, as the dominant actors are divided into two groups: members of NATO on one side, and Russia and Russia-dominated actors on the other; however, in fact, the circumstances are far more complicated due to: (a) the low-scale and frozen conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine, Chechnya, and Azerbaijan; (b) Russia's willingness to use military force in the pursuit of its foreign policy goals; and (c) Turkey's distinct and long-standing position on the issue of restricting the military navigation of the

Black Sea by non-littoral states. These three factors create very complex dynamics of strategic uncertainty in the Black Sea region.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between Ankara and Moscow have been largely cordial and at times even amiable, but at the same time, at least on two occasions, the two sides have come perilously close to a military clash. For over a decade and a half, both Russia and Turkey have been led by strong and charismatic leaders backed by popular support in their own countries, who have developed their own distinct vision of their country's place and role in international affairs. Both Russian and Turkish leaderships have been taking risk-informed actions in the areas of their mutual interest, more recently, with their involvement in the Syrian civil war. The frozen conflicts in the Caucasus and the status of international navigation in the Black Sea serve as enduring sources of strategic uncertainty between the two. There is even less certainty regarding the conflicts over Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea, or Nagorno-Karabakh. In regards to the Black Sea status, Ankara and Moscow have a similar vision of its strategic importance with their clear preference for the status quo; however, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has upset the fragile stability in the region and furthered uncertainty.

RUSSIA'S SMALL WARS

Russia's ambitious military initiative in Syria is built on the success of its policy of small wars in its immediate neighborhood. Moscow's previous gambles in the Black Sea region have paid off handsomely: by annexing Crimea and acquiring control over Abkhazia's coastline, Russia has significantly strengthened its position in the Black Sea region and eliminated the possibility of the Black Sea becoming NATO's internal sea.¹ Moscow successfully advanced its interests vis-à-vis the United States and NATO by attacking and dismembering two of the most Western-oriented states in its traditional sphere of influence, Georgia, and Ukraine. If Russia manages to secure the long-term survival of the Assad regime, it will gain further leverage and bargaining chips in its dealings with both the West and the regional powers in the Middle East, among them Turkey. Western attitudes toward Moscow's policies designed to re-establish control and influence through small regional wars have been anemic and inconsistent at best. Turkey all but ignored Russia's invasion of both Georgia and Ukraine, and only became alarmed after Russian troops showed up in force south of the Turkish borders in August 2015. The United States, purportedly the world's only superpower, gave Moscow a "reset" button after the war in Georgia, and only noticed Moscow's brazen and open aggression against Ukraine when the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 was shot down by a Russian paramilitary group over

Ukraine on July 17 2014.² Even then Washington and its European allies demonstrated reluctance in imposing significant economic and/or political sanctions on Russia, primarily due to significant disagreements on the subject among the Western allies.³ Western failure to act after Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, resulted in Russia's military build-up in Syria—this new problem Washington could no longer ignore as the Russian deployments in Syria put the Russian and American forces in dangerous proximity to each other.⁴ The United States and its allies have failed to check Moscow's appetite at both bilateral and multilateral levels. NATO, theoretically the strongest military alliance in history, has proven to be irrelevant when it comes to preservation of the post–Cold War order in greater Europe and the Middle East. Turkey, a member of NATO, through its own inaction, has found itself surrounded by Russian forces and their allies.

Russia has inherited a powerful, competent, and very active military command structure from the Soviet Union. The latter practiced military planning and preparations for future armed operations by constantly assessing and studying its most realistic opponents, most of them historically found in its immediate neighborhood.⁵ That is why Russia's military doctrines, at least since the 1920s, have been based on the anticipation of future wars not with imaginary or theoretical enemies, but with its specific neighbors, and after World War II, with its strategic adversaries.⁶ With strategic rivalry receding from the picture in the 1990s, the post-Soviet Russian military doctrine started to focus on smaller new neighbors, and respectively, it became trite for military policy-makers in Moscow to anticipate the future wars concerning Russia to be taking place at regional levels along country's south and southwestern borders.⁷ Russia's new military doctrine adopted in 2011 further stressed this aspect and accentuated the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear neighbors in what Russia calls the "escalate to deescalate" approach to regional wars.⁸

THE RUSSO-TURKISH GAMBIT IN THE CAUCASUS

Before deploying troops to Syria and muscling the Western forces out of that country, the Russian Federation pursued military interventionism in the Caucasus region, which separates it from the Turkish republic. The three sovereign states of the Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, regained their independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. They border three large regional powers, Iran, Turkey, and Russia, and for the last 200 years, all three have played influential roles in the region through both conflict and cooperation. In the 19th century, for instance, all three major powers invaded various parts of the Caucasus under a variety of pretexts and circumstances, but Russia with its large

army and economic might managed to achieve the most—by mid-19th century, the Russians defeated Imam Shamil's forces, took the leader of the North Caucasus resistance movement captive in 1859, and thus finished their conquest of the Caucasus, a process which they started nearly a half a century ago. The second half of the 19th century and most of the 20th saw Russia dominating the region. Things have changed considerably since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. After the restoration of independence and sovereignty by Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, they found themselves on a new and uncertain playing field with the three major powers in action, vying for more power and influence, and joined by global players, such as the United States and China. The newly independent states of the Caucasus inherited three local conflicts: the secessionist movements in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and an active military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the latter's province of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Chechnya's secessionist war with the Russian federation in North Caucasus further complicated regional affairs.

In the 1990s, both Russia and Turkey had the ability to influence local events by employing military, economic, and political means at their disposal. Local conflicts and rivalries in the Caucasus created fertile grounds for outside involvement and intervention. Since 1991, outside powers have used the conflicts and power struggles in the Caucasus to further their own interests, and the local actors have not been hesitant to call upon their foreign allies if their assistance was seen as advantageous in their domestic or regional power struggles. The dissolved Soviet Union left a set of interesting alliances in the Caucasus: the Russian Federation encouraged and supported the Abkhaz and South Ossetian rebels in their armed rebellion against the Georgian state, which from very early days of its post-Soviet independence demonstrated unrestrained Western ambitions. Turkey quickly reestablished its historic ties with Azerbaijan, while Iran supported Armenia in the Karabakh war to quell potential Azeri sentiments of "redeeming" Iran's "southern Azerbaijan"—predominantly Azeri populated provinces of northwestern Iran. The Karabakh war; however, was in the end decided by the Russian aid to Armenia as the latter would not have prevailed without the crucial military and economic assistance provided by Moscow. Notwithstanding Iran's activities in the Caucasus and its position on the Caspian Sea in the 1990s, it has been mostly the Russian and Turkish initiatives in the region that have created deep uncertainties with strategic implications for all concerned.

As the Soviet Union dissolved at the end of 1991, it became clear that international relations and strategic calculations in the Caucasus, and the wider Black Sea region became increasingly complex. Relatively simple arrangements centered on the distribution of power between NATO and the Warsaw Pact were replaced by a more complicated setting in which not all parties knew the true intentions of their opponents, and long-term

survival prospects of smaller neighbors were far from certain. Russia continued routine military and security interventions in the domestic affairs of its smaller neighbors, but now opportunities opened up for Turkey as well. Despite the continuous Russian military presence in the Caucasus, the chaotic conflicts in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia allowed Ankara to entertain the possibilities of military intervention, especially when Russia itself started experiencing violent domestic conflicts—the armed stand-off between President Yeltsin and the parliament in Moscow in fall of 1993, and the December 1994 start of the Russo-Chechen war. According to a former Greek Ambassador to Armenia, in 1993 Ankara came very close to sending its troops to Karabakh and Georgia—a foreign policy option that became available to Turkey due to the conflicts in the states of the Caucasus and political and economic instabilities in Russia. This scenario was occasioned by the violent clashes in Moscow between the troops backing President Yeltsin, and his opponents from the Russian Parliament led by Vice-President Rutskoy. The 1993 constitutional crisis in Russia, which culminated in military clashes in Moscow in September of the same year, was triggered over a dispute over the scope and the boundaries of presidential power in Russia, a routine question for a newly formed state and its government institutions. The fact that the Russian leadership was unable to solve fundamental questions of governance through institutional means and had to resort to violence to sort them out, quite likely created an impression in Ankara that this new Russian state was not as competent and viable as its formidable predecessors.

Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos of Greece was posted in Armenia when the events linking the October 1993 failed coup in Moscow with the alleged Turkish designs for the Caucasus took place.⁹ On October 5 1993, President Levon Ter-Petrossian of Armenia told Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos, who was posted in Armenia at that time, that he had the armed forces of Armenia on maximum readiness, because he expected Turkey to attack Armenia. According to intelligence reports given to Ter-Petrossian, there was a possibility that about ten thousand Russian soldiers “guarding the border between Armenia and Turkey” would be ordered to return to Russia as the outcome of the clashes in Moscow was not yet decided. One of the main anti-Yeltsin figures at that time heading the rebellion in Moscow was Ruslan Khasbulatov, an ethnic Chechen, who led the Russian parliament. In the case of Khasbulatov’s victory over Yeltsin, it was likely that he would recall the troops from Armenia and side with Azerbaijan in their dispute over Karabakh. The key assumption was that as a Muslim, Khasbulatov was more likely to side with a predominantly Muslim state, and as a victorious rebel leader, he would be eager to acquire economic contracts with the oil-rich Azerbaijan. Apparently, Ter-Petrossian was convinced that Turkey would take advantage of the ongoing unrest in Russia, and invade Armenia using a pretext of

either the Kurdish question or the protection of Nakhichevan.¹⁰ The Kurdish community of the area was not a direct party of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but they suffered greatly, as they happened to reside in strategically important locations, such as the Lachin corridor, which witnessed fierce battles. Armenia is a traditional ally of the Kurds, and the Armenian victory in the war could have emboldened the Kurds of Turkey to pursue their military struggle for independence. Azerbaijan's Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan is not geographically contiguous with the rest of Azerbaijan, but is bordered by Armenia from north-east and Iran, Armenia's ally and Turkey's traditional rival, from south-west. During the Karabakh war, Nakhichevan was in danger of being completely blockaded or even militarily invaded by Armenia—Nakhichevan only possessed rudimentary defense capabilities, and was in no position to defend itself from Armenian forces. Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos reported that the President of Armenia had intelligence reports that Ankara was considering such a course of action, and his suspicions were further confirmed on October 5 1993, when the Turkish armed forces penetrated Iraq in the hot pursuit of militants affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

On October 11, 1993, Ambassador of France to Armenia, Madame France de Hartingh,¹¹ whom Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos describes as "a dynamic woman who spoke fluent Russian and knew very well the problems of the region,"¹² informed the Greek ambassador that according to French intelligence sources, there had been an agreement reached on the question of Armenia between the Chairman of Russia's Supreme Soviet, Ruslan Khasbulatov, and Ankara. Reportedly, Khasbulatov promised Turkish leaders that he would allow Turkish incursions of a limited nature into Armenia, to round up PKK militants, and "into Georgia to secure Abkhazia." According to the same source, Khasbulatov had also planned withdrawal of Russian troops from Armenia. Chrysanthopoulos adds that the same information was later confirmed by his "United States colleague."¹³

On October 12 1993, Chrysanthopoulos has a conversation with Serzh Sargsyan, who at that time was Defense Minister of Armenia, and later would become its president. In that conversation, Sargsyan also linked the events in Moscow with Turkish military build-up along the Armenian border. Sargsyan remembered the September 22 visit to Armenia by a Turkish military delegation under General Hayrettin Uzun in the framework of the CSCE (now OSCE) verification mission. The Turkish delegation reportedly asked to visit Armenia's border with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Quite predictably, the Armenian military authorities did not allow the Turkish officials to inspect the frontiers by land but did so from a high-flying plane instead. On October 2 and 3, 1993, when the Moscow rebellion was in full swing, Armenian authorities started to be alarmed that the Russian troops would be withdrawn from the country, and

feared a Turkish invasion was imminent. Defense Minister Sargsyan¹⁴ was in constant communication with his Russian counterpart, Pavel Grachev, who assured him a number of times that there was no question of recalling Russian troops from the Turkish–Armenian border.¹⁵ Around the same time, this author interviewed Russian diplomats posted in Georgia, who acknowledged uncertainty in Moscow but affirmed their strong support for President Yeltsin and his policies.¹⁶

Years after these events Ambassador Chrysanthopoulos affirmed in a conversation with this author that he strongly believed that the above-mentioned scenario was very much credible,¹⁷ and such an agreement did exist between Ruslan Khasbulatov and Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller. At the same time, he did acknowledge that the increase of Turkish armed forces at the border with Armenia in early days of October 1993 could have been “attributed to the occupation of Fizuli by the Karabagh armed forces.” Chrysanthopoulos suspected that Khasbulatov’s ethnic background as “Chechen Moslem” would drive him to get Russia side with Azerbaijan instead of Armenia, and generally self-proclaimed Chechen Republic would have been better positioned to support Azerbaijan. Indeed, Chechen fighters did aid Azerbaijani forces in their fight against Armenians. Most notably, Shamil Bassaev and Salman Raduev, the notorious rebel Chechen field commanders and warlords, alongside their troops, were involved in the battle of Shusha in 1992, which ended with Armenian victory. However, Khasbulatov was more likely looking for support from Turkey in his stand-off with Yeltsin, as that would have been more valuable to him than all the gains made by Armenia in the Karabakh war.

It is quite possible that Ankara indeed had some kind of understanding with Khasbulatov. However, if it was known to the Armenian intelligence, it was definitely known to the Russian intelligence as well, meaning that the Russian command would have developed its own plans regardless—even if Khasbulatov had won the stand-off with Yeltsin, the changeover would have taken some considerable time and the Russian armed forces would have acted according to the previously established strategic objectives. If the alarms raised by the Armenian leadership were false or exaggerated and the Turkish force build-up along the Armenian border in early October of 1993 was triggered by the military developments around Fizuli, this incident shows to what extent uncertainty dominated actions of the participant actors. The stimulus for action was provided by the clashes in Moscow, but strategic uncertainty itself was not caused by the Yeltsin–Khasbulatov struggle for power, instead, it was born out of the phenomenon of the self-proclaimed Armenian Karabakh state, Republic of Armenia’s ambiguous role in the war, and uncertainties associated with Russia’s role in the Karabakh war and its overall strategic objectives in the Caucasus. For both Armenia and Russia, the usual mode of operation during the Karabakh war was to officially assert one policy

line, normally neutral and peace-oriented, but to pursue contrary actions on the ground.

According to the October 1993 intelligence assessments in Yerevan, Turkey was also planning a move into Georgia in order “to secure Abkhazia.”¹⁸ Turkish invasion of Armenia to aid Azeri troops in the battles with the Armenian forces is not entirely improbable scenario; however, invading Georgia and depositing Turkish troops right at the Russian border is a step that would have led to a direct military conflict with Russia regardless who was running Moscow. Russia aided the Abkhaz rebels with weapons, ammunitions, and manpower in the 1992-1993 war, but officially and formally it was not part of the conflict. This allowed Moscow to secure its victory against Tbilisi, and at the same time, act as a peacemaker providing peacekeeping forces for the post-war Abkhazia. If the Russian involvement in Abkhazia in the 1990s was opaque that led many observers puzzled, the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia and the subsequent creation of the pro-Russian puppet states in Abkhazia and South Ossetia left no questions unanswered regarding its true intentions vis-à-vis Georgia. However, Georgia does not regard the topics affecting its territorial integrity as settled, and neither does Azerbaijan consider the Nagorno-Karabakh district to be lost to Armenia for good. In the long run, the existence of these frozen conflicts in the Caucasus creates strategic uncertainties for both Ankara and Moscow—they cannot exclude that parties of the frozen conflict will resort to force to settle their grievances with or without outside support. Moreover, if such an application of force were to escalate, they cannot properly anticipate each other’s reaction and behavior in terms of force deployment and intensity, especially if outside parties get involved. Full trust does not exist between Moscow and Ankara and it is unlikely to develop anytime soon. Turkey is a member of NATO, and hosts American military bases, while the resurgent Russian state pursues foreign policies that are designed to weaken NATO, and American influence in Europe, the Middle East, and anywhere near the Russian frontiers. Moreover, both Moscow and Ankara have demonstrated the willingness to use military force to suppress local dissent, and both have long records of using armed proxies in other countries in pursuit of their foreign policy goals. Both Moscow and Ankara remain vulnerable to each other in this regard: Ankara can fuel dissent among independent-minded Islamic groups in Russia, while Moscow can exploit the Kurdish question to undermine Turkey’s domestic stability. The two capitals do talk, often in cordial terms, but in the good old tradition of Asiatic politics, there is no reason for either of them to fully believe what the other is communicating. It is possible for Moscow and Ankara to end up on the opposite sides in the war over Georgia’s breakaway regions even though they share interests regarding maintaining status-quo in the Black Sea region.

Russian support for Armenia has been a well-calculated strategic move, such that by pursuing armaments supply and troop deployment policies in Armenia, Moscow has persistently put pressure on both Azerbaijan and Turkey, and by doing this, has managed to introduce a level of discord between Baku and Ankara. Understandably, a well-armed Armenia and Yerevan's decisive role in the Karabakh dispute has been more pressing and crucial for Baku than it has been for Ankara, and correspondingly, urgency in Baku has not always translated into the same in Ankara. Moscow views Armenia as an indispensable ally in the region, and has armed it accordingly. In fall 2016, it became known that Russia was supplying Armenia with ballistic missiles—the advanced short-range 9K720 Iskander missile systems—part of the \$200 million arms deal signed between the two countries in 2015. Previously, in 2013, Russia deployed an older version of the same missile, Iskander-M (SS-26 Stone in NATO designation), to the Russian troops stationed in Armenia.¹⁹ At the same time, Russia also agreed on an even bigger military deal with Azerbaijan, worth \$4.5 billion, presumably in response to the growing anti-Russian sentiments in Armenian society.²⁰ In October 2016, Russia participated in an arms exhibition organized and hosted in Yerevan, AermHiTec-2016, and used that opportunity to unveil its brand new “radio-electronic weapon,” a weapon “based on new physical principles.”²¹ Next ArmHiTech is scheduled to be held in March 2018.²² The Russian 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, Armenia, is one of the staging bases for the Russian troops in the Trans-Caucasus. The base permanently hosts no more than 3,000 troops, some of who are Armenian nationals. However, in the case of crisis, the base can accept thousands more from Russia as it houses a formidable supply of weapons and ammunition. It is widely believed that the Russian troops from the 102nd base will participate in a military conflict against Azerbaijan, if Baku were to try retaking Nagorno-Karabakh by force.²³

In October 2006, Russia's Black Sea fleet conducted live-fire maneuvers off Georgia's Black Sea coast. According to Georgian officials, Russian ships were as close as 16 miles from Georgia's coastline.²⁴ The live fire exercise disrupted civilian shipping in the area, as the Russian military vessels blocked the Georgian ports Poti, Supsa, and Batumi. The Russian government intended this exercise as a hostile act, as they declined to inform the Georgian counterparts of the movements of their vessels, and deliberately misinformed the public of the nature of the exercise. Then Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov labeled it part of Black Sea Harmony (BSH), a joint exercise with Turkey that the countries are supposed to be conducting after some advance planning. Ankara; however, publicly rejected this claim, and expressed its surprise and informed Georgia through diplomatic channels that not only the Turkish navy was not involved in the maneuvers at the Georgian coast, but it was not even informed about it.²⁵ It should be noted that it was not Ankara's idea to

invite Russia to join various naval security initiatives, but that of NATO. The Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, also known as BlackSeaFor, was initiated in 1998 by NATO at Turkey's behest as a confidence-building measure in the Black Sea region.²⁶ However, Russian naval threats to Georgia in 2006 suggested that BlackSeaFor was irrelevant as a regional security instrument.²⁷ As the events of August 2008 subsequently demonstrated, Moscow used the multilateral naval initiatives as a shield for its invasion of Georgia. Similarly, in February 2014, Russia used NATO warships deployed around Sochi,²⁸ ostensibly to aid in security measures for the Sochi Olympics, as a shield to invade Crimea. Both in 2008, and even more so in 2014, Turkey and its NATO allies had full evidence that Moscow was using regional stability-building measures as shields for aggressive military designs toward its neighbors. However, the environment of strategic uncertainty created in the Black Sea did prevent foreign policy decision-makers in the key NATO capitals from seeing clearly where exactly things were headed.

AMERICA'S CASUAL MOVES

In 2001, with the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty following the 9/11 attacks on American cities, NATO created the Operation Active Endeavour (OAE). A maritime military operation, the OAE was the first ever operation to be conducted by the alliance in the direct application of the collective defense provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty. It was one of eight military and security initiatives launched after the 9/11 attacks on the United States. The operation was aimed at terrorist activities in the Mediterranean Sea, ran until October 2016. The main operational area for the OAE initially was the Mediterranean Sea, with Turkey participating with other NATO members, and from 2004, non-NATO members were invited and joined some operations.²⁹ In 2006, at least one Russian frigate was allowed to join the OAE. In the same year, the United States proposed to extend the OAE area operations to the Black Sea. This initiative followed a vision of security threats first enunciated in 2002 by Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense, who noted that a "broad arc of instability" that stretched from "the Middle East to Northeast Asia" had been created by a "volatile mix of rising and declining regional powers."³⁰ In this context, the Caucasus and the broader Black Sea region was seen as a bridge or even as the "epicenter" for stability from Europe reaching into the greater Middle East and beyond. Azerbaijan was cited in the context of becoming "a successful Muslim democracy": "Azerbaijan's ability to transform itself into a successful Muslim democracy may be as important to our ability to win the war on terrorism as access to military bases on Azeri soil."³¹ One of the authors of this vision, Bruce P. Jackson, testified on the subject in the US Senate

on March 8 2005.³² Turkey was initially seen as an indispensable ally of the United States in the fight against international terrorism. Ankara received preferential treatment from the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) when it came to borrowing emergency funds in the wake of a major financial crisis in that country. In December 2001, the IMF approved the emergency funds for Turkey, while at the same time it allowed Argentina to sink in its sea of debt.³³ This preferential attitude was to change in 2003, when Ankara refused to support to join the US-led invasion force to Iraq. In the context of Rumsfeld's "arc of instability," this was a risky step to make, as Turkey risked inviting American disapproval and retaliation. As Bush administration's point man in the war against terror, Secretary Rumsfeld became a frequent visitor to the Caucasus since 9/11. First, he toured the region in December 2001, and in December 2003, he became the first senior US official to visit Georgia following the Rose Revolution. The Rose Revolution, ushered a new era in the post-Soviet Georgia, which now was led by unreservedly pro-American political forces under President Mikheil Saakashvili's leadership. In May 2005, President Bush visited Tbilisi, to celebrate "historic times when freedom is advancing from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and to the Persian Gulf and beyond."³⁴ This visit, made just before Bush's trip to Moscow, was interpreted by many as a "warning to Russia."³⁵ At the same time, due to its geographic proximity to the Middle East, Georgia was seen as an alternative to Turkey in America's search for allies. Unsurprisingly, neither Moscow nor Ankara found this newly blossoming U.S.-Georgian ties desirable: if it were to mature, the US-Georgian partnership would bring a long-term American military presence in the Black Sea, the maritime space jealously guarded by both Russia and Turkey as their exclusive area of military operations.

The 1936 Montreux Conference in Switzerland was attended by Turkey, Great Britain, the USSR, Bulgaria, Greece, Germany, Japan, Australia, France, and Yugoslavia. It regulates the movement of merchant and military vessels in and out of the Black Sea. The convention designated the Turkish Straits as international waters, but Turkey was allowed to maintain military control over the Straits. Although the articles of the convention regulating the passage of military vessels are definitely outdated, the treaty is still in effect and it is being largely respected by both the signatories and non-signatories.³⁶ To address its outdated nature, it would suffice to mention that Ukraine and Georgia, the two riparian Black Sea states most in need of naval protection, did not exist as sovereign international entities in 1936. In addition, all the navies concerned with the Montreux Convention have far outgrown the displacement limits set by the Convention.³⁷ In the end, the expansion of the Operation of Active Endeavour into the Black Sea did not happen due to active opposition both by Russia and Turkey. Ankara strongly opposed the initiative, arguing that the extension would violate the Montreux Convention of

1936, and there was no need for the OAE expansion as Turkey was running its own missions in the Black Sea, such as the Operation Black Sea Harmony, and BlackSeaFor.³⁸

The Operation Black Sea Harmony was launched by Turkey in 2004 specifically to oppose NATO's plans to expand into the Black Sea; Ankara invited Moscow to join the effort in 2006, and the latter immediately accepted the offer.³⁹ BlackSeaFor, as it was noted above, was initiated in 1998 by NATO at Turkey's behest, and subsequently, all Black Sea states were invited to join it. In 2004, the Russian Federation proposed to add counterterrorism to the force's mission in response to the American proposal to expand the Operation Active Endeavour into the Black Sea, and eventually used this multilateral effort as a shield to harass and threaten Georgia in preparation for the August 2008 invasion of that country. The theme of preserving the Montreux Convention has been so sensitive for Ankara that in the aftermath of the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, the Turkish leadership essentially sided with Moscow by refusing the passage through the Turkish Straits to two American vessels that exceeded 30,000-ton displacement—the ceiling for the passing vessels allowable under the Montreux Convention. Washington dispatched two hospital ships, USNS Comfort and USNS Mercy, converted oil tankers displacing more than 69,000 tons each, to aid Georgia's post-war reconstruction and humanitarian efforts.⁴⁰ Ankara still had to tread carefully by acknowledging the right of its NATO allies to deploy in the Black Sea provided they did not exceed the maximum allowable 21 days as stipulated by the Montreux Convention. NATO's Standing Maritime Group 1 and Maritime Group 2 have deployed to the Black Sea since the mid-2000s, something that never fails to annoy the Russians.⁴¹ However, in its quest to keep its dominant position in the Black Sea, Russia found an important ally. Still, the changing realities in the Black Sea region invited more decisive actions by Moscow as Russia saw its position in the Black Sea as even more vulnerable than that of Turkey's. Unlike Ankara, Moscow had no direct diplomatic mechanisms to oppose NATO's military expansion into Black Sea, and its two former Soviet Union states, Georgia and Ukraine, were openly championing the idea of joining NATO. Ukraine controlled Sevastopol, the all-important Russian Black Sea naval base, and Georgia formally owned the former Soviet submarine base in Abkhazia. The Kremlin kept considerable pressure on both Georgia and Ukraine, but no long-term solution was reached with either of these states. In August 2008, Russia attacked Georgia as soon as it was ready for military action, just before the 2008 American presidential election and during the Beijing Summer Olympic Games, but Ukraine remained an even bigger challenge as Moscow's treaty with Kyiv on the subject of Sevastopol and its naval base was due to expire in 2017.⁴²

In late 2005, Victoria Nuland, US ambassador to NATO, called on the allies to take NATO and "turn its power outwards; to lead the rest of the

world in offering a better future, one that embraces the core values of economic opportunity, pluralism, and democratic governance.”⁴³ In early years of the global war on terrorism, when outcomes in Afghanistan and Iraq were seen as optimistic, and the Syrian, Libyan, Yemen and other regional disasters were nowhere in sight, many in the West saw NATO as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East in a wide-reaching international effort to bring democracy and stability to the Middle East. As the United States looked more assertive in the Black Sea region, the likelihood of Washington at some point acting contrary to the Montreux provisions was increasing. After all, the United States was not a party to the 1936 convention in Switzerland, and never formally joined it. In December 2006, the influential Heritage Foundation called the US administration to re-draw its approach to the Black Sea region and come up with new policies.⁴⁴ This analysis was very critical of Russia’s conduct toward its smaller neighbors as it called the US government to step up its support for the Western-oriented Georgia. The Heritage Foundation report was very skeptical of Russian-Turkish rapprochement and criticized the “anti-Western sentiments” expressed in Ankara and Moscow. The analysts pointed out the occasions in which Russia and Turkey acted in concert to counter US interests in the region.⁴⁵ Other studies published in 2006 in the US, echoed the one by the Heritage Foundation. According to Hill and Taspinar, Russia and Turkey found common ground in the area of Black Sea regional security, and cooperated against Western interests in the region, because Russia and Turkey saw American policies “to spread freedom and democracy around the world not as a bulwark against tyranny and extremism in places like Syria, Iraq, and Iran, but as an expansionist policy that will further damage their interests.”⁴⁶ Bruce Jackson, in a 2006 policy review published by the Hoover Institution, pointed out the destructive nature of Russian conduct toward its smaller neighbors. He noted that President Putin’s “key political advisor, Gleb Pavlovsky, had publicly suggested that it would be advisable for the Georgian people to simply assassinate their president, Mikheil Saakashvili, to avoid a Russian military attack (interestingly and perhaps tellingly, Pavlovsky recommended a single shot, a reminder of the Chekist assassinations in the South Caucasus in 1920–21 as Bolshevik forces moved South).”⁴⁷ Jackson further urged geopolitical revisions in the Black Sea region to remove the outdated and oppressive mechanisms that governed commercial and military relations in the region. Among other recommendations, he advised to “overturn the norms that have permitted an unstable and anachronistic militarization to persist into the twenty-first century, such as the 1936 Montreux Convention establishing Turkish military control over the Dardanelles.”⁴⁸ By 2008, Russian concerns over the military future of the Black Sea reached its peak. Moscow had its reasons to be alarmed, as some officials in Georgia and Ukraine saw their countries membership in NATO as an almost done deal. In the June 2007,

interview to a Russian newspaper, Deputy Defense Minister of Georgia, Mr. Batu Kutelia noted that Georgia was already a *de facto* member of NATO.⁴⁹ Obviously, the Deputy Minister exaggerated quite a bit, but developments around the Black Sea encouraged by the United States gave him and officials like him the confidence to talk in that manner. Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia was designed to thwart that eventual-ity by dismembering the country and stationing its troops there.

After the dismemberment of Georgia, Ukraine remained a problem for Russia as the country possessed significant political hostility to Russia and sympathetic support to the West. In early February of 2014, the former US ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland, by that time US Assistant Secretary of State in the Obama administration, was seen in Kyiv handing out food with US ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt to participants of the Euromaidan movement organized by the Ukrainian opposition, who called for the resignation of President Yanukovich. The so-called Euro-maidan protests called for the resignation of President Yanukovich—Ukraine's opposition forces vehemently opposed Kyiv turning away from the negotiated deal with the European Union, which was supposed to give Ukraine an associate member's status in the Union. The opposition saw President Yanukovich's decision to end from Ukraine's orientation toward Europe as dictated by Moscow, and demanded the president to revert to the initial policy or leave the office. American officials in Ukraine held meetings with the leading representatives of the opposition, and as they exchanged their impressions of these figures, Nuland's phone conversation with Ambassador Pyatt was intercepted, presumably by the Russian intelligence service, and parts of it were posted on YouTube.⁵⁰ In that conversation, Nuland and Pyatt discussed the future of the Ukrainian government, and a distribution of government posts among the opposition Euromaidan leaders. Their exchange also indicated that U.S. Vice-President Biden was in support of the policy to aid the Ukrainian opposition, which called for the removal of the pro-Russian Yanukovich.⁵¹ The Euromaidan ended on February 20, 2014, with violent clashes between participants of the protest movement and an unknown armed group presumably sponsored by pro-Russian forces. A couple of days later, President Yanukovich resigned and fled the Russia, followed by a Russian invasion of and subsequent annexation of Crimea in March 2014, giving Russia sole control over the naval base in Sevastopol (before the Crimea events, the Sevastopol naval base was shared with Ukraine's Black Sea Fleet).

Turkey's reaction on Russia's annexation of Crimea was initially muted, neutral, and concentrated on the needs of the Crimean Tatars more than anything else.⁵² However, following the Russo-Turkish clash over the shooting down of a Russian attack jet by a Turkish interceptor in Syria in December 2015, Turkey's position on the subject changed into being openly pro-Ukrainian.⁵³ Following the July 2016 coup attempt in

Turkey, Ankara once again adjusted its position vis-à-vis Moscow, President Erdogan apologized for the downed Russian jet as he embarked on a process of healing the damaged relations between the two capitals. The failed coup, and especially its aftermath, highlighted Turkey's weaknesses. Whatever the motivations and designs for the July coup, the reaction of the Turkish government has been dramatically sweeping: thousands of people arrested, tens of thousands have been fired, and government, military, and diplomatic officers have fled the country. For these actions, the Turkish government, and President Erdogan personally, have been heavily criticized by the domestic opposition, those in exile, and by Western governments and civil rights activists.⁵⁴ The turmoil in Turkey was amplified by the fact that the Turkish government suspected the United States of helping the coup organizers, in very similar tones to Russian officials who blamed the United States for the so-called colored revolutions in the former Soviet Union that had brought to power pro-Western governments in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Soon after the failed coup, it became clear that Ankara would make conciliatory gestures toward Moscow.⁵⁵ The latter reciprocated, and even the December 2016 assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey at the hands of the security officer assigned to him by Turkish authorities could not derail this process.⁵⁶ In February 2017, the Russian ground attack jets mistakenly bombed a wrong location in Syria and killed three Turkish soldiers.⁵⁷ Ankara accepted the explanations provided by Moscow and did not complain too much about the tragedy. On May 7 2017, it was announced in Moscow that Gazprom, the Russian gas giant, would finally start the construction of the long-awaited gas pipeline under the Black Sea to supply gas to Turkey, and eventually, to the European Union.⁵⁸ This announcement was preceded by President Putin's declaration that his country's relationship with Turkey had fully recovered after the most recent crisis.⁵⁹

Russia's *Anschluss* of Crimea and its current attempts to consolidate military gains in eastern Ukraine to build a land-bridge between Russia proper and the newly acquired Crimea go a long way in Moscow's age old quest to maintain a dominant power status in the Black Sea basin, and to maintain secure access to a warm sea. Turkey does not appear to be very critical of Russia reconstituting its old Soviet-era power in the region—it is in Ankara's interests, too, to keep non-littoral states outside the Black Sea—unregulated and unrestricted military navigation in the Black Sea would not only result into an exposed and undefended Turkish Black Sea coastline, but also Ankara would lose control over the Turkish Straits, which cuts across the country's most important city, Istanbul. At the same time, Turkey remains a member of NATO and as such it has to make some accommodation to allies' access and maneuvers in the Black Sea, but such developments never fail to annoy Moscow. Moscow continues to see NATO enlargement as encroaching on its international status

and power, and especially the Black Sea forays by NATO navies are seen as designed to put pressure on the Russian Federation. Ankara initially managed to avoid confrontation with Russia due to the West's inability to influence the outcome of the Russo-Georgian war, and a rather meek and subdued response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine,⁶⁰ but following the sharp disagreements over Syria, Ankara has not been able to ignore Russia's new found confidence and its aggressive pursuit of national interests. Moscow's gains in Ukraine will nearly complete Russian leadership's plans to consolidate its strategic footholds in the former Soviet Union—the only partially unresolved issue being the oil and gas pipelines running from Azerbaijan to Turkey through Georgia in avoidance of Russian territory. The Baku-Supsa-Ceyhan oil pipeline sending Azeri oil to Turkey and further to the West has been a major achievement for Turkey, but following the 2008 war, the Russian troops stationed in the self-proclaimed puppet Tskhinvali statelet of Georgia have made a few test moves to take a portion of the pipeline under their control,⁶¹ having advanced their frontline and military infrastructure closer to the Georgian-controlled east-west pipeline.⁶²

For its strategic goals, Moscow ideally will have to undermine NATO by putting the alliance on a different playing field by creating conditions that would gradually separate European, and Turkish strategic interests from those of the United States. Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential elections and his initial declarations pronouncing NATO "irrelevant" seemed to be following a script written in Moscow. Russia can try to make NATO irrelevant by undermining the alliance's defense and security role in Europe and elsewhere. By engaging in small but decisive wars, Moscow has an excellent chance of influencing risk averse and impressionable politicians in Western capitals. This will leave Turkey somewhat isolated from its NATO allies, as it cannot just ignore the ongoing civil war in Syria and Russia's active military role there. Turkey risks to be negatively affected by the Russian expedition in the Middle East regardless of the final outcome—Moscow can use the Kurdish insurgents in Turkey, primarily the PKK, to sway Ankara when it comes to policy decisions favorable to Russia's strategic interests, and Moscow can make ad hoc alliances with Iran or Hezbollah to further pressure Turkey's sensitive issues in regional politics. If Russia were to remain engaged in Syria for a few years, Moscow will be more likely to influence Armenia for some concessions to Azerbaijan if it wants to avoid another regional conflict it will be called to attend—Russia will have major problems handling two significant regional conflicts simultaneously. The same scenario is not likely to work out for Georgia in its bid to gain concessions from Russia in relation to its breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (the Tskhinvali region). Georgia is not ready for any war, let alone one with Russia, and besides, its political class is almost singularly concerned with achieving some kind of recognition or accep-

tance by European institutions, which they believe to be paramount for the country's future. As no European institution without active American participation represents an immediate threat to Russia's national interest, Moscow will be content to let Georgians travel that road, especially since it will not likely lead anywhere. Brussels has developed a habit of organizing meetings of conferences with senior Georgian officials during the outbursts of Russian military activities—an exercise presumably designed to send “strong signals” to Moscow. As Russia settled in a routine of flying regular bombing sorties in Syria, Brussels, rather predictably, hosted Georgia's defense minister to recognize “Georgia's progress on its path of NATO integration.”⁶³ Such pronouncements encouraging Tbilisi are hollow as Georgia has no credible armed forces, no modern equipment to deter aerial, land or naval invasion, and NATO does nothing to remedy this problem despite Tbilisi's presumed “progress” on its path to become a NATO state. Especially glaring is Georgia's lack of naval defenses—a maritime nation, it is entirely devoid of a naval force, there is no credible defense infrastructure on Georgia's Black Sea coast, while its ground troops are primarily preoccupied with the NATO-sponsored peace support operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The Europeans have become nearly irrelevant in the ongoing and frozen conflicts in the Black Sea region, and Syria. European protests regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine only became vocal after a Malaysian aircraft filled with European citizens was shot down in July 2014 by a Russian owned and operated missile system over the rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine.⁶⁴ Even then the Europeans failed to achieve unity, once again highlighting the view that a common European identity is a farce. The developments in Ukraine could not convince the Obama administration to take Russia seriously and to come up with a course of action to deter its aggressive moves, instead Washington tried to “isolate” the Russian leadership by not holding high-level meetings. That period of “isolation” effectively ended by Russian deployments to Syria in August, 2015.⁶⁵ Under President Obama, Washington has been chiefly preoccupied with developments elsewhere in the world, with the administration much more interested in trade deals and social issues. In the Middle East, American policies have been low key, inconsistent, and ineffectual as Washington clearly did not anticipate Russia's Syria move. The West has remained largely inactive throughout Russia's deliberate policies at creating buffer states at its western and southwestern borders,⁶⁶ by undermining both Azerbaijan and Armenia through the Karabakh war, and dismembering Georgia and Ukraine. No single aggressive step by Moscow has been significant enough to draw the West out of its paralysis, while cumulatively they have achieved desirable results for Russia. Moscow's military initiatives did not worry Washington too much in 2008–2016, as Moscow continued to demonstrate its respect for free trade and open financial systems, has remained committed to market-guided

access to oil and natural gas resources, and continued cooperation with the US in key areas of nuclear proliferation and space exploration. These areas of US-Russia cooperation are even more likely to satisfy President Trump, who has been seen as “pro-Russian” from the very early days of his presidential campaign. Russia’s commitment to unfretted access to strategic resources and the routes for their transportation; however, may not live long into the 21st century as Moscow pushes ahead with its primary objective of establishing its dominance over the oil and natural gas reserves and infrastructure within the Eurasian continent.⁶⁷ If Moscow manages to rescue the current Syrian regime, it will strengthen its position both in the Caucasus and the Middle East, by making not only Syria, but also Iran its key ally in the process.

RUSSIA’S WARM SEAS

Historically, it has been widely believed that Russia needed access to warm seas in order to maintain its great powers status. This was especially true in the 19th century when Russia’s seas froze for many months every year or were too far from European centers of power. The belief was carried on through the 20th century, and strategy demonstrated that it was not misplaced at all: the last battles of the Russian civil war took place on the Black Sea coast of Russia and in Crimea, and during World War II, the battles in the Black Sea basin leading to the German push toward Stalingrad were crucial, so was the defense of Sevastopol and Crimea. Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader from 1964 to 1982, built his post-war career on his war-time exploits defending a small patch of seashore south of Novorossiysk, which was assaulted from three sides by Germans for more than 200 days. Russia’s access to the Black Sea and operations of its combat-ready fleet there was threatened in the 1990s, and in the first decade of the 21st century, when the sea nearly became NATO’s internal lake: of the littoral states, former Soviet allies, Romania and Bulgaria joined NATO, and two former Soviet republics, Georgia and Ukraine wished to do the same. Had Georgia and Ukraine succeeded in their plans, Russia would have ended up with a single Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, rather shallow and unusable for large vessels, and entirely unsatisfactory for combat readiness and to the credibility of Russia’s Black Sea fleet. Russia’s short 2008 war with Georgia, followed by the self-proclaimed Russian protectorates of Abkhazia and “South Ossetia,” changed the situation dramatically by halting Western enthusiasm for farther enlargement of European and transatlantic institutions. Russia’s invasion and annexation of Crimea in spring 2014, topped by Moscow-fueled rebellion in southeastern Ukraine, has heavily tilted the Black Sea basin balance of power toward Moscow.

The United States and its European allies possess no immediate countermeasures to Russia's military annexation of parts of Georgia and Ukraine. Moscow has scored significant victories by unilaterally revising post–Cold War European political geography—and this is very significant—no country has been able to do it unilaterally since Germany's ill-fated attempts in the 1940s. The Black Sea basin also carries international significance for all the states in the region, as well as for the international system overall due to two factors: strategic importance of Georgia's and Ukraine's coastline, and oil and gas reserves of the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁶⁸ These two closely linked issues also dwarf all others in the region, as both the Russian Federation and the United States have primarily focused on oil and the Black Sea access since the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁶⁹ The retrenching Russian state in the 1990s did barely enough to maintain its influential role in the Black Sea region, while the rebuilding of Russia's military under Vladimir Putin has allowed Moscow to pursue more aggressive and uncompromising policies. In fact, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some of the most significant disagreements between Moscow and Washington have developed around the issues involving developments in the Black Sea basin: the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline, Tbilisi and Kyiv's aspirations to join NATO, the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, Moscow's recognition of Abkhazia and "South Ossetia" as independent sovereign states, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and the Russian invasion of southern Ukraine, which among other things, has caused the destruction of Malaysian airlines' passenger jet. Tukey has been closely involved in most of these developments, as a member of NATO, and as an interested party in the affairs of the Black Sea.

Russia's great power status depends much more on the developments in the Black Sea than in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, the United States or other great powers do not see their endurance as great powers being dependent upon their access to the Black Sea coastline—it is essentially a remote backwater for them, but for Moscow, to lose strategic access to the Black Sea will translate into a major step back from its international power status and influence. The historical and strategic legacy of the Black Sea is too great for Russia to abandon without a serious fight. The key to this access lays in Crimea and Sevastopol—because of its dominance in the Black Sea can Russia deploy its troops and mount successful military operations in Syria, among other things. However, Crimea, a peninsula with a narrow land-bridge to the mainland Ukraine, is economically unsustainable in long-term—it receives most of its resources such as electricity, gas, oil, and even drinking water from mainland Ukraine; hence Russia's attempts to build a land corridor from Russia to Crimea by capturing Luhansk and Donetsk regions of southern Ukraine. This captured land in eastern Ukraine, the so-called Novorosiya, will serve Moscow long-term plans of either expanding its presence

there or using it as a bargaining chip with Kyiv so that Crimea's blockade is avoided. During the Cold War, the USSR managed to maintain almost exclusive control over the Black Sea. Georgia and Ukraine belonged to the Soviet Union, and Bulgaria and Romania were members of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact. During the Cold War, the Black Sea was seen as an internal sea by Moscow—its dominance there was not challenged by the West—the US and other NATO members respected both the Montreux Convention⁷⁰ and Turkey's desire not to pursue confrontation with Russia in the region.⁷¹ More recently, with Bulgaria and Romania joining NATO, and Georgia and Ukraine have displayed strong intentions of joining the Western alliance, Moscow has witnessed its "internal" sea gradually turning into an internal lake of its main rival, NATO. Naturally, the Russian leadership displays anxiety regarding such prospects and will resist attempts to bring any of it to fruition. Russia's power and assets are not invulnerable; however, and the more reserves Moscow controls in its bargaining with other great powers, the more secure its possession of Black Sea would feel. In long term, Moscow's stakes in Syria represent such precious reserves that can be traded with the West.

Russia's takeover of Crimea has confirmed that Moscow had no desire to transition to a Black Sea naval presence and operation with very limited assets, mobility, from a restricted and disadvantageous location. The deployment and operation of Russian troops in Syria has further demonstrated the strategic advantages of having strategic dominance in the Black Sea area, and unrestricted access to the Mediterranean. For the first time since Russian troops approached and challenged Turkish dominated lands in the 18th century, the Turkish state finds itself nearly surrounded by combat ready and aggressive Russian military units. The events in late 18th century saw Russia emerge as a great European power, after the imperial government managed to "cut windows" into the Baltic and Black Seas.⁷² Incidentally, the Russia's leadership has resurrected the 18th century term "Novorossia" initially used to designate the newly conquered land of the Russian Empire, and has applied it liberally to the areas of southern Ukraine that have become the battleground between the combined forces of the Luhansk-Donetsk rebels and Russian regulars, and the Ukrainian armed forces. Freezing the conflict in "Novorossia" suits Russian interests well—war can be resumed sometime in the future, while the territory can be proclaimed sovereign or absorbed in the Russian state. An effective Syrian engagement will not diminish Russian gains in Ukraine in Georgia; however, if the Syrian campaign proves to be protracted with Russian troops committed indefinitely, there is a good chance that Ukrainians, and potentially Georgians to be encouraged to challenge Russian military positions in their respective countries. The Russian Federation could find itself facing an ad hoc informal coalition of determined opponents if it shows any weakness in Syria; Ankara specifically should be nervous seeing Moscow flexing muscles south of its bor-

der, relying on Iranian support, and courting Kurdish forces. On the other hand, a protracted, inefficient or excessively aggressive engagement in Syria will make Russia very vulnerable and susceptible to long-term losses. To avoid this, Moscow will use diplomatic tools of negotiation, consulting, and cooperation, and will appeal to public opinion in both Russia and the West using the guise of combating an extremist Islamic entity, in parallel to providing military assistance to Assad, and potentially weakening the Turkish state.

By capturing Abkhazia from Georgia in 2008, Russia not only secured that part of Georgia's northwestern coastline, but it also has assumed ownership and control of the old Soviet diesel submarine base in Ochamchiré. Diesel submarines are necessary for the adequate defense of the Black Sea fleet assets, and for deterrence of other navy vessels operating in the sea, and an additional naval base enhances submarines' operational effectiveness. Since then, among other things, Moscow has deployed a new submarine system have been developed and tested specifically for Black Sea operations.⁷³ Prior to the August 2008 war with Georgia, Moscow had authorized a multi-billion project to make the Novorossiysk harbor suitable for its Black Sea fleet vessels.⁷⁴ With Sevastopol firmly in Russian hands serving as the crucial strategic location for the Russian fleet, the combined Novorossiysk—Ochamchiré bases will add to Russia's naval strength significantly and enable Moscow to exercise dominant power in the region. Sevastopol is blessed with a remarkable strategic position in the "middle" of the Black Sea, which allows a naval force stationed there to monitor, control, and address potential threats emerging from any geographic direction.⁷⁵ New weapons, military bases, the pursuit of strategic goals with military power both in the Black Sea and in the Middle East will help Moscow keep its adversaries in the region unstable, uncertain, and on the defensive while deterring future advances by NATO in the region. Having NATO of its plans for Georgia and/or Ukraine without taking a step to act suits Russian goals as eventually only talk and no action will make the Western alliance weak and not credible.

Russia is the only great power in the world with autarkic defense infrastructure—this Moscow has inherited from the Soviet Union. No other major power in the world manufactures and produces domestically everything necessary for its homeland defense, including energy resources, fuel, and research and development in military industry. In comparison, the United States, the largest military power in the world, depends on oil (and natural gas) imports, albeit from close allies, for the proper functioning of its military capabilities, not to mention the equipment purchased from NATO countries. Dependence on defense-related imports is even more pronounced for major powers like the United Kingdom, and France. Besides, these two and others of similar capabilities in Europe and Asia's Far East cannot possible defend themselves unilateral-

ly against such potential adversaries as Russia or China (the latter being a highly hypothetical one) without being involved in military alliances (NATO) or treaties (with the United States), while Moscow needs no alliance/treaty membership to defend itself against any potential aggressor. In fact, the current military doctrine of the Russian Federation is written with such self-sufficiency in mind, by assuming it to be a natural and even desirable circumstance.⁷⁶ Such distribution of defense capabilities boosts Russia's international position, at least for the coming decades, and informs its unilateral foreign and defense policies. Moscow's actions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria demonstrate that Russia's political and military leadership would like to keep the autarkic nature of their country's defense and security arrangements, and that it is ready to make necessary unilateral steps to secure them. In this regard, Russia will not hesitate to resort to military action in the Caucasus, in parallel to developments elsewhere, if such a step brings material advantages without much expenditure—Georgia's oil and gas transit pipelines would be one such tempting target—this is the only such corridor for the Caspian hydrocarbon exports remaining outside Russia's physical control. When and if Moscow's attention turns to this target, Georgia will not be able to offer much defense, but this is not an unavoidable eventuality provided Tbilisi plays its cards right.

Russia/USSR's unilateral great power policies, often running counter to preferences of most of the rest of the world during the second half of the 20th century, were only possible due to the country's vast oil and natural gas reserves.⁷⁷ The first decade of the post-Soviet period saw Russia militarily preoccupied in its immediate neighborhood, and with its own secessionist uprising in Chechnya. Only under Putin has Russia managed to recover some of its old military confidence, and now Moscow can sustain regional campaigns at its borders for few years in the face of global opposition, criticism, and even comprehensive sanctions—the latter being the most unlikely to be sustainable as Russia exports large quantities of oil and natural gas,⁷⁸ not to mention its membership in the United Nations' Security Council. Without ready access to cheap oil and natural gas, Russia's unilateralism will end alongside with its aggressive defense and foreign policies, and if this were to happen it will be the first such major change in Russian foreign policy since Alexander Suvorov's military expeditions in Europe and the siege of Izmail in the late 18th century. Russia's carbohydrate resources will diminish and end one day—there is nothing permanent under the Sun—but before that day comes, the development of strategic access points to carbohydrate reserves elsewhere, such as in the Middle East, will keep the end day father into the future.

Moscow under Putin has resurrected a *realpolitik* approach to its neighborhood out of necessity, to reassert Russian power, and to make a strong counterpoint to its Western neighbors. Now Russia is fully ready

to pursue a tit for tat approach in international matters. When Russia's current national security strategy was debated in the 2000s, the principle of the so-called double standards was vocally discussed as the most pressing international issue facing Russia. Russian officials complained that according to the "double standards" promoted by Washington, the West under US leadership granted itself rights to pursue any international policy desired, while other states were put under much more restrictive standards of behavior.⁷⁹ The national security document approved by President Medvedev in May 2009, insisted that Russia would take as many and as decisive unilateral steps as it would be necessary to maintain equity (*ravnopravie*) in international affairs.⁸⁰ Pundits in Russia point out that the lessons of most recent history necessitate Russia's more aggressive stance in international matters. Despite verbal promises made to the Soviet leadership at the end of the Cold War, NATO started to enlarge in the late 1990s, fully ignoring vocal protests from Moscow. Presumably, it was Russia's perceived weakness that gave the Western allies a sense of self-confidence and righteousness. This was enough to convince Moscow's old guard that international politics was indeed a zero-sum game—the territories "conceded" by the Soviets as their spheres of influence were "overtaken" by its former adversary. Since the NATO enlargement debate opened in the late 1990s, Moscow has insisted that the process of NATO's eastward expansion was against its vital interests, especially if the crucial states, Ukraine and Georgia, joined the alliance. Russia's primary objective in Georgia and Ukraine has been to deter NATO's further expansion, to cancel these states' ability to use the NATO card in their policies with Moscow, and to reestablish Moscow's exclusive control over the Eurasian landmass. Russia under Putin's leadership has pretty much achieved what it has intended, except for now Georgia's pipeline corridor for Caspian oil and gas still escapes its formal control.

Under Putin, the Russian Federation has managed to reassemble all the former Soviet republics under its control, except for the Baltic States. Georgia and Ukraine had been the most resistant to Moscow's advances—both of them have paid a heavy price by losing parts of its territory to the Russians. The bottom line is this: the countries of the former Soviet Union, including those in the Caucasus, are left to face or deal with the Russians on their own. For the states of the Caucasus this means that they will have to seek individual arrangements with Moscow as any unified front among them is highly unlikely. Moscow will continue to play them against each other for its own advantage, and to pursue its unilateral foreign policies aided by formidable military power. However, Moscow's Syrian engagement can be a blessing for the Caucasus: the longer Russia remains in Syria and the deeper it wades into this sectarian war, the less appetite its military will have for new forays elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

Russia's successful military campaigns in the Black Sea basin has removed this region, and the eastern regions of the former Soviet Union, out of NATO's influence. Although Western leaders have consistently rejected the idea of "new dividing lines" in Europe, especially ever since NATO enlargement became a reality, what the Europeans will get now is, in the best case scenario, the continent divided between NATO and Russian spheres of influence, and the dividing line will cross over Ukraine and Georgia. However, there are costs and consequences for Russia, and more than anything else, this new rump assembly of its Eurasian states and quasi-states will effectively limit Russian influence over its own side of the dividing line, while if European capitals are to distrust Moscow more, Russia could only gain things through a tit-for-tat approach.⁸¹ Moscow has acquired a stronger voice in European politics through fear and without being a member of either the European Union or NATO. The Russians have achieved this by developing an aggressive, and unilateralist line in foreign and defense matters, and are unlikely to step away from it anytime soon. Even under someone else's leadership, it will be nearly impossible to convince Russia's military and political class to abandon the current policy line—why would one step away from something that brings success? So, if it takes force or threat of force to change Russia's behavior, the attempts at convincing European states to embrace Cold War-style attitudes toward Russia can only add more frictions to transatlantic relations within the north Atlantic alliance. Europe is under huge strain not only due to resurgent Russia, but also because of their ill-conceived policies that supported the overthrow of secular dictatorships in the Middle East, which in turn supplied Europe with hundreds of thousands of refugees and economic migrants. When Europeans bicker among themselves over major issues, such as refugee affairs, it translates into disunity and misunderstanding that also affects their trans-Atlantic links. The Americans are highly unlikely to argue with the Russians over the issues of European concern about which the Europeans themselves have no unity. This does not exclude future frictions between the United State and Russia, but future conflicts between them are likely to remain largely cold and marginal.

Russia's record of military engagements since the collapse of the Soviet Union has clearly demonstrated Moscow's serious attention to its regional matters, which in the case of this vast country translates into continent-wide affairs in both Europe and Asia, a trend more recently demonstrated by the Russian military expedition in Syria, and preceded by the Anschluss of Crimea in 2014, the war in southeastern Ukraine, and the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. The trend started in the early 1990s with Moscow's intervention or participation in the Karabakh war, in Tajikistan, in Moldova, in a long and bloody war in Chechnya, and in Geor-

gia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia. With its regional ambitions, Russia's interests have clashed with those of its neighbors, but no country outside the former Soviet Union has received more attention from Moscow than Turkey. The dynamics of the Russo-Turkish relations has not been one-sided but has involved both the promise of close cooperation and military conflict. Moreover, on a couple of occasions, the relationship has gone from friendly and cordial to critical and back again in a matter of days. Asli Fatma Kelkitli has explained this form of unusual relationship between the two through complex interdependence theory.⁸² According to this theory, in the contemporary world, states behave the way they do because their fortunes are inextricably tied together. The theory developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s by American international relations scholars Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Jr. explains relations among states by going beyond the conception of states as unitary actors in international politics motivated solely by the power struggle and competition for survival or resources, and by giving emphasis to societal and transnational forces.⁸³ Indeed, power struggle and competition do not satisfactorily explain the full gamma of relations among contemporary states, and in many ways, it appears that the ties between Russia and Turkey are inextricably connected. In a large picture, all states are in some relationship of complex interdependence given the global challenges of trade and finance, climate change, international terrorism, or pandemics. Theory of complex interdependence provides a statement rather than an explanation of complexities of the contemporary world, and in no way does it shed any insight over rapidly fluctuating attitudes toward each other that Moscow and Ankara are exhibiting. Perhaps, this theory needs updating or an alternative theory can work better, but theoretical exploits are beyond the scope of the current chapter. It is clear; however, that both theorists and reporters have noticed that Russia and Turkey manage to cooperate and struggle at the same time. President Putin may have pronounced the ties between the two countries healed, but no one can argue convincingly that all the problems between Russia and Turkey have been fixed or that an institutional framework has been put in place to prevent future deterioration of relations. In some important areas of mutual interests, Ankara and Moscow have priorities and objectives that are opaque to the other. This contributes to strategic uncertainty between the two, and neither side has made efforts yet to introduce clarity in the issues of mutual interests. The inability to get rid of strategic uncertainty may be linked with the ongoing low-scale and frozen conflicts or insurgencies in the Black Sea region that create both opportunities and vulnerabilities for the parties involved.

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NOTES

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77. With growing oil prices and improvements in technology, Russia’s estimated oil reserves started to grow steadily since early 2000s. *BusinessWeek*, “Oil: What’s Russia Really Sitting On?” November 22 2004, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/04_47/b3909079_mz054.htm; Gulf Oil and Gas, “Lundin Petroleum Announces Major Oil Discovery in Russia Caspian Sea,” 7/3/2008, <http://www.gulfoilandgas.com/webpro1/MAIN/Mainnews.asp?id=6218>. Current estimates are at around 79 billion barrels or 9.42 km³ “Russia oil reserves,” www.wolframalpha.com.

78. In 2007, Russia was number two in oil exports after Saudi Arabia (8 million barrels a day) with around 5 million barrels of crude a day. CIA, *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/217rank.html>. In 2006, when Dmitry Medvedev, subsequently Prime Minister and later President of Russia, was deputy head of Gazprom, and Russia’s economic growth was very

robust, LUKoil president Vagit Alekperov warned that Russia might have to import light oil products by 2009–2010 if its secondary refining capacity did not improve (RFE/RL NEWSLINE Vol. 10, No. 46, Part I, 13 March 2006). This necessity has never materialized, but the point made by Alekperov is likely to remain relevant in the foreseeable future: sooner or later, Russia will encounter problems in its oil production sector. In the second quarter of 2009, the first time since the end of the Soviet Union, Russia with 7.4 million barrels a day overtook Saudi Arabia (7.25 million barrels per day) as world's top oil exporter. "Russia Overtakes Saudi Arabia in Oil Exports," *BusinessWeek*, September 9 2009, http://www.businessweek.com/executivesummary/archives/2009/09/russia_overtake.html. According to US Energy Information Administration, in 2013, Russia made 68% of its export revenues in oil and natural gas sales. "Oil and natural gas sales . . ." July 23 2014, <http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=17231>. Even with Europeans reducing their dependence on Russian oil and gas in 2014, Russia's crude oil export only declined by 5.6% from 2013. "Here's Where Russia Shipped Oil Last Year as Ukraine, Europe Diversified," *Forbes*, April 7 2015 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2015/04/07/heres-where-russia-shipped-oil-last-year-as-ukraine-europe-diversifies/>. By March 2017, Russia's oil and gas condensate output stood at 11.11 million barrels per day. "Russian cuts to oil production stall in February," Reuters, March 2 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-energy-production-idUSKBN1691XP>.

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80. "Strategiia natsionalnoi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi federatsii do 2020 goda," The Security Council of the Russian Federation (in Russian), <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html>.

81. Moscow's policies are along the lines of geopolitical arguments made by new Eurasianists in Russia since early 1990s.

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EIGHT

Restrictions on a Possible Rapprochement between Turkey, Russia, and Iran

İbrahim Arslan

The historical developments and radical changes at the crossroads of the geography of Asia and Europe have profoundly influenced history. The foreign policies of the major powers in the region have been influential in shaping Asia, Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. This chapter will discuss whether the two regional powers of the Middle East, Turkey, and Iran, could develop cooperation with the Russian Federation (RF) in security field, and which restrictions this trio would face if they decided to cooperate in that way. In this context, relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union/RF, Turkey and Iran, and Iran and Soviet Union/RF are analyzed since the World War I; and general attitudes and judgments of these countries against each other will be dealt by taking into account their policies between the years of 1918–2017. Furthermore, the overlapping and divergent points of the foreign policies of Turkey, Russia, and Iran will be determined by taking into account the latest developments in Syria and Iraq. In the last section, the restrictions of a co-operation between these three states will be discussed and clarified.

The World War I caused significant consequences in the Eurasia–Middle East region as well as in the entire world. The Ottoman Empire disintegrated after World War I. The national movement in Anatolia organized under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha came out victorious and the Republic of Turkey was founded as an independent state in 1923 as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, which had existed since 1299. Although just only three percent of the territory of Turkey is located

in Europe continent, there is a strong Western influence in the country.¹ Turkey adopted Western values since even before the proclamation of the republic and participated in several regional and global international organizations. Turkey also applied to join the European Economic Community (EEC), and, Turkey—EEC relations were initiated based on the Ankara Agreement which was signed with the EEC on 12 September 1963.²

Soon after the disintegration of Tsarist Russia during World War I, the Soviet Union was established in 1922 and existed until 1991. The last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, launched the reform of “glasnost” (openness) and “perestroika” (restructuring) in 1987. In this process, separatist movements intensified in the Baltic and Caucasus. Then, a referendum, which was intended to preserve the Soviet Union as a federation of sovereign republics, was held in 1991. Although people voted in favor of the Soviet Union with 77% in the referendum, this referendum became the starting point of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and then all fifteen constituent republics separated from the Soviet Union.

Developments in Iran forced it to get acquainted with different systems of administration after the World War I. The country was separated into two areas of influence between the United Kingdom and Russia in an agreement in 1907. After the collapse of Tsarist Russia during World War I, the United Kingdom succeeded in having Iran sign a treaty on 9 August 1919, aiming to make it be the only predominant power in Iran. With this treaty, the United Kingdom took over the task of reorganizing the Iranian government and military, and promised to provide technical and financial aid. Iranian nationalists reacted against this development, and the Iranian Parliament did not ratify the treaty. Such that the United Kingdom was not able to change the attitude of the Iranian Parliament.

A friendship treaty was signed between Iran and the Soviet Union on 26 February 1921. With this treaty, the Soviet Union respected the independence and territorial integrity of Iran. Two years later treaty, Ahmad Reza Khan seized power by a coup.³ Iran experienced a radical political change against Shah’s regime in the second half of the 20th century. The growing unrest in and oppositions to the Shah’s rule has intensified in January 1978, so that Shah was forced to leave the country at the beginning of 1979. The monarchy was replaced by a new regime under the leadership of ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in February.⁴ An idiosyncratic presidential system rules Iran; according to its 1990 constitution, the president is defined as a regime which represents and protects the theocracy and the republic, which means the Sharia of Islam. Sharia means the religious orders.⁵

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE SOVIET UNION/
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Ottoman Empire was defeated and occupied by the victorious countries in World War I. Then, a national liberation movement started in Anatolia. The financial and weapons provided by Russian Bolshevik government to the Turkish leadership, who pursued the national independence war (1919–1922) against the occupiers, made a significant contribution to the rapprochement between the Bolshevik and Turkish governments.⁶ Despite this political situation, the new government in Turkey repudiated communism, especially during the era of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of modern Turkey.

Turkey remained non-belligerent during World War II. The Soviet Union sent a diplomatic note to Turkey just before the end of the World War II and announced that the 1925 Treaty on Friendship and Neutrality would not be extended.⁷ This treaty was previously extended in 1929, 1931, and 1935. When explaining the decision to terminate the treaty, Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, emphasized that post-war conditions changed, and the Soviet Union was ready to negotiate a new treaty with Turkey. Leaving the border cities Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Union, giving bases to it at Bosphorus region, and the modification of the Montreux Treaty in favor of the Soviet Union were some of Molotov's wishes communicated on 7 November 1945. Not accepted by Turkey, these wishes had a substantial impact on the rapprochement with the West during this period.⁸ From the perspective of Turkey, relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union until 1964 can be defined by the concept of "difficult neighborhood."⁹

After World War II, countries gathered around the winners of the war, the US and the Soviet Union. At the beginning of the Cold War, it was almost impossible for many countries, if not most, to pursue independent policies beyond these two blocs.¹⁰ During this time, the US developed military and economic measures against the Soviet Union in the name of protecting the countries that had Western values. The US Congress decided to provide military support to Greece and Turkey in the framework of the doctrine that the Truman Administration developed in 1947 that came to be known as the Truman Doctrine.

From the early years of the 1950s to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, some developments in the international environment, as well as questions in Turkey—US relations influenced on relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union took place. The Soviet Union declared on 30 May 1953, after Stalin's death, that it was abandoning the demands it made to Turkey in 1945.¹¹ In this period Turkey's NATO membership¹² and the military bases established in its territory disturbed the Soviet Union. According to the Soviet Union, the installation of nuclear armed Jupiter missiles in Turkey in December 1957 meant that Turkey's territory

would be used against it. The solution related to the withdrawal of the missiles¹³ would not be concluded until the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. The decision to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey's soil without considering the view of Turkey forced Ankara to review its relations with the US, while contributing to the developing of ties with the Soviet Union. In this period, another important development was witnessed in the Mediterranean. Cyprus Greeks, who did not want to comply with the provisions of the 1960 Cyprus constitution, increased their attacks to the Cyprus Turks since 1963. Upon this, Turkey, using its guarantor right, initiated a military intervention to Cyprus in 1974. In order to prevent Turkish military intervention to Cyprus, US President Lyndon Johnson sent a letter to the Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü in 1964. In his letter, President Johnson highlighted that Turkey would not use the weapons provided by the United States to Turkey, in a military intervention to Cyprus. After Turkish military intervention to Cyprus in 1974, the United States imposed an embargo to Turkey. In response, Turkey closed some American bases in Turkey.¹⁴ These developments also contributed to the improvement of Turkey—Soviet Union relations. With detente during the Cold War in the 1970s, trade between Turkey and the Soviet Union increased. The relations evolved under the influence of the detente within the Western alliance.¹⁵ It means that conditions in international system granted Turkey an opportunity to improve regional relations.

Starting in the 1980s, the Soviet Union gave its priority to economy, not ideology. In addition, thanks to the efforts of both countries, Soviet Union and Turkey, to restructure their economies at the same period, this similarity has created an environment for the development of cooperation in the political area as well. As the US tried to implement an economic boycott to the Soviet Union due to martial law imposed by the Military Council for National Salvation in order to defend socialism against the first independent trade union behind the Iron Curtain—the Solidarity (Solidarnosc) in Soviet occupied Poland, Turkey signed a contract with the Soviet Union regarding the expansion of the Seydisehir Aluminum plant. With this development, Turkish-Soviet economic relations have gained momentum. The Natural Gas Agreement, signed on 18 September 1984, became the turning point of relations between the two countries.¹⁶

During the official visit of the Soviet delegation of Council of Ministers to Ankara on 25–27 December 1984, “Agreement on Economic, Trade, Long-Term Program for the Promotion of Scientific and Technical Cooperation” for a 10-year term, “Agreement on the Exchange of Goods,” and “Cultural and Scientific Exchange Program” for the period between 1986–1990 were signed.¹⁷ Cooperation in the field of energy that was concluded in 1984 started with the acquisition of the natural gas via the pipeline coming from Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria since 1987.¹⁸

During the 1980s, while efforts of Turkish government aimed at strengthening of the market economy in Turkey, similar policies such as

perestroika and glasnost witnessed in the Soviet Union. New policies in Soviet Union led to the intensification of political instability in the country. During this period, Turkey's respect for the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union facilitated the bilateral relations between two countries. During the visit of President Turgut Özal to the Soviet Union in 1991, the Friendship, Good Neighborhood, and Cooperation Treaty was signed between the two countries. This document became the basis for relations with the Russian Federation (RF). The Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborhood and Cooperation, brought extensive cooperation and obligations in matters respecting the territorial integrity and political independence of both states, counseling on regional issues, communication in military affairs, extensive cooperation in economic, cultural issues, and the fight against terrorism.¹⁹

With the agreement of 30 October 1993, between Turkey and the RF, Turkey became the first NATO country to receive weapons from the RF. These weapons were essential in the fight against the PKK, a Kurdish terrorist organization. Due to arguments related to the human rights violations of Turkish security forces against civilian people reside in the Southeast of Turkey, Germany stopped selling weapons to Turkey in this period. The Agreement on the Principles of Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation, which entered into force on 19 July 1994, constitutes a significant milestone of the relations between two countries.²⁰ In agreements 1991 and 1992, the parties described each other as friends for the first time since the Treaty of 1925. In the context of economic relations, Turkish firms received \$ 9.5 billion worth of business in contracting in the RF from 1987 to 1998. Another area where relations have developed was the tourism sector. Turkey has become the leading country for Russian tourists. For Russia, Turkey was the second most visited country after Germany in 1997.²¹

The concept of competition, which was used to describe Turkey–Russia relations in the decade following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, was replaced by the concept of co-operation in the 2000s. The economic and commercial issues, in which the defense industry and energy sector were the main factors of the co-operation, became the center of the bilateral relations.

During the capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, the Russians' supportive attitude and the indifference of Turkey to the Second Chechen War, which began in September 1999, became effective in the rapprochement between the two countries. The remarks of Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov during his visit to Turkey in October 2000, were remarkable when he said: "Russia and Turkey are not rivaling each other; we are partners and our governments will develop bilateral relations within this principle."²²

The primary text that shaped the new era in bilateral relations is the document entitled "Action Plan for Bilateral Cooperation in Eurasia:

Multidimensional Partnership from Bilateral Cooperation,” dated 16 November 2001. With this document, Turkey and the RF, for the first time, passed from competition to cooperation. The two countries’ relations were strengthening at the cooperative partnership level, at least on paper. Political and economic ties, and the fight against terrorism were main issues in this plan. The Framework Treaty on Military Cooperation and Military Personnel Training was signed by the Chiefs of General Staffs of both countries during the visit of Anatoli Kivasnin to Ankara on 14–18 January 2002. After 32 years, a Russian president visited Ankara for the first time. During the visit of Vladimir Putin, on 5–6 December 2004, a Joint Declaration on the Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation was signed. Putin explained that Turkey and the RF have similar approaches for developments in Iraq, Afghanistan, the South Caucasus, and the Middle East.²³

During the visit of Turkish President Abdullah Gül to Russia in February 2009, a 12-page joint declaration was issued. In the declaration, it was stated that the new targets of the parties were to allow free circulation of goods, services, and capital between the two countries in the context of developing existing cooperation even further. It was decided to use the Turkish currency (lira) and Russian currency (rubl) for bilateral trade. In 2010, the scope of the relations was greatly expanded. During the two-day visit to Moscow on 12–13 January 2010, Prime Minister Erdogan stated that trade between the two countries was expected to increase to \$100 billion within five years. During the official visit of Russian President Dimitri Medvedev to Turkey on 11–12 May 2010, the High-Level Cooperation Council was established. Erdogan and Medvedev took the co-presidency of the Council.²⁴ The council would act as the guiding body in setting the strategy and main directions for developing Russian-Turkish relations, and meet annually to coordinate the implementation of important political, commercial and economic projects, and cultural and humanitarian cooperation.²⁵ Additionally, bilateral relations gained a momentum with the mutual visa agreement.²⁶

Turkey provided valuable support for US-RF and NATO-RF relations, especially in the post-August 2008 period. Cultural activities between the countries also increased and in 2002 Russian Culture Year in Turkey and 2008 Turkish Culture Year in the RF were celebrated.²⁷ Turkish Airlines has started direct flights from Ankara, Istanbul, and Antalya to Moscow as well as to other cities of the RF. By 2014, Turkish Airlines had ten direct flights to the RF.

The Black Sea-based relations with the RF were established in the early 1990s within the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The Turkey-RF cooperation in the Black Sea caused some problems between Turkey and its traditional allies, especially the United States in the 2000s. Turkey’s main goal was to shape regional policies

with realistic strategies by being aware of the regional influence of the RF.

As can be understood from the developments summarized above, since 2000, multidimensional cooperation between the two countries has been established. The reasons why the relations between the two countries do not transform into a more advanced strategic level may be Turkey's desire to preserve its position with the West owing to its NATO membership. Finally, the failed coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016 also contributed to strengthening of relations between two countries. Russia and Iran supported the Turkish Government against the failed coup attempt of the followers of the Gülen community, led by Fethullah Gülen²⁸ because both countries were aware of that this political stand will provide them a geopolitical partner after this crisis.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND IRAN

Iran announced that it recognized the newly established Ankara government and appointed Mofakhan Eshag as the Iranian ambassador to Ankara on 22 June 1922. Turkey and Iran did not establish relations immediately after World War I. The reasons of these countries for not signing a friendship treaty in this period can be explained according to:²⁹

Historical background

Pan-Turanism

Great Britain

The problem of Kurdish tribes

Since 1501, the main cause of the struggle between the Ottomans and Iran under the Safavid dynasty was that Istanbul represented Sunni Islam while Tabriz was defending Shia Islam. Pan-Turanism, which was followed by the Committee of the Union and Progress (İttihad ve Terakki) in the last days of the Ottoman Empire, disturbed Iran as it had millions of Turkish-rooted people living in the country. Despite Iran's declaration of its neutrality, Ottoman forces invaded Iranian Azerbaijan in the World War I and tried to provoke Turkish-rooted people with a nationalist understanding. Iran worried that the new regime established in Turkey after the proclamation of the republic would pursue Pan-Turanism/Pan-Turkism policy, as the Committee of the Union and Progress did. According to Iran, this policy was a threat to Iran's stability due to its Turkish population. Additionally, Iran did not want to stir a British reaction by engaging with the Turkish government in the aftermath of the World War I because, in the region, the dispute related to Mosul was lasting between Turkish government and Great Britain. The British and Bolsheviks had significant influence over the Tehran government in that period.

Then, Iran got closer to the Soviets and a friendship treaty was signed between Moscow and Tehran on 26 February 1921.³⁰

After the World War I, Kurdish tribes near the border of Turkey-Iran started to see themselves as independent communities. This situation threatened the stability and security in the region strained the relation between Turkey and Iran.³¹ Both countries were suspicious that the tribes in the region were supported by the other side. This security dilemma lasted until 1926. In order to solve this problem, the Friendship and Security Treaty was signed between Turkey and Iran on 22 April 1926. Then, both countries aimed at increasing the effect of the Treaty of 1926 with the additional protocol signed on 15 June 1928.³² These problems experienced on the Turkish-Iranian border, determined by the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin in 1639, indicate that both countries could not establish enough control over the tribes living in the border region at that time.³³ The Friendship and Security Treaty of 1926 was the first instrument between Ankara and Tehran.³⁴ Despite this agreement, the border issue could not be solved completely. The Kurdish groups, who rebelled against the Turkish government, were fleeing to Küçük Ağı Mountain in Iran. To prevent this, Turkey invaded Küçük Ağı region and offered a Turkish territory to Iran in lieu of remuneration and Iran had to accept this situation. Later, on 23 January 1932, two treaties were signed in Tehran, one for the resolution of the border dispute and the other one for the cooperation in the field of the law. After the main problem, the border dispute, had been solved, two treaties (Friendship Treaty and Treaty on Security, Neutrality, and Economic Cooperation) were signed in Ankara on 5 November 1932, which reaffirmed the Treaty of 1926 and the additional protocol of 1928. Bilateral relations started to develop in 1932 and reached the highest level in June 1934, when Iranian Shah Reza Pahlavi visited Turkey. Iran, as a candidate country for the Council of the League of Nations, withdrew its application in favor of Turkey in 1934, thus this country showed its solidarity with Turkey in international arena.³⁵

The nationalist movement under the leadership of Prime Minister Mossadeq, which attempted to nationalize Iran's oil,³⁶ was not welcomed in Turkey in the early 1950s. Since Turkey has worried that the Soviet Union would influence Iran, Turkey-Iran relations entered into a crisis in the period of 1951–1953 during Mossadeq's administration.³⁷ When Iran–Great Britain relations deteriorated due to the oil issue, Turkey supported Great Britain, including complying with the oil embargo against Iran. After the 1953 military coup, by Shah Mohammad Reza on Iran, the Soviet threat increased in the region. Against the Communist expansion, the Baghdad Pact emerged in 1955.³⁸ Member countries of the Baghdad Pact were Great Britain, Iraq, Turkey and Iran.

Although Iran had taken its place in the anti-Communist camp as an ally with the US, there remained unresolved problems in Turkey–Iran relations. Iran had supported the opposing Kurdish groups in Iraq, and

although Turkey informed Tehran that the Shah's support for Iraqi Kurds to establish an autonomous structure in Iraq was dangerous in terms of regional stability, there was no change in the Shah's policy. According to the Shah, the Kurds were Persians speaking a different dialect, and the right to protect the Kurds in the region belonged to Iran. Besides, Iran wanted to be the leader country of the region³⁹ by establishing control over the countries in the region where Shia Muslims live, and controlling islands and water ways in the Persian Gulf directly.

In the 1970s, the streets in Iran became the scene of mass protests. Although the Shah wanted to transform Iran into a nation state, the Ulama did not want to lose their power in the society and they started a riot against Shah's administration with the craftsmen in Bazaar. As a result of popular movements, the Shah fled the country in January 1979. Turkey recognized new regime of ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on 13 February 1979, just two days after the political system changed in Iran. The end of the Pahlavi dynasty and its nationalist ideology in Iranian foreign policy have been a relieving development for Turkey.⁴⁰

At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, Iran returned to its traditional policy during the Shah administration: Iraqi Kurds were supported against Baghdad. Turkey conveyed two wishes to Iran in the face of these developments. These were that the Iraqi-Turkish trade would not be harmed, and the PKK would not be supported. Iran has paid attention to both issues during the war, but the logistical support provided by Iran to the PKK became the central problem in the bilateral relations during the 1990s. Turkey declared its neutrality in the Iran-Iraq War. Turkey-Iran trade reached its highest level after the trade agreements were signed which included trading Iran's oil supply in return for Turkey's basic consumption goods.⁴¹ The end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1989 resurfaced the previous problems between Iran and Turkey and the relations soon deteriorated. As a result, trade declined by 10% in 1985. The first crisis in relations emerged three months after the end of the war, on the commemoration of Atatürk's death, on 10 November 1988, when the Iranian embassy did not fly its flag at half-mast. In response to this, in June 1989, at Khomeini's death, Turkey flew the Turkish flags at half-mast and Iran responded to it in the same way on 10 November 1990, the death anniversary of the founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In that period, when Turkey tried to develop relations with Israel, Iran increased its support for the PKK and Syria. Thus, relations were frosty but far from being in a crisis.⁴²

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, despite a start of the race between Turkey and Iran to be a model country for the newly independent countries in the Caucasus—Central Asia; both countries, Turkey and Iran, were not successful because the Russian Federation has started to increase its influence in the region since 1993. In this period, Heydar Aliyev, who came to power in Azerbaijan in 1993, followed an appease-

ment policy for Iran and obstructed extremist nationalist movements aiming at Azerbaijani rooted people living in the neighbor countries; therefore, Iran pursued a balanced attitude in the Azerbaijani-Armenian war. Concerned about the rapprochement between Azerbaijan and Turkey having the same ethnic origin, Iran experienced some anti-Turkey initiatives. For example, in response to the organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation established by Turkey, Iran founded the Caspian Sea Cooperation Organization.⁴³

The crisis that arose in the Persian Gulf in August 1990 after Iraq's occupation of Kuwait concerned both countries. When Iraq was defeated by alliance under the leadership of the US, the northern Iraqi Kurds revolted, but Iraq suppressed the insurgency. A million and half of Kurds had to seek shelter in Iran and Turkey. The fact that Turkey supported the US presence in Iraq led Iran to define Turkey as the "servant of the devil." Two important Kurdish groups and Turkmens were encouraged by Turkey to negotiate with Baghdad, while Iran was trying to control Kurdish groups independently from Turkey.

The stagnation in economic relations between Turkey and Iran after the Iran-Iraq war was reinvigorated with the independence of the Central Asian republics following the collapsed Soviet Union. Iran became a transit country for Turkey to reach Central Asia. In 1996, Turkey pledged to buy 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Iran annually. The regular flow of natural gas, which started at the end of 2001, had a positive effect on the development of relations between these countries.⁴⁴ Turkish-Iranian trade reached 13.7 billion dollars in 2014.⁴⁵

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND RUSSIA

Iran and Russia signed the treaties of Gulistan in 1813 and Turkmenchay in 1828 that divided Azerbaijan into two, leaving a significant part of present-day Azerbaijan within Iran's territory. Relations between the two countries entered a new stage with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the 1921 revolution in Iran. According to the agreement signed between the two countries on 26 February 1921, Soviet Russia canceled all privileges of the Tsarist Russia in Iran. Article 6 of this Agreement was related to intervention: if a third party used Iran's territory as a base to attack Soviet Russia and its allies, and if Iran could not remove this threat on its own, Soviet Russia would be allowed to intervene in Iran. This article constituted a legal basis for the entry of Soviet troops into Iran in August 1941.⁴⁶ In order to increase its influence over the World, Russia aimed to reach to the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean throughout its history. Russia's constant desire to land in warm seas has disturbed Iran all the time due to its geographical location on Russia's route. Moreover, the danger of communism was another threat to Iran,

but with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Iran had no land border with Russia any longer, and Communism ceased to be an ideological threat to it. After these developments, the Iran–Russia relations began to develop on the basis of mutual interests.⁴⁷

Iran–Russia relations can be summarized under several titles. These are: military and technical relations, nuclear energy, diplomatic relations, and the status of the Caspian Sea. Military–technical relations and nuclear energy issues are standing out as the most important issues between both countries. After the World War II, the influence of the US had begun to increase in Iran. Despite the US, it seems that Iran also tried to improve its relations with the Soviet Union in economic, political and military fields toward the end of the 1960s. The Soviet Union made an agreement with Iran in January 1966 and had undertaken large-scale projects in this country such as iron, steel, automobile factories and natural gas pipelines. The sale of some military weapons to Iran by the Soviet Union began during this time.⁴⁸

With the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran proclaimed the US as the “Great Satan” and the Soviet Union as the “Little Devil,” which aim at capturing the world. Iran’s relation with the Soviet Union came almost to a halt during this period, due to its acting with the motto “neither East, nor West.”⁴⁹ Although Russia supported Iran at the beginning of the Iraq–Iran War of the 1980s, it later started to sell arms to Iraq and then this development resulted in the deterioration of bilateral relations.⁵⁰ The Soviet Union was accepted by Iran as a “military” enemy before the Iranian Revolution and as of an “ideological” enemy after the Revolution. The Iranian leader Khomeini disapproved the desire of the Soviet Union to establish close relations with Iran after the Islamic Revolution by declaring the US and the Soviet Union as “fundamental enemies of Islam.”⁵¹

The war with Iraq forced Iran to establish closer bilateral relations with its sole supplier of arms and military equipment, the Soviet Union. Thus, Iran signed an agreement with Russia in 1986, according to which Iran wanted Russia to stop its military support to Iraq, whereas Russia wanted Iran not to react to its occupation of Afghanistan.⁵² In 1989, a series of agreements were signed on the purchase of arms and military supplies during the visit of Iranian Parliament Chairman Hashimi Rafsanjani to Moscow. Iran’s dependence on weapons from Russia increased in 1990–1991. From the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 2000s, the sale of weapons to Iran by Russia has exceeded by \$ 2.5 billion.⁵³

The reasons for the fluctuations in Iran–Soviet Union relations ending with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 must be sought in the conditions of the international system and radical changes in Iran. As an example, the start of the Cold War after the World War II made it impossible for Iran–Soviet Union relations to be maintained in a stable period due to different political systems. The realization of the Islamic Revolu-

tion in Iran in 1979 and then the establishment of a radical new political order in this country led to the emergence of a new environment and new foreign policy. The Iran–Iraq War and the intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan were other sources of tension between Tehran and Moscow. After the revolution, the Soviet Union became one of the first countries to recognize the Islamic Revolution and began to strengthen friendship relations with Iran. Three years after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, three developments affected Iranian–Soviet relations negatively. These were the unilateral cancellation of Articles 6 and 7 of the Soviet–Iran Agreement of 1921; the end of natural gas exports to the Soviet Union in exchange for raw material imported by Iran; and the occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union.⁵⁴

The US made a secret deal with Russia in the mid-1990s to prevent Russia from selling weapons to Iran. According to the memorandum signed by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and the US Vice President Albert Gore in 1995, Russia was to restrict arms exports to Iran, refrain from making new deals, and not sell any weapons to Iran. In consideration of this memorandum, Russia was to receive financial assistance from the United States. According to former Russian Chief of the General Staff Leonid Ivashov, Russia continued to cooperate with Iran while the “Gore-Chernomyrdin Memorandum” was in force.⁵⁵ The two countries signed the Agreement on Principles of Cooperation and Principles of Mutual Relations between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran during Iranian President Mohammad Khatami’s visit to Moscow in March, 2001. Thus, the two nations, by drawing the framework of future relations, agreed on commitments such as regional security, and preventing the use of force in mutual relations.

After 2001, the presence of the US in the region was a threat to Iran, which stopped its military nuclear program in 2003 to avoid an invasion or attack by the United States as happened in Iraq.⁵⁶ Under President Putin, Russia has increased its power in the Middle East in this period. The US invasion of Iraq, and its growing influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus, worried Russia, which began to pursue policies in the Middle East⁵⁷ to counter growing American influence and some of the reasons⁵⁸ for Russia and Iran to act jointly in the region may be: The desire of the US to set up a base in the Caucasus and Central Asia is seen as a threat by Iran and Russia.

THE EASTWARD EXPANSION OF THE NATO

The fact that a large part of the energy resources of the Caspian Sea is in the control of foreign countries. Both countries are opposed to activities of the third countries in the region. Russia and Iran are generally against western ships in the Persian Gulf. Both countries perceive them as ene-

mies and, according to Iran, this region belongs to itself, and thereby all developments in that region should be under its control.

Both countries do not want a strong Azerbaijan in the region. A strong Azerbaijan can be a threat against stability in Iran due to its Azerbaijani rooted people and in Armenia, a partner of Russia and Iran. The close relationship of Turkey with the Turkic republics in the region that include Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

The status of the Caspian Sea can be seen as a problem between the two states. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there were only two littoral states to the Caspian Sea, Iran and the Soviet Union. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan emerged as independent countries.⁵⁹ To benefit from Caspian oil, the US started to establish bilateral relations with the newly independent states. Uncomfortable with these relations, Russia declared that the Caspian is a closed sea to keep third countries away from the Caspian Sea, by claiming that these new states are the successor states of the Soviet Union and therefore they are friends by the agreements signed in 1921 and 1940. Russia's oil reserves on the Caspian coast are less than the other states; this makes the sharing of the sea difficult. Iran does not have any oil-related efforts; the Gulf of Basra is the most important oil region of the world. Therefore Iran is more interested in having influence in the region.⁶⁰

Azerbaijan is one of the issues that both Iran and Russia act jointly in the region. Both are against a strong Azerbaijan which is an ally of the US. Iranian Azerbaijan is five times bigger than the nation of Azerbaijan in terms of population. In terms of territory, Iranian Azerbaijan is still much bigger than Azerbaijan. Despite Azerbaijan does not have any provocative initiative and discourse related to the Azerbaijani population living in Iran, Iran considers Azerbaijan as a threat.⁶¹ For this reason Iran and Russia support Armenia in the Azerbaijan–Armenian war.⁶²

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

With the claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, the US and the Great Britain invaded Iraq in March, 2003 and the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was overthrown. Following the invasion and post occupation mistakes, security in Iraq has collapsed. Violence between Iraq's Sunnis and Shias has reached undesirable points. Nearly 170,000 US troops were stationed in the country when the US presence in Iraq reached its peak. The US ended its combat operations in Iraq in 2010 and the US troops abandoned Iraq in December 2011.⁶³ The Iraqi and Syrian Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist organization aiming at the establishment of Caliphate in the areas where the Sunni population resided in Iraq and

Syria, started to increase its strength in a chaotic atmosphere with the withdrawal of all US troops from Iraq in 2011. According to reports of the Syrian Human Rights Watch organization, the number of ISIS's warriors was approximately 50,000 in Syria and 30,000 in Iraq by August 2014.⁶⁴

Sixty six countries are contributing to the international coalition aiming at the destroying of the ISIS which threatens general security in the region.⁶⁵ The US supports the Iraqi forces and Kurdish elements such as People's Protection Units (YPG) and Democratic Union Party (PYD) as the main fighting groups in the struggle against the ISIS. Turkey, on the other hand, does not want to be on the same side with these groups which it defines as terrorists, declaring that it will not allow a terrorist corridor on the south of its border. According to public perception in Turkey due to their same leaders and policy guidelines, there is not any difference among those three Kurdish groups (PKK, PYD, YPG) in the region and they are terrorist organizations.⁶⁶ Parallel to the developments in Iraq and the Arab Spring, anti-regime demonstrations in Syria started in March 2011. Between 2014 and 2016, ISIS controlled a vast area in Syria and Iraq; in the cantons Afrin, Kobané, and Cizre, the administration of PYD lasts.⁶⁷ Although Turkey had tried to persuade Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to introduce reforms in Syria at the beginning of the demonstrations, it did not succeed in its initiative. Then Turkey started to support Syrian opposition group called as the Free Syrian Army (FSA) against Assad.⁶⁸

Although Iran and Turkey did not have the same approach at the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Turkey had generally good relations with Iran. Following the 15 July coup attempt in Turkey, Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif's visit to Turkey on 12 August opened a new era in relations between the two neighbors.⁶⁹ During his visit to Turkey, the Iranian foreign minister praised the rapprochement between Ankara and Moscow and congratulated the Turkish nation for its stand against the coup.⁷⁰

The common interest against the emergence of a Kurdish state brings Iran and Turkey together related to the territorial integrity of Syria under centralized rule.⁷¹ Russia has supported the Assad regime from the first day of the Syrian civil war in 2011. Due to differences in their policies in the process, it was almost impossible to not to encounter serious problems for Turkey and Russia. Tension between these countries reached its highest level in November 2015 when two Turkish F-16 fighter jets shot down the Sukhoi Su-24 Russian attack aircraft on the Turkish-Syrian border on 24 November 2015 due to air space violations. The shooting down of the Russian plane was covered in the Russian press with titles such as "coup against relations between Turkey and Russia" and "the most dangerous military event with a NATO member after the Soviet Union."⁷² But the relations became normal again after about six months. In June 2016, before the July 15 coup attempt, President Erdogan talked to

Putin, and the first step of the normalization process between Turkey and Russia was taken on this date.⁷³

There is a strong perception in Turkey that the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETO) shot down the Russian plane and carried out the 15 July coup attempt to destabilize the country. Fethullah Gülen, the leader of this organization, was born in 1941. He is an Imam and preacher. Many students have studied in his Islamic schools that have been built by Fethullah Gülen with donations. His students and other members of the Gülen community obey him fully. Fethullah Gülen transformed this community into a terrorist organization to control governments in countries. Due to being a threat to Turkey's stability, after 1980 decision was issued in Turkey to capture Fethullah Gülen, and eventually he immigrated to the United States in 1999. In Turkey, comments are being made that the shooting down of Russian plane and 15 July coup were attempts to end the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia, and to force Turkey to continue its relations with the West as it used to be. The Turkish government, claiming that Fethullah Gülen is directly linked to the 15 July coup attempt, requested the US to extradite him. If Gülen, who has been living in the United States for several years, is not extradited to Turkey, this political situation may justify those views, affect the relation between Turkey and the US negatively, and make Turkey seek alternative sources of regional cooperation.

Due to its role as a game changer in the ongoing Syrian crisis, Russia is seen as a partner for a political solution by Turkey. This points to a significant policy change⁷⁴ at least on the regional issues. The European Union (EU) Progress Report on Turkey was published on 9 November 2016 during these developments. Turkey was criticized in the EU Report for the actions it has taken against FETO and PKK supporters.⁷⁵ This has further increased the tension in the government circles against the EU and the West in general. During this period, the Russian ambassador to Ankara was assassinated by a Turkish policeman on 19 December 2016. The Turkish government announced that the assassin was a covert member of the FETO terrorist organization. Russia, contrary to expectations, did not react strongly to this development and explained that the assassination aimed at preventing the development of the Turkey–Russia relations. On Russia's request, the assassination is being investigated jointly by Turkey and Russia. Another fragile development in this period was related to the arms support to the ISIS. During the operation of Turkey's Euphrates Shield in Syria, President Erdogan's allegation related to the US's arms support to the ISIS⁷⁶ attracted attention in the international arena.

The 15 July coup attempt became a new start for Turkey to shift its policy in Syria. Turkey, which could not harmonize its policy with the West in Syria, has tried to find a way out in Syria with Russia and Iran. After the talks among the Turkish, Russian, and Iranian foreign ministers

in Moscow, the three countries announced on 20 December 2016 that they set a standard position to the solution of the Syrian crisis.

CONCLUSION

The distinct feature of relations among Turkey, Russia, and Iran in the past was the lack of shared confidence. Considering this historical reality, it is not so easy to claim that Turkey and Russia can be members of the same alliance in the field of security in a short time. The lack of confidence emerges as perhaps the most significant restriction in relations.

Although Turkey has been trying to be a part of the West since its foundation, it cannot be said that its people have thoroughly espoused Western values. However, this does not mean that those who support Western values have little influence in the country. Any government in Turkey, aiming at changing relations with the West radically, needs the support of the majority of the population. If not, the stability in the country can't be sustained. This divergence in the Turkish public is a serious barrier for Turkey to change its Western-oriented foreign policy. But despite the ebb and flow in its dealings with the West, Turkey is still seen as pro-Western by Russia and Iran.

Iran's attempt to create a Shiite crescent with Iraq-Syria-Lebanon-Yemen in the Middle East is a significant restriction of the rapprochement with Turkey because the majority of Turkish people are Sunnis. Although the Turkish Republic has not pursued a foreign policy based on a sect since the establishment of the republic, nowadays, there is a general perception among opponent groups in Turkey that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) has been abandoned this approach since 2002. Additionally, Sunni governments in the region, especially Saudi Arabia, will not support Turkey's approach to Iran with the concern that the Sunnis will lose ground. If Turkey insists on getting closer to Iran, Turkish policymakers should envisage that economic relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia will be affected adversely.

Turkey and Russia are rivals for influence in the region. In this context, Azerbaijan is another restriction. Turkey can't improve relations with Russia and Iran against Azerbaijan because of historical reasons. If a consensus would be reached by taking into account Turkey's expectations in Syria, in Crimea and in the Caucasia where Turkish-Russian geopolitical interests overlap, it may be possible to develop relations between Turkey and Russia more.⁷⁷

It is an exaggerating to suggest that Turkey will leave NATO and join the Eurasia bloc as there is no evidence for such a development. Turkey's close rapport with Russia may mean that it wants to shape its relationship with the Western bloc, more than a half-century-old ally, within a new paradigm and a renewed framework.⁷⁸ In addition to being a NATO

member, Turkish Armed Forces' weapons standards, Turkey's export to the EU countries (66.7 billion Euro in 2016), and the historical and cultural relations with the West for more than two centuries are other factors that explain why Turkey cannot quickly abandon the NATO and the EU.⁷⁹

A security alliance between Turkey, Russia, and Iran depends on a radical change in Turkey's foreign policy. Since the proclamation of the republic in 1923, Turkey has not changed its foreign policy choice of using diplomacy, despite the radical developments and changes in the international environment such as the World War II, Cold War, bipolar world order, and post-Cold War. It seems difficult for Turkey to find a significant reason requiring a fundamental change in its foreign policy. Additionally, it is known that Russia is not willing to establish relation on the basis of equality with the countries in the region. Russia still believes that it is superior to the countries in the region as it was during the Cold War period. This reality prevents improving cooperation in the field of security between Russia and Turkey. However, the EU's exclusive attitude toward Turkey throughout ongoing membership process since 1963 and, in general, increasing of anti-Turkey and anti-Islamic attitudes in Europe make it easier for the current ruling party in Turkey to get closer to Russia.

Russia and Iran are not only friends but also rivals. As an example, Russia did not heed the Iranian Islamic Republic when Russia needed the help of the US to restructure its economy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In that period, Islamic fundamentalists were seen as a serious threat to the security of Russia following the West's approach.⁸⁰ Therefore, it can be claimed that Turkey, Iran, and Russia can come together in case their interests would overlap when there is an external influence on the stability of the region. This is the main reason why these countries, which are not satisfied with the politics implemented by the West under the leadership of the US in Syria and Iraq, are getting close to each other.

One of main topics discussed in Turkey is regional cooperation. The proposal of the Secretary General of the Council of National Security in 2002 aiming at signing agreements to develop cooperation with Russia and Iran was much debated in Turkey.⁸¹ This debate has not lost its significance since then. But it should not be forgotten that deepening of relations in the field of security among Turkey, Russia, and Iran may be perceived by the West as a strong step toward restructuring of the international system. In this case, one of the first groups to be affected negatively by the possible sanctions imposed by the West to Turkey may be nearly 5.5 million Turkish citizens living in the Western countries. Therefore, Turkey has to develop its multifaceted policies by taking into account not only security issues but also social and economic factors that affect its foreign policy.

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NINE

Central Asia at the Crossroads of Russian–Turkish Cooperation and Competition

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With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the region of Central Asia has acquired a particular significance, finding itself at the center of a complex process of cooperation and competition of regional players, including Turkey and Russia. The importance of the region lies in its strategic location at the intersection of key trade and transport corridors as well as in its abundant energy resources, which is especially from Europe's perspective seen as a way of diversification from Russia's energy hegemony in Eurasia. Furthermore, as the balance of global economic power gradually shifts from the Euro-Atlantic to a dynamic Asia-Pacific region, energy-rich Central Asia progressively gains a new geopolitical and geo-economic significance. In this regard, China's westward economic expansion and Russia's pivot to Asia transfers traditional importance of Central Asia as an energy reservoir into an area of conflicting and overlapping continental trade, infrastructure, and transport projects.

From Turkey's and Russia's perspective, Central Asia, along with its increased geo-economic value, represents a region of particular importance, since these two major players in Eurasia have their own specific interests and influence in the region. Both countries consider the region as an object to promote their own political, economic and cultural power. Russia, due to the deeply embedded Soviet legacy, traditionally conceives of Central Asia as its "historic sphere of influence" and implements numerous integration initiatives to strengthen position in the region. Through the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU),

which includes Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan form Central Asia, Moscow confirmed its continuing strategic economic and security interests in the region and also demonstrated its desire to restore its power in the post-Soviet region. In this regard, neo-Eurasianism as an conceptual foundation of Russia's foreign policy behavior constituted a major factor which reinforced Moscow's aspiration to ensure the integrity of Eurasia with its core in Central Asia under dominant Russian power. At the same time, since the beginning of the 1990s, the Turkic republics of Central Asia, largely ignored in Turkey's foreign policy interests during the Cold War period, became a focal point of its strategic thinking and subsequently gained importance within the country's broader Asian strategy.

A combination of a specific ideological component (based on cultural and ethno-linguistic affinities with Central Asian peoples) with a pragmatic approach to ensure economic interests, represents a distinctive feature of the institutional and political involvement of Turkey in the region. It is exactly this peculiarity of Turkey's Central Asia policy which approximates it to Russia's traditional position and historical role in the region and serves as an imperative for multifaceted competition and cooperation between the two major regional powers.

This chapter proceeds in the following three steps. First, it looks into the regional players' political, economic, and cultural engagement policy toward post-Soviet Central Asia. Second, it attempts to address the main features of their twofold regional cooperation through mutual and conflicting interests at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Third, the chapter briefly discusses some important determinants of the changing roles and influences in Central Asia within the context of the new dynamics of multilateral regional competition.

RUSSIA'S CENTRAL ASIA POLICY: FROM INDIFFERENCE TO HIERARCHICAL ENGAGEMENT

Russia's continual power and influence in Central Asia is deeply ingrained in its historic presence in the region throughout the Czarist, Soviet and post-Soviet periods.¹ Though it is commonly believed that in terms of the post-Soviet Russian foreign policy, Central Asian states throughout the whole period of their independent existence have remained Moscow's historic sphere of influence, the content and trajectories of its engagement policy toward the region has changed considerably.

Russia's Disengagement from Central Asia in the Early 1990s

During the first half of the 1990s, post-Soviet Russia's preoccupation with a substantial process of redefining its place in the emerging new

world order necessitated the disburdening from the Soviet legacy. Against the background of neo-liberal foreign policy concept to become an integral part of the Euro-Atlantic system in the early 1990s, Moscow significantly distanced itself from the Central Asian countries which were virtually sidelined from its foreign policy priorities. Considering the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a mechanism for peaceful disintegration, Russia was not only unwilling to keep the post-Soviet countries of Central Asia within its sphere of influence, but openly demonstrated its indifference and disinterest, which resulted in a failure to formulate clear policy objectives toward the region and develop an effective form of cooperation. As Moscow abandoned Central Asia new forces, particularly Turkey, with its enormous economic and cultural potential to influence, acquired a chance to develop direct ties of cooperation with the new independent republics.² Moscow's reluctance to deal with its Central Asian neighbors in the early 1990s was reflected in its receding military presence in the region and in its neutral position toward penetration of NATO through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative.³ Moreover, Moscow has made no serious attempts to prevent the end of common economic and monetary space formerly existed among Russia and Central Asian countries.⁴

Conceptual Adjustment of Russian Foreign Policy and a Renewed Attention to Central Asia

Since the mid-1990s, certain signs of adjustment in Russia's stance toward Central Asia have emerged as a result of re-evaluating Moscow's foreign policy preferences within the context of the so-called Primakov doctrine. This new strategic thinking reasserted the idea that countries of the CIS constitute Russia's historic sphere of interest and any foreign intrusion of the region should be perceived as a substantial threat to Russia's national security.⁵ While to some extent continuing an official discourse of Russia's Euro-Atlantic integration, the core idea was recovering Moscow's role as a center of influence over the entire post-Soviet region. From this perspective, Central Asia was identified as a crucial part of Russia's "near abroad," since exactly this region constitutes an essential element of strengthening Russia's international status as a strong Eurasian power.

Within the context of such a policy recalibration, the idea and intellectual tradition of classical Eurasianism, which views Russia as a unique cohesive civilizational entity, encompassing the Eurasian landmass and congruous with centuries of coexistence of divers peoples and socio-cultural factors,⁶ was redefined as an ideology of "neo-Eurasianism." As a substantial source of Russia's strategic thinking and foreign policy behavior this concept defines "Eurasia as a special geographical space and civilizational zone that represents the legacy of Russian imperial and

then Soviet state," which by its nature constitutes a substantial contrast to the West with its Atlanticist world order.⁷ Its core principle maintains a necessity of reassembling Eurasian space into some sort of consolidated political entity under Russia's domination.⁸ Therefore, this renewed approach to Russia's near abroad excludes possibility of any foreign power projection in Central Asia, particularly of Turkey, with its idealistic discourse of pan-Turanism. Such a conceptual adjustment of Moscow's strategic thinking has increased the role of Central Asia in Russia's foreign policy and has allowed to expand a pragmatic cooperation with the countries of the region mainly through improving contacts on military and security issues.⁹

Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for Cooperation and Integration in Central Asia

Russia's desire to regain and safeguard its influence in Central Asia, has been further reinforced in the 2000s in terms of Vladimir Putin's foreign policy strategy to strengthen Moscow's international positions. An important point to be emphasized in this sense is that Moscow started "returning" to Central Asia not as a paternalistic Empire, but as a great power driven by self-interest. In other words, Russia no longer seeks to patronize the region in a benevolent way; it is seen today rather as an object for Moscow's global ambitions.¹⁰ As such, Russia's regional engagement during the second half of the 2000s acquired substantially new dimensions, including an extensive use of institutional mechanisms for integration. In this regard, a shift to specific institutional cooperation with the emphasis on finding new integration schemes and interaction mechanisms in the fields of trade and security beyond the CIS framework became a defining feature of Russia's Central Asia involvement.¹¹

Russia's rapid economic growth during the 2000s has generated a substantial investment ground for ambitious reintegration projects under Moscow's leadership. In this regard, in 2010, Moscow established the Customs Union (CU) with Kazakhstan and Belarus which paved the way for the Eurasian Economic Union launched in January 2015 with the subsequent joining of Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. This Russian-led economic integration entity aims to replicate the European Union's (EU) model of prosperity and security in the post-Soviet region through a joint regulation of economic activity of its members. However, Moscow's policy to reintegrate the former Soviet republics, including Central Asian, represents some sort of "protective" or "holding-together" integration¹² rather than a model based on aspiration to build a functional supranational entity such as the EU. Through this mechanism of reaffirming of continuous Russian influence in Eurasia, Moscow seeks to safeguard its dominant role as a central integrative power, as well as to promote and legitimize its national interests in the post-Soviet region, which exposes the

real nature of the project to be political rather than economic.¹³ Indeed, Central Asia does not constitute a significant economic value for Russia. Economic cooperation between the Central Asian countries and Russia has declined drastically since the 1990s as Russian economic influence in the region has been confronted by other regional actors' involvement, including Turkey. Furthermore, during the 2000s, China has emerged as an important trade partner for the countries of the region, replacing Russia's traditionally strong economic presence in these countries.

Though Russia's economic presence in the region is waning, in comparison with other players' engagement, Moscow continues to maintain its role as the most powerful security provider, with significant military assets in the region¹⁴ and the capacity to respond to a potential crisis which is reflected by the bilateral agreements with the Central Asian states.¹⁵ At the same time Moscow has also contributed to the improvement of multilateral institutional framework for security cooperation. Thus, with Putin's ascendancy to power the CIS's Collective Security Treaty signed in May 1992, was institutionalized as a Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 2002, which includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Above all, the issue of regional security, which constitutes Russia's major concern in its Central Asian involvement, is largely perceived by Moscow through the lens of its own national security. Central Asian countries' insufficient capability to independently and effectively cope with the challenges of Islamists groups (either home-grown or spilled from Afghanistan) poses a substantial cause for concern. Russia acknowledges that these groups' potential penetration to its own territories in conjunction with the already existing North-Caucasian insurgency may create a danger of internal instability.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Moscow's reluctance to directly intervene or activate the mechanisms of the CSTO during internal tensions such as the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan (2005) and ethnic clashes in south Kyrgyzstan (2010) has highlighted Russia's ambiguous security role in the region. Instead of taking responsibility for the regional security in Central Asia, Moscow tends to pursue own interests and considers the issue of intervention with great caution unless developments in these countries threaten Russia directly.¹⁷

From Privileged Sphere of Influence Toward a Differentiated Approach to Central Asia

It is noteworthy that since the mid-2000s, Russia's strategic logic toward Central Asia has shifted from exerting maximum possible influence across the entire region to the logic of hierarchy, which prioritizes specific relations with certain states on a selected set of issues. Within its country-based differentiated approach to the region, Russia concentrates on ensuring deep influence through the integration with only three countries of Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, while attaching

lesser importance to engage with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan¹⁸ which have openly rejected subordination to Russian influence. Thus, Uzbekistan in 2012 withdrew from the CSTO, and energy rich Turkmenistan increasingly leans toward China and Asian energy market, demonstrating its waning interest in Russia as a reliable energy partner.¹⁹

On the whole, Russia's involvement in the affairs of the Central Asian republics throughout the period of their independent existence can be characterized by a shifting combination of "disengagement" followed by a growing determination to "return" and "retain" the region within its own influence.²⁰ Despite the fact that Russia since the beginning of the 2000s has managed to significantly re-establish and strengthen its position in Central Asia, its approach to the region largely remains inconsistent which manifests itself in a combination of official appreciation of the region as an important element in the system of Russia's foreign policy interests with the absence of clear measures that would allow Moscow to build an effective and long-term strategy, which would encompass the region as a whole.²¹ Thus, Moscow's Central Asian policy increasingly deals with the region on a country-specific basis and prioritizes the issue of security, which became evident in particular within the context of NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan and subsequent developments in the region's security.

TURKEY'S CENTRAL ASIA POLICY: FROM IDEALISTIC TO PRAGMATIC APPROACH

As a consequence of the Soviet Union's disintegration in the early 1990s, the region of Central Asia with its four newly independent Turkic republics was opened up for Turkey's penetration, which began to actively seek influence in the region.²² Before that historical moment these countries had remained beyond Turkey's foreign policy scope and interests due to their existence as an integral part of the former Soviet state and domination.²³ With the "discovery" of the Turkic-speaking Central Asian countries, Ankara's foreign policy activity acquired a fundamentally new "Turkic" dimension. Moreover, the emergence of these Turkic states in some way has finalized relative isolation of Turkey, which prior to that moment was the only independent Turkic states in the world.²⁴

Turkey's Narrative Driven Aspiration to Dominate the Region of Central Asia

The narrative of the emerging "Turkic world" and Turkic togetherness, with special value and emphasis on deep cultural and ethno-linguistic affinities and shared heritage that stretches centuries back, formulated an ideological basis for Turkey's foreign policy to spread its influence over the region. Thus, driven by the "idealistic enthusiasm" emanat-

ing from the idea of grand reunion with long-lost Turkic brothers, for the first time in its republican history Turkey sought to develop a sphere of influence beyond its territory.²⁵

From Ankara's perspective this new political situation in post-Soviet Central Asia was a great opportunity not only for increasing Turkey's influence over the Turkic world, but also for preserving the continuity of Turkey's traditionally strategic importance in the eyes of the West, since with the removal of an antagonistic political and ideological East–West division, Turkey's importance and role as a buffer zone has significantly decreased. These developments, in addition to the 1989 rejection of Turkey's accession to the European Community, necessitated a substantial redefinition of Ankara's foreign policy identity and priorities in terms of the emerging post–Cold War world order. Within this context, declaring itself as a “natural link between the new Turkic states of Central Asia and the rest of the world.”²⁶ Turkey started positioning itself as a “model” of development for these countries, the essence of which lies in a combination of it being a moderate Muslim society with a democratic and secular political system and based on market economy. Turkey's new role received strong support from the West, for which Turkey now became a major provider of Western interests in the southern part of the post-Soviet region. Moreover, Turkey's new position also functioned as a way to contain potential Iranian influence in Central Asia. Thus, in Western strategic thinking Central Asia was bound to be attached to Turkey's sphere of influence, which in turn meant the inclusion of the region into an area of Western influence.²⁷ Central Asian countries also welcomed Ankara's attention and accepted its model of development, since for them such reconnection with Turkey implied a flow of foreign investments and economic aid from and through Turkey, which was essential for their successful socio-economic recovery and political transition as newly independent states.

Turkey's Active Multifaceted Engagement Policy in Central Asia in the Early 1990s

Against this background, in the first half of the 1990s Turkey embarked on a specific regional engagement policy aimed at attaching the countries of Central Asia to its own sphere of political and economic interests. As the first country to officially recognize the independence of the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, the main imperative for Ankara's regional policy was the creation of bilateral relations and multilateral institutional mechanisms for cooperation. Thus, as a result of intense diplomatic efforts, Turkey developed close political, economic, and cultural links with the countries of Central Asia and played an important role in fostering their integration with the wider world through their representation in the regional and global institutions. With

the assistance of Ankara, the newly independent states of Central Asia were able to make their voices heard in such regional economic and political organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Turkey also contributed to the accession of these countries to NATO's "Partnership for Peace" initiative, as well as to the penetration of international financial institutions into these countries.²⁸ Since 1992 Turkey has initiated the sequence of summits of Turkic-speaking countries with the aim to increase solidarity between them and to establish new opportunities for cooperation. The establishment of the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) in 1993, with the aim to strengthen cultural ties between Turkic peoples and to protect and promote their common cultural heritage, played a key role in enhancing cooperation and mutual understanding between Turkey and the new Turkic countries. A significant contribution to spreading Turkey's soft power in the region made the creation of a specific government department—the Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Development (TIKA), which provides technical assistance to the region and contributes to the development of economic, commercial, cultural and educational cooperation.

The Main Determinants of Turkey's Failure to Dominate the Region of Central Asia

Despite development of relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics of Central Asia, Ankara's foreign policy aspiration to become a regional leader in the early 1990s did not yield the desired results and the euphoria of special relations soon faded. Despite several major achievements in terms of investments, economic relations and cultural diplomacy, Ankara has significantly lagged behind its quest to dominate the region, primarily due to the substantial shortage of political and economic resources to provide sufficient aid to the Turkic republics. Above all, one of the most important aspects of such a failure was the absence of a coherent conceptual framework of a policy of domination. In other words, although during the first half of the 1990s fundamental principles of pan-Turkism²⁹ were revived within the narrative of the "Turkic world" as an accompanying ideological basis of Turkey's leadership aspirations, it has not been conceptualized into a foreign policy doctrine and to large extent remained as a rhetorical antithesis of Turkey's Western orientation.³⁰ Furthermore, discourses of Eurasianism and Neo-Ottomanism with their own vision and search for a new role for post-Cold War Turkey, which were converged within a unique "concept of Eurasia" during the 2000s, have not been upgraded to a comprehensive foreign policy doctrine either, and considered rather as a tool for pragmatic ef-

forts to improve political and economic relations with Central Asia, as well as with Russia.³¹

Another important drawback for Turkey's regional leadership aspiration was a so-called parade of sovereignties in Central Asia. In this context, on the one hand, Turkey's calls for a unification of Turkic states stumbled on the unacceptability of any new political and ideological dominance in the region, since for the newly independent states the main priority was strengthening their sovereignty and national identity, rather than integration into a new political union with outside influence or dominance. On the other hand, the Central Asian political leadership's aspiration to pursue a multivector foreign policy became a significant restraint. The Turkish model of democracy and development ceased to be attractive, while the countries of Central Asia increasingly preferred to follow Asian models of development (Chinese in particular), which provide stable economic growth without democratization. Moreover, some political tensions in relations between Ankara and Central Asian political authorities have emerged over time. In the late 1990s following the terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the Central Asian states' ruling elites became concerned over Turkey's alleged influence in spreading Islamist ideas in the region and took a tough stance toward its economic, political and cultural-educational presence in the region.

A major determinant of Ankara's failure to dominate the region was also a strategic error to ignore the Russian factor. In other words, Turkey's attempt to pull the Turkic states of Central Asia under its own influence fell short on taking into serious consideration Russia's privileged position and geopolitical interest in the region. From this perspective, Moscow's substantial political and economic presence in Central Asia, reinforced through economic interdependence due to the common Soviet past and through enormous labor migration, became a major constraint for Ankara's efforts to deepen economic and political influence in the Turkic republics.

Therefore, such an abrupt shift from a short period of active involvement to a period of frustration has resulted in Ankara's acknowledgement to develop a more coherent Central Asian policy. Throughout the second half of the 1990s with this understanding of the constraints to spread influence over the Turkic republics and, most importantly with Russia's return to the region after a short period of disengagement, Turkey's Central Asia policy acquired an increasingly pragmatic approach. Thus, the redefinition of Turkey's long-term perspective on Central Asia as well as a gradual rapprochement with Russia, particularly in terms of energy related issues, replaced Ankara's previous idealistic approach with a policy based instead on the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation instead of competition. Accordingly, the narrative of Turkic unity based on ethnic, cultural, and linguistic kinship was gradually discarded

by the realization of the inevitability of having to build an inclusive policy of cooperation rather than competition with Russia.³²

The JDP's Policy Recalibration: From Special Relations with the Turkic Republics of Central Asia Toward Pragmatism

With the Justice and Development Party's (JDP) accession to power in 2002, Turkey's entire foreign policy went through a substantial paradigmatic re-evaluation. At the heart of such revision called "strategic depth"³³ was an assumption that Turkey's value in international politics is determined by its geostrategic location and historical depth. This understanding maintained a substantial need to deploy Turkey's historical, cultural and civilizational potential and the legacy of the Ottoman Empire in the process of shaping Ankara's policies toward its neighbors.³⁴ The "strategic depth" meant a pursuit of an equally active foreign policy with synchronous efforts toward a broad range of regions and countries.³⁵ In other words, such a doctrinal update led the country to abandon its role as a "bridge" between Europa and Asia and to formulate a new geopolitical role as a "central power" in a broader geopolitical space, in which apart from Central Asia, the sphere of Ankara's interests also included territories that formerly comprised the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, Turkey's aspiration to become an effective central power required a relevant foreign policy with equal involvement in of all parts of the Eurasian region.³⁶ The set of foreign policy priorities developed within the context of "strategic depth" can, thus, be regarded as a variant of Eurasianism in Turkish foreign policy, which envisages the pursuit of a flexible diplomacy with a variety of directions stretching across Eurasia with an understanding of the necessity to also develop cooperation with Russia. In this context, the expansion of Ankara's foreign policy vision and efforts, particularly in the direction of deepening attention to the Middle East, and attaching more importance to the strategic partnership with Russia, seems to have reduced the importance of Central Asia and virtually pushed the region to the periphery of its foreign policy activity and strategic thinking.³⁷ In this regard, one of the most important changes in Turkey's policy toward Central Asia became the rejection of the idea to promote "Turkic togetherness" and attach the region to own sphere of influence. The recognition of Russia's permanent presence in the region and pragmatic combination of competition with cooperation with Moscow, particularly in the energy and security areas, formed the foundation of Ankara's renewed Central Asian approach. Throughout the 2000s it focused primarily on advancing of bilateral ties and mutually beneficial cooperation.³⁸ An enhanced relations in trade, telecommunication, infrastructure, and energy sectors and direct investments, educational exchanges and technical assistance for socio-economic development in the region continued to constitute an important tool for Ankara's

permanent regional presence. Despite the fact that the economic cooperation between Turkey and Turkic republics of Central Asia during the 2000s has considerably grown in comparison with the 1990s, Turkey is still not a dominant player in the regional economy and its investments considerably lag behind other regional players' contributions. The same downward trend can be discerned in the region's position within Turkey's direct foreign aid.³⁹ Nevertheless, some important institutional initiatives for increased cooperation with Turkic-speaking countries have been launched since the end of the 2000s. Two important initiatives to converge these countries within cooperation institutions have become the Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkish Speaking States (TURKPA), established in 2008, and in 2009 the institutionalization of Summits of Turkic-speaking countries into the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (Turkic Council). The establishment of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities as a government institution attached to the Prime Ministry of Turkey have become an effective instrument for promoting Turkey's soft power in the region.

Most importantly, a strong imperative for Turkey's new foreign policy has become an aspiration to ensure a central position in strategic projects within the East-West Energy Corridor which diversifies the transportation routes of Caspian and Central Asian hydrocarbon resources to the world's markets. Thus, in the course of the last decade major energy transportation projects with tremendous strategic importance have been realized with Turkey's contribution and diplomatic efforts. One of the most important strategic investments in this regard became Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan, and Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum oil and natural gas pipelines. Another project of strategic importance which will potentially strengthen Turkey's role as a regional energy hub is the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline as a central element of the Southern Gas Corridor.

The launch of such a functional and pragmatic approach toward the Turkic countries of Central Asia reveals Turkey's gradual recognition of objective constraints for attaching the region into its own orbit of influence. From this perspective, the region of Central Asia does not constitute an immediate priority in terms of Ankara's foreign policy, and many aspects of its current involvement in the region, particularly in the field of energy security, are rooted in Turkey's new foreign policy aspiration to play a more active role both in its immediate neighborhood and in the international arena.

A TWOFOLD NATURE OF THE RUSSIAN-TURKISH INTERACTION: RECONCILING COMPETITION WITH COOPERATION

While since its foundation Turkey has always preferred to maintain European rather than an Asian identification of its geopolitical essence,⁴⁰ in

terms of the Russian –Turkish interaction, geographical and civilizational perception of the two powers historically has been characterized by their Eurasian quintessence with their territories spanning on both continents. Their mutual perception as two Eurasian powers is determined by the uniqueness of their experience of relations, which in the context of historical continuum has been swinging from close friendship and mutual understanding to an open confrontation.⁴¹ In terms of the degree of involvement and limits of influence in a particular region of Central Asia, the mutual perception of Russia and Turkey is also determined by the historical memory of confrontation and their dramatically opposite positions in a bipolar world during the Cold War period. Thus, the emergence of the Soviet Union on approximately the same territory as the Russian Empire, which it succeeded, virtually isolated the region of Central Asia as its southern periphery from all kinds of external influence. As a successor of the Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey since its foundation with clearly defined ethno-linguistic, political, and more importantly territorial parameters in 1923 fundamentally rejected the idea and possibility of convergence with the so-called outside Turks including the peoples of Central Asia, which were regarded by Ankara as an integral part of the Soviet state and influence. For this reason, links between Turkey and the Turkic peoples in Central Asia were deliberately cut and the Central Asian countries have developed their own specific identity under the influence of the Soviet Union, which gradually outweighed their Turkic identity.⁴² However, the emergence of new independent Turkic states in Central Asia in 1991 opened up a completely new period in Turkey's attitude toward the Turkic peoples of the region. The geopolitical vacuum that emerged in Eurasia following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Moscow's inability to provide full control over the former Soviet republics created a unique opportunity for Turkey to penetrate and take a leading position in the region. At the same time, by the end of the 1990s, Russia after a short period of disengagement, renewed its attention toward the region. From Moscow's updated foreign policy perspective, Central Asia once again acquired significance as a natural sphere of influence and a key geopolitical element of its self-perception as a strong Eurasian power.⁴³

Turkey's increased role and presence in Central Asia with reference to historical, ethno-linguistic, and cultural kinship triggered Russia's alarmist reaction, which was also reinforced by Turkey's Euro-Atlantic geopolitical affiliation. Thus, as an integral part of the Western system Turkey with its geopolitical location became the only direct link connecting the West with Eurasia.⁴⁴ Moscow's efforts to reintegrate the Central Asian countries within various regional integration structures, which culminated in the creation of the EEU, have vividly demonstrated an inadmissibility of external power projection with potential long term domination in the region. Similarly, Turkey's initial approach toward the Turkic coun-

tries of Central Asia during its first direct contact with the region was not inclusive, since it did not take into account Russia's influence in the region. It basically had two mutually reinforcing meanings: firstly, to assist the newly independent Turkic states in strengthening their independence, in particular by promoting their integration into the world community; and secondly, to develop special relationship with the region based on common ethnic, cultural, and linguistic roots. It was believed that the implementation of such policy would weaken and replace Russia's presence in the region with that of Turkey. Consolidation and strengthening of the independence of these countries meant the irreversibility of the post-Soviet status quo.⁴⁵

From a conceptual point of view, both Turkey and Russia's Central Asian approach is characterized by overlapping but distinct vision of Eurasia. Since the early 1990s, Turkey along with Russia, embodies the quintessence of Eurasianism as a conceptual perception of this geography⁴⁶ which was formulated within the framework of a narrative of the "Turkic world in Eurasia" and subsequently as a specific "geopolitical concept of Eurasia."⁴⁷ From the late 1990s fundamental ideas of classical Russian Eurasianism have been restored within the concept of neo-Eurasianism as an ideological foundation of Russia's foreign policy and have become a major factor of legitimization and justification of Moscow's aspiration to ensure the integrity of Eurasia with its core in Central Asia.

Along with such a competitive mutual perception in Central Asia, interaction between the two powers on bilateral level, however, developed in a direction of tactical and even strategic partnership in a variety of spheres, including economic, political and cultural relations. In this respect, Russian-Turkish cooperation, particularly in the energy sector (despite maintaining a competitive nature), reveals a clear example of important common interests in a sense that Turkey's current energy strategy aims to balance the country's need for reliable supplies from Russia with its ambitions to become a vital energy hub, channeling Caspian and Central Asian energy resources to the European markets. Russia, in its turn, also needs to diversify its natural gas transit routes through Turkey in order to ensure stable exports to European markets.⁴⁸ Bilateral cooperation in terms of energy security culminated with the signing of strategic intergovernmental agreement on "Turkish stream" in October 2016, which envisages the construction of two lines of gas pipeline under the Black Sea to the European part of Turkey.

Therefore, the twofold nature of the Russian-Turkish interaction represents a complex intertwining of the two opposite dynamics: the combination of geopolitical competition at the regional Central Asian level, with efforts to strengthen economic and energy cooperation at the bilateral level. The combination of these elements of partnership and competition at the same time is accompanied by the common feature of each

nations' Central Asian foreign policy: an appeal to a specific cultural and civilizational value of the region in their vision of Eurasia.

CHANGING DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL COMPETITION AND TRANSFORMATION OF RUSSIAN AND TURKISH INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA

A New "Great Game"?

The dissolution of the Soviet Union substantially transformed politics and economies in Eurasia. The emergence of new independent states in Central Asia with a huge potential to contribute to European energy security, has become an object of particular interest and attention of major powers such as the United States, Russia, China, Iran, Turkey and the EU. A renewed geopolitical interest in the abundant energy resources of Central Asia has been extensively described as a resumption of the traditional "great game"⁴⁹ with its new interpretation, focused on counterbalancing post-Soviet Russia and creating alternative ways for connecting the region to the world markets. However, in a sense that the specter of such renewed competitive geopolitical interaction involves more than two regional and extra-regional powers, and includes the Central Asian states themselves, it is indeed a complex multi-actor interaction. In other words, the penetration of the new forces and emergence of relatively new actors in the region, including Turkey, in conjunction with Russia's assertive return to the region and China's tremendous economic expansion, along with the Central Asian states' desire to diversify their political, economic and security orientations, make the region not only a battleground for the "great game" in its traditional meaning,⁵⁰ but a sphere of multilateral and multitrack competition with such an important peculiarity as a common recognition of Russia's permanent geopolitical and security presence in the region.⁵¹

The Factor of China in Central Asia

Nevertheless, against the background of transforming power dynamics in Central Asia, the whole logic of competitive interaction between traditional and new players in the region has changed considerably. One of the most important aspects of the new dynamics of regional rivalry in Central Asia is China's rapid westward economic expansion which challenges the traditional influence of Russia and also Turkey's recently established economic presence in the region. "In 2013, China had total trade of \$22.5 billion with Kazakhstan, about \$1.5 with Kyrgyzstan, \$9.3 with Turkmenistan, and \$4.5 with Uzbekistan,"⁵² replacing Russia's traditionally strong economic presence in these countries. China's focus on Turk-

menistan's natural gas resources, which now head East through the "China–Central Asia Pipeline," became the greatest determinant of Russia's diminishing economic influence in the region. Therefore, Beijing's growing economic leverage in Central Asia necessitated a recalibration of both Russia's and Turkey's approaches toward the existing system of regional interaction, which has been reflected in their gradual inclination toward multilateral mechanisms for the realization of their specific interests in Central Asia. Accordingly, Moscow and Ankara have gradually come to terms with their new position in Central Asia as one player among others which seek a geopolitical and geoeconomic equilibrium rather than competition in the region.

Asian Reorientation of Russia and Turkey: Favoring Multilateralism in Central Asia

From the Russian perspective, this understanding of the inevitability of multilateral Central Asian approach comes from a substantial paradigmatic transformation of Moscow's foreign policy perspective which envisages its "strategic turn" toward Asia as part of an important process of shifting center of gravity of global economic and political processes toward Asia-Pacific.⁵³ Additionally, the 2014 crisis over Ukraine and the subsequent deterioration of relations between Russia and the West also contributed to Russia's Asian pivot.⁵⁴ Against the background of increasing Western pressure and economic sanctions, Russia's traditional position as a great Eurasian power once again became an important aspect of its foreign policy identity, to large extent closing the transient period of its aspiration to be integrated into the West.

There is an obvious and substantial replacement of Moscow's previous foreign policy concept of "Greater Europe" from Lisbon to Vladivostok with its current aspiration to build "Greater Eurasia" from Shanghai to St. Petersburg through Sino-Russian strategic cooperation, which is expected to establish some sort of alternative to Euro-Atlantic system of international relations.⁵⁵ Within Moscow's Asian reorientation strategic cooperation with China, particularly in the region of Central Asia, vividly displays Russia's changing global perspective. In this sense, the conjunction of Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union with ambitious Chinese One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, which over the coming decades is expected to transform the political and economic landscape of Eurasia through a substantial infrastructure, energy and transport networks, is likely to create some sort of synergy between Russia and China's integration and cooperation models with Central Asian countries to be involved simultaneously in both of them. The embodiment of the Sino-Russian cooperation in Central Asia has already become the institutionalization of the "Shanghai Five" grouping into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which along with Russia and China, includes Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. However, Russia's attitude toward this multilateral mechanism for cooperation in Central Asia has such an aspect as Moscow's interest to use the SCO's framework for challenging the legitimacy of Western institutions rather than transforming its cooperation capacity into an effective vehicle for regional integration which would potentially upgrade China's leading role in the organization and expand its economic presence in the region into a strong political position for a competitive integrative centre.⁵⁶ It is also noteworthy that within the Central Asian regional context, Moscow seeks to improve its cooperation with China in terms of trade rather than security. In this sense, Russia's conciliatory attitude toward China's economic expansion toward Central Asia can be explained by the reluctance of the policymakers in Beijing to exert influence in spheres other than economy and their perception of Russia as a principal ally on the world stage with a traditionally dominant position in this region. Accordingly, Russia does not stand against China's ambitious energy and transport projects which embrace Central Asia as an important element, such as the Central Asian gas pipeline connecting Turkmenistan to China.⁵⁷ "Russia's main concern is not Central Asian gas going to China, but it is going to Europe, which could jeopardise its own exports to the continent."⁵⁸

From Turkey's perspective, along with the recognition of certain constraints for exerting economic and political influence in Central Asia, one of the key elements of Ankara's new strategic approach toward the region has become a pragmatic imperative to improve relations with Russia and China, which clearly goes beyond the limited scope of Central Asia paying Ankara high dividends from inter-regional formats of cooperation. In this regard, Russia continues to remain Turkey's key partner in terms of energy supply, as well as investment and trade. Continuing its efforts toward the implementation of the East-West energy corridor, Ankara is now increasingly focusing on the parallel and more promising energy supplies from Russia, which resulted in the signing of the inter-governmental agreement on Turkish Stream project. Consequently, such a shift in the energy strategy requires a sustainable partnership with Russia. Moreover, the importance of Russia in this regard has increased with China's penetration into the region, which directly affected Turkey's interests in the energy field. Thus, the prospects of the transportation of the Central Asian hydrocarbon resources to the European markets, in addition to Russian opposition, have significantly reduced by a gradual inclusion of the Central Asian region into the Asian energy market.

Ankara's bid for the SCO membership, which was renewed in the sixteenth meeting of the organization's Heads of States Council in June 2016, represents an extremely important point from a general perspective of Turkey's changing role in Central Asia. Turkey's accession to the SCO would create a new multilateral mechanism for cooperation between Ankara and the countries of Central Asia as well as with the regional pow-

ers. Integration with the SCO may also improve and bring dynamism to Turkey's strategic position in the new geostrategic projects designed with Central Asia at the center. Beijing's "Silk Road Economic Belt" initiative as one of the main components of abovementioned OBOR project, with its focus on enhancing connectivity and cooperation among China and Eurasia as a whole, can be an important factor in enhancing Turkey's involvement in the regional multilateral processes. In addition to a positive impact on bilateral relations, Turkey's bridging geostrategic position within this project can become a real foundation for the expansion of cooperation between Turkey and Central Asian countries in the field of Eurasian transport infrastructure. Therefore, Turkey's aspiration to advance its participation in the SCO with its current Dialog Partner status⁵⁹ and its interest in being included in continental transport and infrastructure projects as a key cooperation partner displays Ankara's strategy to take advantage of a global process of redistribution of economic power toward its gradual shift from the Euro-Atlantic space into Asia-Pacific. This requires enhancing Turkey's presence in Central Asia within the framework of multilateral formats of cooperation rather than as a dominant player.

CONCLUSION

This chapter made three points. First, by looking into Russia's and Turkey's political, economic, and cultural engagement policy toward the region of Central Asia, an evolution of the content and trajectories of both powers' regional approaches has been revealed. In this context, while Russia's regional involvement reveals a shifting combination of disengagement which was followed by a growing determination to restore its influence in the region (though on a country-specific hierarchical interaction basis), Turkey's approach indicates a shift from an initial idealistic approach to a more rational and pragmatic policy, which in turn means the rejection of the idea of Turkic unity. Thus, the region of Central Asia does not constitute an immediate priority for Ankara; its current regional involvement is rooted in a foreign policy aspiration to play an active role both in its immediate neighborhood and also in the international arena. Second, the chapter presented a twofold nature of Russian-Turkish interaction as a complex combination of such opposite dynamics as competition in Central Asia and also an effort to strengthen economic and energy cooperation at the bilateral level. The intertwining of these elements at the same time is accompanied by such common feature of their Central Asian approach, as an appeal to a specific cultural and civilizational value of the region in their vision of Eurasia. Third, the chapter discussed the transforming power dynamics in Central Asia which has changed the whole logic of competition between traditional and new players in the

region. One of the most important determinants of changing roles and influences in the region has become China's sweeping westward economic expansion which challenges the traditional influence of Russia and Turkey's recently established economic presence in the region. This new situation in Central Asia necessitated a recalibration of both Russia's and Turkey's approaches toward the region, which has been reflected in their gradual inclination toward multilateral mechanisms for the realization of their specific interests in Central Asia.

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6. As an intellectual movement of the 1920s, the "classical Eurasianism" was an attempt to build a system of ideas and values aimed at the comprehension of Russia's civilizational identity and geopolitical space that it forms. In this sense geographical space of Russia's existence in congruence with its distinct cultural and civilizational essence constitutes its "Eurasian" identity. The proposition that Russia forms a unique cultural and civilization entity constitutes a quintessence of classical Eurasianism. For more details on classical Eurasianism see: Mark Bassin, "Eurasianism 'Classical' and 'Neo': The Lines of Continuity" in *Beyond the Empire: Images of Russia in the Eurasian Cultural Context*, Tetsuo Mochizuki (ed.), (Sapporo: Slavic Research Centre, 2008); Vügar Imanov, "Klasik Avrasyacılık: Rus Medeniyet Kimliği İnşası," [Classical Eurasianism: Construction of Russian Civilizational Identity], *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Sayı 35, (2007–2008): 1–9.

7. Bassin, *Ibid.*, 286.

8. Sezgin Kaya, "Rus Dış Politikasında Batı Karşıtlığının Düşünsel ve Tarihsel Gelişimi," [Ideational and Historical Development of Anti-Westernism in Russian Foreign Policy] *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, Cilt 4, Sayı 7, (2010): 63–67.

9. Paramonov, et al., *Ibid.*, 22–28.

10. Trenin Dmitri, *Post-Imperium: Evraziyskaya Istoriya*, [*Post-Imperium: Eurasian History*], (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 2012), 176–186.

11. Paramonov, et al., *Ibid.* 30–31.

12. For more detail see: Alexander Libman and Evgeny Vinokurov, *Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

13. Malashenko, A. "Interesi i Shansi Rossii v Tsentral'noy Azii." [Russia's Interests and Chances in Central Asia], *Pro et Contra*, vol. 17, no. 1–2, (2013): 27.

14. Currently, Russia enjoys two military bases in Kyrgyzstan (Kant Air Base) and Tajikistan (Russian 201st Military Base), as well as a space launch facility in Kazakhstan (Baikonur Cosmodrome).

15. Oliphant, C. Mills, S., Campbell, I. et al. "Central Asia at a crossroads: Russia and China's changing roles in the region and the implications for peace and stability," *Saferworld Report*, June 2015, at www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/central-asia-at-a

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16. Laurelle, *Ibid.*, 3.

17. Anna Matveeva, "Russia's changing security role in Central Asia," *European Security*, vol. 22, no. 4 (2013): 495.

18. Alexander Cooley and Marlene Laruelle, "The Changing Logic of Russian Strategy in Central Asia from privileged sphere to divide and rule?," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*, No. 261, (July 2013): 2.

19. Lemon, et al., *Ibid.*

20. Tolipov, *Ibid.*, 21

21. Igor Ivanov (ed.), *Interesi Rossii v Tsentral'noy Azii: Soderjaniye, Perspektivi, Ogranichiteli*, [Russia's Interests in Central Asia; Content, Prospects, Constraints], (Moscow: Russian International Affairs Council, 2013), 5.

22. The term "Turkic republics" of Central Asia refers to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, leaving Tajikistan with its majority of Persian-speaking population beyond the scope of this chapter.

23. Erhan Büyükakıncı, "Türk-Rus İlişkilerinin Değerlendirilmesi: Güvenlik Sorunsalından Çok Boyutlu Derinliğe Geçiş" [Evaluation of Turkish-Russian Relations: From Security Issue to Multidimensional Depth] in *Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından yirmi yıl sonra Rusya Federasyonu: Türk dilli halklar ve Türkiye ile ilişkiler*, Erhan Büyükakıncı and Eyüp Bacanlı, eds., (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2012), 780.

24. Heinz Kramer, Will Central Asia Become Turkey's Sphere of Influence, at <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/8.-will-central-asia-become-turkeys-sphere-of-influence.pdf>

25. Bulent Aras, *The new geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey's Position*, (London: Routledge, 2002), viii–2.

26. Carley P. M., "Turkey and Central Asia: Reality Comes Calling" in *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*, Rubinstein A.Z. and Smolansky O.M., eds. (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 185.

27. Thomas Wheeler, "Turkey's role and interests in Central Asia," *Saferworld Briefing*, 2013, at www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/.../turkeys-role-and-interests-in-central-asia.pdf

28. Fidan Hakan, "Turkish foreign policy toward Central Asia," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2010): 114.

29. The ideology and movement of Pan-Turkism originated in the late nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire and envisaged the convergence and political unification of the so-called outside Turkic peoples under the Ottoman Empire's control. For more details on the history and content of Pan-Turkism see: Carley, *Ibid.*, 176–179.

30. Erol M. Seyfettin, "11 Eylül Sonrası Türk Dış Politikasında Vizyon Arayışları ve "Dört Tarz-ı Siyaset." [The Search for Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy after 9/11], *Akademik Bakış*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2007): 34.

31. Emre Erşen, "The Evolution of 'Eurasia' as a Geopolitical Concept in Post-Cold War Turkey," *Geopolitics*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (2013): 24, 40.

32. Carley, *Ibid.*, 190–192.

33. For more details on the concept of "strategic depth" see: Ahmet Davutoğlu (2004), *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, 15. Baskı, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları).

34. Göktürk Tüysüzöğlü, "Milenyum Sonrası Türk Dış Politikası: Yeni Osmanlılık ve Türk Avrasyacılığı Ekseninde İnşa Edilen Bir Pragmatizm." [Turkish Foreign Policy After the Millennium: Pragmatism Built on the Axis of New Ottomanism and Turkish Eurasianism], *Alternatif Politika*, vol. 5, no 3 (2013):298; Erşen, *Ibid.*, 33.

35. Ulchenko Natalia., Shlikov, Pavel. *Dinamika Rossiysko-Turetskix Otnosheniy v Usluviyakh Narastaniya Global'noy Nestabil'nosti*, [The Dynamics of Russian-Turkish Relations], (Moscow: IV RAN, 2014), 7.

36. Büyükakıncı, *Ibid.*, 818–819.

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38. Ertan Efeğil, "Turkish AK Party's Central Asia and Caucasus Policies: Critiques and Suggestions," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 3, (2008): 169.

39. Carlo Frappi, Central Asia's Place in Turkey's Foreign Policy, *ISPI Analysis*, No.225, (2013): 7, 10.

40. Erşen, *Ibid.*, 24–25.

41. Ulchenko, *Ibid.*, 4.

42. Akçalı, *Ibid.*, 603–604; Carley, *Ibid.*, 176–179.

43. Bobo Lo, "Frontiers New and Old: Russia's Policy in Central Asia," *IFRI Russie. Nei. Visions*, No. 82 (2015): 7–8.

44. Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, "Turkish-Russian Relations: The Challenges of Reconciling Geopolitical Competition with Economic Partnership," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2000): 60.

45. *Ibid.*, 63–69.

46. Trenin, *Ibid.*, 42.

47. For more details see: Erşen, *Ibid.*, 24–44.

48. Makhmutov Timur, Avatkov Vladimir, Likhachev Vladimir, et al., "New Stage of Russia–Turkey Economic Relations," *Russian International Affairs Council*, 28 December 2016, at http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=8537

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52. Nicola P. Contessi, "Central Asia in Asia: Charting growing trans-regional linkages," *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, (2016): 4.

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54. Hans-Joachim Spanger, "Russia's Turn Eastward, China's Turn Westward: Cooperation and Conflict on the New Silk Road," *Valdai Paper*, no. 47, (May 2016): 3.

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56. Oliphant, et al., *Ibid.*, 21.

57. Lo, *Ibid.*, 12.

58. Laurely, *Ibid.*, 2.

59. Since May 2017 Turkey officially enjoys a Dialog Partner status in the SCO, which envisages "the improvement of cooperation between Turkey and SCO in various subjects mainly in regional security, fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and preventing organized crime as well as economic and cultural fields." For more details see: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/shanghai-cooperation-organization.en.mfa>

TEN

The Turkish–Russian Relations in the Context of Energy Cooperation

Tugce Varol

Over the last decade, commerce dealing with energy has been as one of the main pillars of Turkish-Russian relations. Russia is the biggest energy supplier of Turkey, whereas Turkey's growing economy is an important market for Russia's energy sector. Economic dependency and foreign policy choices have a direct and inevitable correlation which is the case for Ankara–Moscow relations. Turkey's geographic location and authoritarian internal politics have caused a threat to its energy security as a result of the incoherent foreign policy choices of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Since 2002, Russia and Turkey have not been on good relations due to various international conflicts they have been involved in. Nevertheless, until the incident when a Russian fighter jet was shot down in November 2015, both Putin and Erdogan seemed to get along well when it came to energy. During the Putin and Erdogan period, some of the problems involving Russia and Turkey included: to Georgia, Kosovo, Syria, Ukraine, the Eastern Mediterranean, NATO missiles. In spite of these issues, oil and natural gas trading helped rephrase between these two countries. Nonetheless, the energy relationship between Turkey and Russia started to deteriorate due to the freezing of the Turkish Stream Project, Russia's sending troops to Syria, and due to the downing of a Russian fighter jet when it violated the Turkish airspace in November of 2014. Although a new period of cooperation between Turkey and Russia started after President Erdogan's official apology letter in June 2016. The relations between Ankara and Moscow are still ambiguous to

predict that the relations will turn back to pre-crisis periods regarding energy matters.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey and Russia are two countries both possessing a history of empire and rivalry. In this sense, the two long-term rivals have compelled to construct stable relations during the Cold War. Turkey, as a NATO member, is part of the Western alliance and Russia, the former leader of the Communist Warsaw Pact, is still a major power. With the end of the Cold War, a new episode has begun in Russian-Turkish relations concerning free trade and energy. In the post-Cold War era, Russia and Turkey have become close trading partners, mainly over energy.¹ However, such cooperation over trade suppressed the existing conflicts in the way of economic interdependency. The formulation of national strategy is influenced by the history of the nation, the nature of the regime, economic factors, and governmental and military institutions.² In this respect, Turkey and Russia diverge from each other. Despite both countries' imperial roots, the nature of their governments, economies, and militaries are different. The unequal trade relationship and problems of national foreign policy between Turkey and Russia are mostly analyzed with the interdependence theory. The theory of interdependence is identified with the concept of mutual dependence such as transport of people, funds, trade of goods and services. Troulis Markus claims that of economic interdependence contributes to a more peaceful relations between Russia and Turkey.³ Moreover, advocates of interdependence theory assert that as two states voluntarily increase trade, the potential for conflict between them declines.⁴ However, the trade relationship between Turkey and Russia is asymmetrical rather than symmetrical which is in favor of Russian economy. In this sense, according to Katherine Barbieri, a scholar of the theory of realism, symmetrical trade decreases the opportunities for conflict, while asymmetrical trade increased the chance for violent conflict.⁵ Because symmetrical trading relations may foster peace while asymmetrical dependence creates tensions between the parties that may cause conflict.⁶

Since Turkish President Erdogan came to power in Turkey, in 2002, energy relations between Turkey and Russia have grown and, Turkey became Russia's third biggest natural gas customer. On one hand, concerning energy cooperation, Turkey and Russia have not accomplished any project rather than increasing Turkey's import of Russian natural gas. On the other hand, Turkey and Russia have been following diverse foreign policies and actions toward Syrian crisis since 2011. Nevertheless, both sides constantly swept their disagreements over Syria under the rug during the bilateral meetings. As a result of asymmetric interdependence

between Turkey and Russia, Syria revealed as a crisis after downing of Russian jet. The government of Erdogan failed to create an equal trade partnership with Russia due mainly to high amount of Turkey's natural gas imports from Russia. Hence, at the onset of the crisis of the November 2015 when Turkish Air Force F-16 fighter jet shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24M attack aircraft, Russia imposed economic sanctions quickly against Turkey, whereas Turkey was not able to replace Russian gas and tourist from other countries. Ziya Onis and Sunnaz Yilmaz claimed that in spite of growing economic interdependence and diplomatic initiatives on the part of President Erdogan and President Putin in recent years, bilateral relations continue to be characterized by significant elements of conflict such as nature of the relationship, key driving forces, role of leadership, etc.⁷ Finally, Tolga Demiryol also asserted in 2015, before the shooting down of Russian fighter jet, that the long-term energy strategies of Russia and Turkey function as a source of conflict in bilateral relations such as incongruity of Russian controlling pipeline routes and markets whereas Turkey's becoming an energy hub and diverse its energy suppliers.⁸ This essay indicates that Turkey and Russia could not empower energy cooperation despite the various project proposals and initiatives. Turkey's participation in the Turkish Stream would contribute to Russian foreign energy policy more rather than Turkey energy security.

ENERGY COOPERATION VS. GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY

Nicholas Spykman, a scholar of "Geopolitics," described that "Geography is the most fundamental factor in foreign policy because it is the most permanent."⁹ Indeed, until the mid-20th century, geography was the most necessary parameter for designing foreign policy, however, possessing energy resources such as oil and natural gas became as significant as geography. While Russia is one of the richest countries regarding its energy resources, Turkey is not only poor in this respect, but also its economy acquires 90% of its hydrocarbon needs through imports. Inevitably, states consider the ratio of importing hydrocarbon resources and/or exporting hydrocarbon resources in their foreign policy strategies in the 21st century.¹⁰ According to Dmitry Shlapentokh, Russia and Turkey engaged in political flirtations from the late 1990s to the early 2000s such as building Blue Stream pipeline, and both sides deployed "Eurasianism" as the ideological framework of their rapprochement.¹¹ While Turkey approached Central Asian countries through history and kinship patterns, Russia created an identity which is composed of both Europe and Asia. Shlapentokh wrote that "Eurasianism downplayed ethnicity, and its representatives pointed out that the Turkic people of Russia/Eurasia

had more in common with Slavic people who had shared historical space with them for centuries than with other Turkic people.”¹²

Turkey’s policy of increasing its energy dependency more than 60% on Russian resources created a sort of “energy cooperation” which is different than Japan–Russia energy cooperation or Italy–Russia energy cooperation. The term “energy cooperation” refers to cooperation that entails some mutual aspects of a partnership, for example, when Russia exports its gas to another country, in some cases, to some extent, importer country is able to engage in energy operations in Russia. Nevertheless, this has not been the case for Turkey, as while Russia has been increasing its natural gas exports to Turkey, it could not get involved in Russia’s energy projects such as Japan, Italy, and even US. Thereby, the energy cooperation and economic interdependence between Turkey and Russia have symptoms of an asymmetrical dependence which benefits Russia more than Turkey. It is worth of remembering Bruce Russett’s words that “in many circumstances, economic ties, especially in the form of asymmetrical dependence rather than genuine interdependence, do not promote peaceful relations.”¹³ Concerning the Russian-Turkish relations, high asymmetrical trade relations maintains risks of crisis at any time. Another important factor for the risks of asymmetric interdependence is instability, uncertainty, and the low level of democratic standards. As in the case of Turkey and Russia, Turkey’s decreasing level of democracy and accountability of institutions in the last decade created an ambiguous decision-making process in Turkey. Since Recep Tayyip Erdogan became President of Turkey in 2014, he transformed Turkey’s political system from parliamentarism to so-called Turkish type presidentialism and began to act as an authoritarian leader.

Russia, as an authoritarian state with an imperial heritage, pursues its national interests and energy policy by disregarding the reactions of international community. For instance, Russia utilizes its state-owned energy companies, such as Gazprom and Rosneft, as instruments of its foreign policy to maximize its market dominance and profits in Europe, Turkey or elsewhere. Not only are Gazprom and Rosneft actors of Russian foreign policy, but also they are part of the Kremlin’s “stick and carrot” policy, used when it is necessary such as halting gas supplies to Ukraine. Concerning the Russian–Ukraine crisis, Russia should construct stable relations with Ukraine to maintain its pipeline security and to seek options to upgrade its export capacity through its existing pipelines over Ukrainian territory. However, Russia puts forward its national interest and sine qua non conditions such as opposing the possible NATO membership of Ukraine. In this respect, geopolitical and economic interdependence theories assert that the competition and the asymmetric dependence, as well as the uncertainty of the inter-state institutions, pave the way for defrosting of conflicts. In other words, the long-term asymmetric

dependence regarding the relations between Ukraine and Russia caused the escalation of the submerged conflicts.

In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and engaged in a civil war in Ukraine and re-initiated the strategy of bypassing Ukrainian pipelines which are transporting Russian gas to Europe by transforming the South Stream gas pipeline to the Turkish Stream gas pipeline. Crimea is a sensitive matter for Turkish foreign policy. Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's former minister of foreign affairs and prime minister in March 2014, stated that "the fait accompli referendum held in Crimea is unacceptable" after he met with Mustafa Kirimoglu, former Chairman of the National Assembly of the Crimean Tatar People and also a former member of the Ukrainian Parliament.¹⁴ Even though then the Prime Minister Davutoglu openly criticized Russian military actions in Crimea, President Erdogan, and his team, slurred over the Crimean case. Afterward, Russia sent its troops to Syria to back its ally, Bashar al-Assad, and returned to the Mediterranean by passing through Turkish Straits at the end of August 2015. Turkey immediately reacted to Putin's decision of sending military troops to Syria. Subsequently, the Turkish air forces shot down a Russian military jet on 24 November 2015, due to its violating of Turkish airspace, and this led to a geopolitical crisis and energy security dilemma between Turkey and Russia.¹⁵ This incident revealed rivalry taking place between the two countries. As a result of the deterioration of Russian–Turkish relations, Turkish air force was banned by both Russia and Syria from entering into Syrian air space to retaliate against ISIS attacks along the Turkish border. Even after Erdogan's apology letter of incident of downing of Russian fighter jet to Putin on 27 June 2016, Turkish air force could not fly in Syrian air space because of the Russian objection. Only after the visit of Turkish Chief of Staff and Chief of National Intelligence Agency to Moscow in November 2016 to discuss military and regional developments, Russia allowed the Turkish air force to strike ISIS militants for a limited time.¹⁶

TRADE AND PIPELINE DIPLOMACY

Starting in the mid–1990s, Turkey and Russia achieved to find a common basis of interests by increasing the volume of bilateral trade.¹⁷ The trade volume between Turkey and Russia was \$1.5 billion in 1992, \$3.3 billion in 1995, and \$2.8 billion in 1999. In 2002 the AKP came to power in Turkey, exports to Russia was \$1.17 billion and imports from Russia was \$3.89 billion. In 2015, the AKP's 13th year in power, overall trade between Turkey and Russia was \$24 billion which Turkey's export volume was \$3,58 billion and import volume from Russia was \$20.4 billion.¹⁸ Therefore, while Turkey's exports grew two-fold since the AKP came to power, Turkey's imports from Russia grew six-fold. The main reason for Tur-

key's rise of imports from Russia in the 2000s is the completion of the Blue Stream gas pipeline between Turkey and Russia which was initiated before the AKP government came to power. Therefore, the Erdogan administration should not to receive all the credit for increasing cooperation with Russia on natural gas between 2002–2016, however, it is responsible for the insufficient level of export numbers since 2003. It is likely that Turkey's natural gas imports from Russia will increase in 2019–2020 as a result of the Turkish Stream agreement signed by the AKP government in 2016. The Blue Stream pipeline, with annual capacity of 16 billion cubic meters, delivered 10.1 billion cubic meters' natural gas to Turkey in 2008. By 2010, Blue Stream reached its designed capacity of 16 billion cubic meters a year.¹⁹ Finally, in 2011, natural gas deliveries to Turkish market reached a total of 25.4 billion cubic meters, and in 2012, they increased to 26.4 billion cubic meters. Hence, Turkey has become one of the biggest importers of natural gas from Russia, and its share in the volume Russian gas exports has grown from 7.59% in 2006 to 11.76% in 2011.²⁰ Another significant economic aspect of cooperation between Turkey and Russia is tourism. Roughly three million Russian tourists visited Turkey in 2008. Approximately ten thousand Russians have settled in Turkey's Antalya. With the authorization of the Kremlin's sanctions against Turkey at the beginning of 2016 after Turkish air force shot down the Russian fighter jet in November 2015, the number of Russian tourists to Turkey dropped by more than 90%. In addition, overall Turkey endured a staggering 23% drop in visitors from all countries in the first half of 2016 due to lack of security emerged after terrorist attacks in Turkey.²¹

PIPELINES AND AKKUYU NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Natural gas pipelines and the project of Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) are crucial economic and strategic projects between Turkey and Russia. The Trans-Balkan and Blue Stream natural gas pipelines are the existing and operating pipelines between these two countries. At the same time, the new pipeline project, the Turkish Stream natural gas pipeline, is under construction after a tumultuous and non-transparent negotiation process.

Trans-Balkan and Blue Stream Pipeline

Turkey imports Russian gas through two natural gas pipelines called Trans-Balkan (or Western Route) and Blue Stream. Turkey received its first Russian gas import (0.4 billion cubic meters) in 1987 via the Trans-Balkan, which has a capacity of 14 billion cubic meters.²² While private companies in Turkey import 10 billion cubic meters of the Russian gas via the Trans-Balkan, the rest of the gas is still being imported by Turkey's

state-owned company BOTAS. In 1996, Russian Gazprom and Italian ENI aimed to expand gas deliveries to Turkey and proposed the Blue Stream pipeline through the Black Sea route in order to transport gas directly to Turkey. The project was launched in December 1997, by signing the Russian-Turkish Intergovernmental Treaty, under which Gazprom was obliged to deliver 16 billion cubic meters of gas Turkey via the new line during the next 25 years.²³ In 2015, Turkey imported from Russia 26.78 billion cubic meters of natural gas and in 2016, 24.54 billion cubic meters of natural gas via the Western Route and Blue Stream pipelines. In addition to this, in 2016, Turkey's BOTAS imported 16 billion cubic meters of natural gas, while private companies imported 8.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas. Occasionally, Turkey demands Russia to increase its gas flow via Western Route and Blue Stream due to PKK attacks on Turkey's pipelines carrying Azerbaijani and Iranian gas or technical failures of the pipelines.

Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant

In 2006, Turkey proclaimed that it was going to build two nuclear power plants (NPP) that would start to operate in 2012 and called for foreign companies to invest in the construction of the required facilities and reactors.²⁴ The Turkish government awarded the Russian firm Rosatom to build the Akkuyu NPP. Rosatom's plan is to build Akkuyu NPP using "build-own-operate" regulations that will be implemented for the first time. According to the agreement between Russia and Turkey, Russia will bear the cost of constructing the NPP that will produce electricity, in return, Turkey guarantees the purchase of the electricity generated by the Akkuyu NPP. The Environmental Impact Assessment report of the Akkuyu NPP was approved by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in 2014, on the same the day when President Vladimir Putin visited Ankara.²⁵ Some problems about the Akkuyu NPP emerged when Erdogan stated that "if Russians do not build [the Akkuyu NPP] anyone else does"²⁶ in October 2015 after Russia sent its troops to Syria. When Turkish and Russian relations hit the bottom at the end of 2015, it was revealed that the Russia applied to the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEA) in late 2015 to obtain the construction permit of the NPP. Meaning that while Russia was preparing economic sanctions against Turkey starting to apply at the beginning of 2016, they did not give up constructing Turkey's first NPP. With the new rapprochement process between Moscow and Ankara discussed in the other chapters, Russia has proceeded the construction of the Akkuyu NPP which will be the first of its kind in Turkey.

Turkish Stream

The Turkish Stream natural gas pipeline, expected to cost \$20 billion, was designed to have a capacity of 63 billion cubic meters, just like the South Stream pipeline which was cancelled due to European Union objections of Russia creating monopoly in European energy market.²⁷ It was announced in 2015 that the first stage of Turkish Stream targeted to carry 15.75 billion cubic meters of gas that Turkey would purchase at the end of 2016. Thus, Russia aimed to bypass EU regulations and restrictions since Turkey is not an EU member. Nevertheless, Turkey tried to continue talks on the Turkish Stream project and negotiations on price discount for the existing gas contracts with Gazprom, but Ankara's attempts did not yield any positive results in obtaining discounts. In addition, Turkey stirred up the geopolitical rivalry between TANAP (Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline) pipeline which aims to carry Azeri gas to Europe via Turkish territory (which Turkey has a 30% share) and the Russian Turkish Stream project at the same time. Russian energy strategy, focused on dominating Turkish Stream and giant gas storage in Turkey, is to control gas prices and the markets for its gas. It is expected that Turkey's dependence on the Russian gas will rise drastically.

As a matter of fact, Turkey and Russia have also attempted to develop several other oil and natural gas pipeline projects over the last decade. For example, the Blue Stream-2 pipeline was offered to be built in parallel with Blue Stream-1.²⁸ While Russia developed the South Stream natural gas pipeline project to bypass Ukraine to directly reach European markets, Turkey tried to obtain some discounts on the gas prices in exchange of approving the South Stream pipeline to pass through the Turkish exclusive economic zone because Russia needed Turkey's permit to construct pipeline in Turkey's exclusive economic zone. Meanwhile, Turkey and Azerbaijan initiated TANAP in 2011, which targeted the southern European market. Yet, carrying Azeri gas with the TANAP pipeline versus the Russian South Stream pipeline did not go well for Turkey and provided the requested feasibility permit to Russia for the construction of the South Stream at the end of 2011. Apart from natural gas pipelines, Turkey proposed that the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline to carry Russian and Kazakh oil to its Ceyhan port which was developed by Turkey's Calik and Italian ENI groups. Russian did not lean toward the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline because of the disagreements over the transportation fees which seemed to be higher than the transportation fees via the Turkish Straits.²⁹

Regarding the TANAP pipeline, Turkey has aimed for a long-time to contribute to the European energy security by carrying Caspian energy resources to Europe. For that reason, Turkey had promoted the Nabucco gas pipeline project and later the TANAP gas pipeline project, while also trying to change the situation of the asymmetric interdependence with

Russia. Thus Turkey could reduce the share of Russian energy supply in Turkish energy market. For that reason, Turkey developed the Sam-sun–Ceyhan oil pipeline and Turkey–Israel natural gas pipeline to carry Russian resources to Israel during the mid–2000s. None of the proposed pipelines have materialized until Russia replaced the South Stream with the Turkish Stream. However, the first phase of the Turkish Stream pipeline will supply natural gas to the Turkish market instead of European market, increasing Turkey’s dependence of Russian gas. Concerning the Turkish Stream pipeline Russia unilaterally keeps on negotiations to expand the Turkish Stream either to Greece or Bulgaria. Ostensibly, the Turkish Stream pipeline will be dominated by Russia, which aims at exporting its gas to other countries through Turkey. It is kind of a Russian strategy replacing Ukraine with Turkey by controlling pipelines and gas storages. Russia also plans to build a massive gas storage facility in Turkey’s Thrace region which will likely to be controlled by Russian Gazprom.

Besides energy projects, over the last five years, the biggest mistake of Turkish foreign policy was to underestimate Russian foreign policy toward Syria. Ankara, particularly Erdogan, assumed that Turkey would continue energy cooperation with Russia despite Moscow’s commitment to keep Bashar al-Assad in power in Syria. For instance, after meeting with President Putin in Baku in 2015, Erdogan claimed that Putin had changed his long-standing approach of providing full support to Bashar al-Assad but he did not.³⁰ Furthermore, the developments after the Baku summit of Erdogan and Putin such as increasing Russian military in Syria proved that Kremlin never shifted its policy toward Syria since the beginning of the Arab Spring.

TURKEY’S ENERGY SECURITY AND THE DOWNING OF RUSSIAN JET

The Turkish Stream project was postponed in mid–2015 before the deterioration in Turkey–Russia relations. On 7 June 2015, the AKP won the general election in Turkey, for the fourth time in a row but its total vote fell from 49% in 2011 to 41% in 2015. This required a coalition partner to form a government. The delegations of Turkey and Russia, under the leadership of Putin and Erdogan, met on 12 June 2015 in Baku. The leaders of both countries discussed bilateral issues, particularly energy issues, behind the closed doors.³¹ Russian Prime Minister Medvedev stated a few days before the Turkish general elections that “We are interested in creating a solid legal framework for it; all the documents are being prepared, and everything is well in this regard. Basic agreements to this effect have been reached with the Turkish leadership.”³²

After receiving an official invitation from Syrian administration, Russia sent its troops to Syria on 30 August 2015 to help Syrian Army against rebels and terrorist organizations. Russia aimed to keep Assad in power at least until a suitable candidate was found to replace him. Ankara severely criticized the deployment of Russian troops in Syria, but Russian aid reached a Syrian port after passing through the Turkish straits.³³ Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, Erdogan called for an end the Assad regime, whereas Russia has deployed to Syria to help the regime and began to bomb the rebel groups and the forces of the so called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Naturally, Putin's continuing political and military aid to Assad displeased Ankara because Erdogan's primary goal was to overthrow Assad regime in Syria.³⁴ Due to the confrontation between Turkey and Russia over Syrian crisis, Turkish Stream project was frozen, and Putin's sending Russian forces to Syria showed that the cooperation between Erdogan and Putin has ended. Russian intervention in Syria inevitably provoked Ankara since Turkey is sharing its longest border with Syria.³⁵

As a result of the accelerating tensions between Turkey and Russia, first, President Erdogan stated that "We do not purchase the Russian gas if it is necessary, Russian jets violated the Turkey's airspace."³⁶ After Turkey downed the Russian fighter jet in October 2015, the economic and the military tension between the two countries rapidly arose. Tensions between Russia and Turkey tightened during the G-20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey in 2015. During the summit, Putin alleged that Russian intelligence provided examples on the financing of ISIS by private individuals, who received money from 40 different countries and some G-20 members were among them, thus implying Turkish involvement in the issue.³⁷ Only eight days after Putin's G-20 speech in Antalya, on 24 November 2015, Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet for violating Turkey's airspace. Ultimately, the crisis between Turkey and Russia triggered global unrest when Turkey asked NATO for help as a NATO member since 1952.

At the beginning of 2016, a dispute over the gas prices emerged between Gazprom and private companies in Turkey importing 10 billion cubic meters of gas from Russia via the Western route. In March, Gazprom cut gas supplies by nearly a quarter after failing to reach an agreement with importer companies in Turkey on discounts for Russian gas.³⁸ Meanwhile, BOTAS, Turkey's state-owned company, filed an arbitration case against Gazprom over the gas prices in 2015. Nevertheless, Turkey and Russia re-started negotiations about the price dispute in October 2016 after the signature ceremony of the Turkish Stream.³⁹

After the "jet crisis" Turkey began to challenge Russia, and Erdogan made statements about ending the importation of Russian gas and replacing it with other sources. For that reason, Erdogan immediately visited Qatar to discuss buying options of Qatari liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Turkey then decided to normalize its relations with Israel to seek importing of Israeli gas. Finally, Ankara embarked upon importing Kurdish natural gas. However, instead of signing a new gas contract with a new supplier other than Russia, in June 2016, Erdogan sent an apology letter regarding downing of Russian fighter jet in October 2015 to Putin and eventually signed the intergovernmental agreement of Turkish Stream in Turkey. Turkey's foreign policy approach during the Arab Spring and Ankara's reaction to the deployment of Russian troops to Syria caused loneliness for Turkey. Besides, Russia commenced a containment policy against Turkey by forming a coalition with Syria, Iraq, Iran, and even Israel. Russian military presence in neighbors of Turkey and selling S type of missiles to them automatically created an isolation of Turkey as well as containment. Thus, Russia's aggressive policy led Erdogan to find outlets from that isolated position such as normalizing relations with Israel.⁴⁰ As an example of the tension between Russia and Turkey, President Erdogan's eldest son Burak Erdogan's freighter, named M/C Sakarya, was held at the Russian port of Novorossiysk for safety violations for five days between 3–7 March 2016 during the Turkey-Russian crisis.⁴¹

RESETTING OF TURKEY-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Despite the rising political and economic relations of Turkey and Russia over more than a decade, the asymmetrical interdependence and rivalry over geopolitical dominance a conflict between Moscow and Ankara. The Georgian crisis in 2008 was a great test for Turkish–Russian cooperation, particularly in the energy area. During the Russo–Georgian War in 2008, Turkey was reluctant to allow NATO ships to enter the Black Sea, and tried to mediate the crisis. Indeed, Turkey worried that it might experience energy shortage if the Russians attacked the energy pipelines passing through Georgia and reaching Turkish territory which were halted for a couple of days. Subsequently, the Ukrainian Revolution in 2014 and Russian annexation of Crimea was another test for Turkey's energy security regarding its dependence on Russian gas. Turkey's primary objective was supporting the safety of pipelines in Ukrainian territory which carry Russian gas to Eastern Europe and Turkey. Once more, Turkey was apprehensive to secure its energy supply chains without halting of pipeline flows which happened in the winter seasons of 2006 and 2009.

Russian and Turkish relations hit rock bottom between November 2015 and June 2016 due to the Russian military deployment in Syria and shooting down of Russian fighter jet by the Turkish Air Force. Subsequently, starting on 1 January 2016, Russian imposed economic sanctions starkly affected Turkish economy, especially sharp decline in the number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey. The Kremlin banned the selling of tour packages to Turkey and the importation of vegetables and fruits

from Turkey.⁴² However, Putin announced that the Turkish Stream and Akkuyu NPP were out of sanctions. After having the crisis for six months and blaming each other for violating international law, the sides were more willing to remove their differences. President Erdogan finally sent an apology letter to President Putin in July 2016. In the letter, Erdogan called Russia “a friend and a strategic partner” of Ankara,⁴³ which was attentively accepted by the Russian side. Furthermore, Turkey has experienced a coup attempt on 15 July 2016 by diverged fractions in Turkish Army. Most of the coup attendees believed to be sympathizers of Gulen, an Islamic cleric, who has been living in the United States for more than a decade. Consequently, the Turkish government blamed the US for supporting Gulen and requested his extradition. In such an atmosphere, in the wake of the failed coup, Turkish decision makers expressed a new perspective of Turkish foreign policy based on questioning Western alliance such as NATO membership and EU accession, and instead becoming part of Eastern Alliance with the help of Russia. After the coup attempt, Turkish foreign policy shifted from the paradigm of “living without Russia” to “not able to live without Russia.” Thus, Russia became Turkey’s best friend only after six months of shooting Russian fighter jet and threatening of lowering energy relations with Russia. For that reason, Turkey accelerated the negotiations of the Turkish Stream with Russia and accepted the entire conditions of Russia over the project. Turkey and Russia signed the agreement of Turkish Stream gas pipeline on 10 October 2016. In exchange for the Turkish Stream agreement, Ankara expected the lifting of all Russian sanctions, but Putin lifted only the restriction from Turkish citrus exports to Russia.⁴⁴ More importantly, Russia did not end the visa-free regime with Turkey, which was a part of the economic sanctions of January 2016. Even during the signature ceremony of the Turkish Stream, Russia did not signal the re-initiation of visa-free regime with Turkey. It appeared that the removing of the sanctions would be a step-by-step process.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly has ratified the Turkish Stream deal with Russia regarding the construction of the pipeline which is set to begin in 2017 and to be completed by late 2019.⁴⁵ In response, the Russian government approved the draft law on ratification of the Turkish Stream agreement with Turkey and submitted it to the Russian Duma on 16 December 2016.⁴⁶ Afterward, the Russian State Duma approved the Turkish Stream deal in January 2017.⁴⁷ When Turkish Stream pipeline is completed, Turkey will be importing a total of 45.75 billion cubic meters of natural gas (Western Route 14 billion cubic meters, Blue Stream 16 billion cubic meters, and Turkish Stream 15.75 billion cubic meters) in 2019. As Younkyoo and Blank commented, if Turkey becomes excessively dependent on Russia, the Kremlin could exploit this reliance to downgrade the TANAP–TAP pipeline and to block connection of Caspian resources to European markets.⁴⁸ Because Russian primary goal is to domi-

nate European energy market as much as possible while preventing other rival pipelines to reach Europe. In this respect, Turkey's asymmetric interdependence to Russian resources will grow as well as the risks for its energy security.

CONCLUSION

Turkey's natural gas dependence was the primary concern for Turkey's energy security after the Turkish air force shot down the Russian fighter jet in November 2015. However, instead of taking precautions to lower Turkey's energy dependence to Russian sources after the November 2015 incident, Turkey signed the binding agreements of Turkish Stream pipeline which will increase Turkey's asymmetric dependence to Russia. It seems that Turkish side promised to obtain the necessary approvals for Russia's Turkish Stream natural gas pipeline from the Turkish Grand Assembly after receiving the required votes to form a single-party government in June 2015. Thus, the AKP could not receive the necessary votes to form a single-party government, and the project of Turkish Stream has postponed until 2017. The statements of Erdogan to challenge President Putin such as halting the import of Russian gas and replacing Russian gas with other resources caused instability for Turkey's energy security. After shooting down the Russian fighter jet, Erdogan first visited Qatar to seek an increase of importing Qatari liquefied natural gas. Then, Turkey announced the normalization of relations with Israel and negotiations for the Israel–Turkey natural gas pipeline. Ankara's final option to replace the Russian gas was to buy gas from Iraqi Kurdistan. However, geopolitical factors such as deterioration of relations with Syria, Iraq, and Iran, forced Turkey to commence a policy of rapprochement with Russia.

As a result of the fourteen years of cooperation and asymmetric interdependence which means the unequal trade between Turkey and Russia, Turkey's energy dependence on Russia increased rapidly. On the one hand, Russian export incomes from Turkey has intensively rose and Russian energy companies entered into Turkey's energy sector. On the other hand, Turkey has signed contracts to increase its natural gas import from Russia to more than 45 billion cubic meters in 2020. Turkish and Russian decision-makers had met numerous times since 2002 to improve bilateral energy and economic relations between two countries. Unfortunately, Ankara's primary focus was to obtain price discount for Russian gas, whereas Russians focused on increasing the existence of the Russian companies in Turkey's energy market. The agreement for Russian Rosatom's constructing of Turkey's first nuclear power plant under privileged conditions is also a significant example for the Russian companies targeting Turkey's energy market. In fact, according to the Akkuyu NPP deal, Tur-

key will rely on the donor not just for nuclear power plant construction but for the whole fuel cycle as well as the human capacity to run the nuclear power plant.⁴⁹ Russian Gazprom's demand to revise the gas prices for the private companies in Turkish energy market at the beginning of 2016 was a warning to Turkey's high dependence on Russian natural gas. Regarding Russia's new containment policy of Turkey, Russia attempted to form an alignment with Syria, Iraq, and Iran by fighting ISIS. Turkey became isolated in its region and suffered economically after the economic sanctions started by Kremlin on 1 January 2016. Although the Russian jet was shot down in November 2015, the Turkish government arrested the two pilots eight months after who shot the Russian fighter jet and denied that either Erdogan or Davutoglu ordered the incident. Russia accepted the gesture but apparently the Kremlin not entirely convinced. Because Russia did not return to visa-free regime with Turkey and did not lift the restrictions over some of Turkey's products. Currently, Russia is not only the northern neighbor of Turkey but also it is a southern neighbor of it since deployment of Russian troops to Syria. As Warhola and Bezci argued, Russian-Turkish activity in the energy sphere included an element of competition for regional influence that carried a potential to undermine the rapprochement.⁵⁰ If Erdogan's party, AKP, loses the power in Turkey and a new government forms in Turkey among opposition parties, the new Turkish government may demand the postpone of Turkish Stream or at least review the agreements signed by Erdogan and Putin. This may cause another crisis between Turkey and Russia. For that reason, although Erdogan is pursuing an instable foreign policy toward Syria, Russia needs Erdogan to achieve its energy strategies. Consequently, despite the apology letter and the commencement of the Turkish Stream project, the emergence of crisis between Turkey and Russia regarding energy cooperation and foreign policy differences still remain.

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ELEVEN

A Comparison of the EU Policies of Turkey and Russia

Soner Karagül

Turkey and Russia have had an influence on the European history for centuries. Both have been important actors in European power politics. Russia, a world power since the 18th century, moved deeper into Europe by political alliances, economic relations and cultural exchanges and impacted European power interactions. At their apex, the Ottoman State was also within Europe. The Ottomans expanded into Central Europe and became neighbors with various European States on the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Similar to Russia it had ties with European countries in the same manner. However, with its decline the State managed to ally itself between shifting European alliances, which helped it survive longer. The Ottomans and the Russians in their centuries-long challenge to each other aimed to forge alliances with European powers. In this chapter, the strategies of Russia and Turkey, Russia as the inheritor of Tsarist Russia, Turkey as the offspring of the Ottomans, in regard to their relationships with the European Union (EU) will be compared and studied under the impacts of national and regional factors.

The relations between newly created Turkish Republic and Bolshevik Russia followed a positive trajectory until World War II. Turkey and Russia's relations were seriously separated at the end of World War II as they were members of two different blocs carrying out different policies and strategies. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) throughout the Cold War was against EU policies while maintaining its control over Eastern Europe. Turkey, on the other hand, was one of the first applicants to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963.

Despite half a century of Turkey's relations with the EU, Turkey is still not a member. Developments over the last few years have distanced Turkey from the EU, making it look for alternative opportunities. Russia, on the other hand, has developed its relations with the EU at the end of the Cold War to stabilize its economy starting from the late 1990s. Having consolidated its economic development with its energy resources, Russia opened a new phase in its relations with the Union. Russia became more aware and protective of territory of the former Soviet Union against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) expansion and the EU's interests.

Both Russia and Turkey have developed robust relationships with Europe. The Ottoman Empire and Tsarist Russia were two significant powers that sought to preserve their position in the European balance of power, while also waging war against each other. The level of their relations with the West was an indicator of the level of their relations with each other. That the Western powers sided with the Turks against Russia's expansionist policies considerably influenced the course of Russian–Ottoman relations in the early 17th century. In other respects, reconciliation between the West and Russia stirred up subversive consequences for the Ottomans which caused loss of lands and military forces.

With the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the late 17th century, Russia found no reason to conduct an aggressive foreign policy against the Ottoman Empire. The Turks managed to keep clear of the Russian threat under the aegis of European States namely France and the Great Britain, as was the case in the Crimean War (1853–1856). However, following the successful Greek War of Independence waged against the Ottoman Empire, relations took a darker turn (1821–1832) European States.

During the period between the Turkish War of Independence –which began with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918– and World War II, Turkish–Russian relations were largely trouble-free. In the wake of World War II, the Soviet Union, having claimed territory from Turkey left Turkey no other choice than to join NATO.¹ In the 1960s, Turkey became closer to the Soviet Union as it was dissatisfied with the negative attitude of its Western allies over the Cyprus problem.² Although Turkey used its natural right to protect civilians in the Cyprus Island based on its guarantor status, the USA enacted an embargo which caused distress on the Turkish side. During this period, Turkey carried out significant industrial investment owing to the support it received from the Soviet Union. Despite being on good terms with the Soviet Union, Turkey still remained a member of the NATO.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Turkish–Russian relations accelerated in terms of economics and commerce realms. Western nations' hesitance to grant Turkey accession to the EU eventually paved the way for stronger Turkish–Russian relations. The 2014 Ukraine Crisis and Russia's involvement raised several concerns regarding the

possible emergence of a new “Cold War” in Europe. Although the EU strongly condemned Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and imposed economic sanctions against Russia in July 2014,³ Turkish–Russian relations remained unchanged until Russia intervened the Civil War in Syria in 2015.

Turkey and Russia, the EU’s two most important neighbors in the East, have continued to this day to engage in a wide range of political, economic, cultural, and educational relations with Europe from the past to present. For both countries, the development of relations with the EU has always been of great importance. Both countries have sought a positive environment with the EU for a certain period; but now these relations with the EU have become increasingly negative for the last ten years.

The main reasons that led to changes in both countries’ EU policies included internal developments in Turkey and Russia, the ‘Arab Spring,’ disparate approaches to internal conflicts as well as other international dissensions, conflicts in the post-Soviet region, and disputes in the fields of energy and trade. This chapter aims to cast light upon EU policies by both Russia and Turkey. It discusses the role of Russia in the European system, the basic pillars of EU relations, and the dynamics of conflict and cooperation. In a similar vein, the chronology of Turkey’s EU experience is examined. The EU policies of both countries are compared in terms of the nature and basis of the partnership between the parties, and their aims and expectations.

RUSSIA’S ORIGIN IN THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM

Russia had become a huge empire in the early 18th century as a result of the land gains by conquests and annexations of other countries. Tsarist Russia’s attempts to expand toward Europe, and its Westernization policy began in the 18th century. During the period of Peter the Great (1682–1725) and Catherine the Great (1762–1796), exertions to make Russia a European state reached their peak. Major developments, such as modernization efforts, the strengthening of the army and bureaucracy, and the establishment of St. Petersburg as the capital, were substantially the products of the attempts at Europeanization.⁴ By the end of the 18th century, Russia had expanded its borders from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from there to the Pacific Ocean. The geographical borders thus created by Russia have paved the way for its gaining the status of the Super Power toward the middle of the 20th century.

It was after Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Russia in 1812 that Russia became more influential in European politics, becoming one of the great powers in Europe. Russia defeated Napoleon in 1814, and was unaffected by the wave of revolutions that hit Europe in 1848. Nevertheless, Russia

kept squandering not only its human resources but also financial resources because of the 18th century wars. This led Russia to prefer the status quo, giving weight to European diplomacy. The thrash of the War of Crimea has forced Russia to make extensive reforms in the military, industry administration, judiciary and education. Russian politicians were induced by the need for modernization, industrialization, and carving a place in Europe. The industrialization and modernity created class struggles in the society, similar to those of the European nations. On one hand industrialization was in progress; on the other hand, the existence of a feudal regime led divergence in Russian society new classes of industrial revolution namely bourgeois and the proletariat appeared in Russia as well. The Industrial Revolution that took place in Europe in the 19th century has not created, in Russia, duration and welfare.

Russian intellectuals, who were thrilled by the stream of thoughts that had emerged in Europe, influenced the working class in Russia to a great extent and consequently, this revolutionary movement came to be widely acclaimed by many of the Russian people. In a setting where class conflicts were prevalent, the devastating effects of World War I brought forth the 1917 October Revolution, which resulted in the establishment of the Soviet Union. Despite this struggle, the country engaged in various alliances in the interwar period and retained its position in the European power balance. The Soviet Union strived until 1930 to be recognized by European neighbors, and thus develop good neighborly relations. A number of European states (Italy, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Greece, and Denmark) recognized the USSR in 1924. In 1926 the Treaty of Soviets and Germany and in 1928 Litvinov Protocol were signed. In view of over-strengthening of Germany, the EU has recognized the Soviet Union, and the USSR was accepted to the League of Nations. Nevertheless, during World War II, almost 27 million people lost their lives in the Soviet Union and the country entered a recession.⁵

In the post-World War II Europe, two super powers emerged; the Eastern Bloc led by the Soviet Union and the Western Bloc led by the USA. Europe was divided into East and West blocs and this division continued during the Cold War. Countries such as East Germany, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia in Eastern Europe formed the Warsaw Pact under the leadership of the Soviet Union in May 1955. The USSR made progress in those years. Its aids to the developing nations, acquiring military bases in certain areas, and invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 has sent shock tremors in the West. The technological, military, political, and economic rivalry between the Soviet Union and the USA that persisted during the Cold War reached a peak in the 1970s. The Soviets, having initiated the Space Age and entered a space race with the USA, demonstrated its competitive power against the EEC with COMECON, a commercial cooperation organization founded by socialist countries in Eastern Europe. Despite such improvements, the Eastern Bloc fell

behind the Western Bloc in economic and military terms, and thus was unable to avoid disintegration in the early 1990s.⁶ After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of East Germany and its reunification with democratic West Germany, the collapse of all Communist governments in Eastern Europe took place in 1989–1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

THE GROUNDS OF RUSSIA–EU RELATIONS

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, during the reign of Gorbachev, the EU relations were officiated under the Treaty for Commercial and Economic Cooperation in 1989. Nevertheless, the relationship could not be carried forward beyond the rhetoric of the agreement. The legal basis of Russia–EU relations rests upon the “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” (PCA) that was signed in 1994 and came into force in 1997, along with the “Joint Strategy Document on Russia” adopted by the EU in 1999. The negotiations on the formation of the PCA ran into a few difficulties. The EU’s Russian policy was reminiscent of those with Eastern Europe. However, unlike Central and Eastern nations, the membership to the EU was not envisaged. In just the same way as Central and Eastern European countries did, Russia had to take actions to enable a transition to a pluralistic democracy and free market economy. The establishment of a free trade area was anticipated immediately after Russia arrived at EU standards.

As foreseen in the PCA, a consistent corporate political dialogue had enabled Russia and the EU to recognize each other more closely and adapt to a more realistic bilateral relationship.⁷ The diversification of the treaty subjects has confirmed this. It contained the cooperation of trade, economy, judiciary, security, science and technology, energy, ecology, mass transportation, and space explorations.

Having a ten-year validity period, OIE was automatically renewed every year after 2007. At the Petersburg Summit which was held in May 2003, the EU and Russia specified four common areas of cooperation in line with the PCA, with the purpose of strengthening their long-term cooperation. The “four common spaces” were as follows:⁸

- *Common Economic Space* aiming to harmonize the EU and Russian economies, to increase investment and trade;
- *Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice*, covering justice, domestic affairs, rule of law and human rights;
- *Common Space of External Security*, aiming to strengthen co-operation in foreign policy and security matters;
- *Common Space of Research and Education*, aiming to promote co-operation in the fields of science, education and culture.

At the Moscow Summit of May 2005, road maps that set forth the objectives and the necessary steps to achieve these four common spaces were announced. A decision was made to start negotiations at the Khaty–Mansiysk Summit in June 2008 to prepare a new agreement since the PCA could not meet the political requirements of the EU and Russia. However, the negotiations remained at a stalemate due to the disaccord between the two sides. Although the EU side had tenaciously reminded Russia of human rights and democracy, the main issues of dispute were actually energy and trade. To accept Russia as it is, and ignore the debatable records of its adherence to the citizens' fundamental rights, and to the democratic standards has always been a moot point in the EU.⁹

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT DYNAMICS OF RUSSIAN RELATIONS WITH THE EU

Russia is the neighbor of the EU with the largest surface area, and its fourth most important trading partner. Russia ranked fifth in the EU's exports in 2016, with a share of 4.1%. Similarly, Russia ranked fourth in the EU's imports with a share of 6.9%. In 2016, the share of the EU in Russia's total exports was 45.7%, the share of total imports was 38.2%, and the share in total trade was 42.8%. It goes without saying that the EU is also Russia's most important trading partner.¹⁰ Russia–EU relations may find grounds for a strategic partnership or fierce competition. Therefore, the parties confront various common regional and global issues in their bilateral relations.

Cooperation in trade and the energy industry forms the first of focal point while establishing a security dialogue is the second. Despite the statement of “strategic partnership” in the official documents of bilateral relations, such a partnership has never existed in practice.¹¹ The definition of the EU for strategic partnership covers not only Russia, but also neighboring countries. Russia also goes for this kind of alliance instead of full partnership. However, the EU assistance to the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence, the battles with Georgia of 2008, and the crisis of Ukraine have had poisoning impacts on Russo-EU cooperation. In fact, in such a partnership, it seems that both parties have differed greatly with respect to purposes and intentions.¹² The strategic partnership of the EU with Russia means transformation to the market economy, democratization, pluralism, and rule of law. For Russia, on the other hand, it is aimed at maintaining geopolitical interests and power equilibriums. However, economic relations developed to a great extent until the Ukraine crisis in 2014.

The relationships between the EU and Russia shape up by the cooperation and conflict dynamics. The first collaboration dynamic is the economic and social transformation trend in Russia. The process of change

in the Soviet Union, which began during Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership as the last leader of the Soviet Union and followed by Boris Yeltsin, as President of Russia, triggered fervent radical transformations in state politics and the economy of post Soviet era. These reforms and the restructuring process in Russia accelerated the transition from a totalitarian one-party regime to free market economy. Undoubtedly, this development served as a crucial opportunity for Europe and the West to establish new relations despite the fact that Russia was not integrated with them then.

Another significant factor of bilateral cooperation between Russia and the EU is their historical and cultural ties. Russia's place in Europe in the past has been mentioned above. It is known that kinship relationships between Tsars and European kings were established during the era of Tsarist Russia. In fact, Russians opted for being described as "Europeans in the East" rather than "Asians in the West."¹³ The "belonging to Europe" and "identity of Europeanness" became legitimate motives for rapprochement with Europe, rather than being discerned as threats to Russian national identity.¹⁴

Besides the dynamics of cooperation between the parties, there exist several dynamics of conflict that includes the expansion of the EU into Eastern Europe, former Eastern Bloc countries' approach toward EU–Russia relations, Russia as a soft security threat, and the EU's positioning of Russia in its Eastern policy. The geographical size of Russia, its unique social structure and values (rich cultural history, customs and traditions), and its strong military and possession of nuclear weapons have preoccupied EU members also.¹⁵ The EU, which is expanding to the East, is seen as a force attempting to get into its "control area," one in which Russia has same interests.

The 'common neighboring regions' that emanated from the enlargement of the EU toward Central and Eastern Europe has so far created the biggest tension between the EU and Russia. Russia has become concerned about the stability of its position not only because of the EU, but also because of the expansion of NATO in large parts of Central and Eastern Europe. In the face of such a situation, Moscow has taken aim at 'integration projects' as the Eurasian Economic Union which is expected to be alternatives to Western institutions.

Another area of conflict area arises from the former European East Bloc Countries' approach toward Russia's relations with the EU. That the Soviet Union had incontestably been a "superpower" that determined rules in the international arena rather than complying with the rules set by others during the Cold War period fermented trouble among the new EU member states of the former Eastern Bloc. The countries such as Poland and the Baltic countries do not favor stronger Russia–EU relations and are trying to prevent the progress of relations as such. For example, Poland vetoed the EU Commission's launch of negotiations on the new "Partnership and Cooperation Agreement," leaving the EU to declare

that it was not ready to launch negotiations with Russia in May 2007.¹⁶ The founding principles of the EU member states hardly helped the furtherance of East European countries–Russia relations. For this reason, instead of developing block-type relations with the EU, Russia gave precedence to developing relationships with leading big countries of the EU, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. These countries also favored progress of relationships with Russia with the priority of energy. The hardships in EU–Russia relations constituted advantages for Russia. There are certain hurdles in maturing the bilateral relationships between Russia and these countries. Among these hardships lie democracy and human rights problems, Russia’s involvement in Syria, and old scars encountered in Post-Soviet Era.¹⁷

TWO FACTORS COMBINING COOPERATION AND COMPETITION: ECONOMY AND ENERGY

Increasing economic and commercial relations between Russia and the EU are at the forefront of the factors that facilitate cooperation between the parties. Energy is a combination of conflict and cooperation between the parties. The EU became one of Russia’s most important foreign trade partners and one of the most important foreign investment sources ten years after the end of the Cold War. While Russia was the third trading partner of the EU, the EU was the first trading partner of Russia; and commercial relations of the parties recorded high growth rates until the middle of 2008.

Due to the impact of the 2008 crisis and some protective policies implemented by Russia, there has been a decline in trade since that date. In 2014, the aggravation of the political situation and sanctions, coupled with the fall in oil prices and growing economic tensions in Russia, have worsened the economic recession, causing dramatic commercial losses in industry.¹⁸ The EU’s exports to Russia consist of machinery, transportation vehicles, chemical products, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural products. The leading imports of the EU from Russia are oil and natural gas and some other raw materials. The EU is the most important investor in Russia. It is estimated that up to 75% of foreign direct investment in Russia comes from EU member states.¹⁹ The three EU member states with the highest trade volume with Russia are the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy.

As a response to Russia’s support for rebels in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Russia faced a series of punitive measures starting from June 2014 coordinated by the EU, the US, Canada, and their allies. Three kinds of economic sanctions were imposed on Russia.²⁰ The first sanction was the restriction of access to Western financial markets and services by certain Russian state institutions in the bank-

ing, energy and defense sectors. The second was putting an embargo on the export of certain high technology and production equipment to Russia for oil exploration. The third was an embargo on the sale of certain military and dual-use materials to Russia. These embargoes harm the EU–Russia relationships, albeit more affecting the Russian economy. In fact, some EU member states have different views on the sanctions. Russia's annexation of Crimea have also continued to cause economic losses on both sides and this led to a 'lose-lose' situation for them.²¹ EU–Russia trade has continuously decreased since 2012, dropping by 44% between 2012 and 2016 from approximately \$413 billion in 2012 to approximately \$233 billion in 2016.²²

Russia, one of the energy giants in the world, is the most important energy supplier of the EU. The EU receives one third of the oil and natural gas it imports from Russia, and since 1967 the natural gas flow has been ongoing. In 2007, Russia accounted for 24% of the total natural gas demand (44% of EU imports) and 27% of the total oil demand of the EU (30% of EU imports); and made 65% of its natural gas exports and 63% of its oil exports to EU members.²³

Some EU members are very much dependent on Russia for energy. This situation puts Russia in a key position in terms of the EU's energy security. This dependency relationship in the energy field carries economic and political risks for the EU. Especially Russia's restrictions of gas volume due to the disputes between Russia and Ukraine created concerns in the EU in the different times. The Russia–Ukraine gas disputes began in early 1990s, and had repeated many times by the end of 1995. Ukraine's rejection of payment for the Russian price for natural gas, and defaults in repayment of debts of Ukraine to Russia have had impacts on Poland, Hungary, Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, and other Balkan countries.²⁴ For these reasons, a dialogue over energy has been carried out between Russia and the EU since 2000. Russia prefers to develop bilateral relations with the EU member states rather than acting as a union in energy relations with the EU. The impasse for the EU is the energy card in Russians' hands for foreign policy.

The EU prefers to engage in various initiatives in order to reduce dependence on Russia in the energy field. Regarding 'security of energy' from the European perspective, reaching a reliable supply of energy resources by secure routes in a sustainable way and with reasonable prices was expressed in a recent green paper titled "*A Strategy for Competitive, Sustainable and Secure Energy*" published by the EU Commission in March 2006.

The EU may not achieve the expected success of its endeavors to diversify the transit ways (such as NABUCCO Project) for several reasons. On the other hand, the EU hardly owns a common energy policy that may come to fruition. Each of the members of the EU has been unilaterally trying on their own to create and practice differing energy

policies. Although unilateral dependence on energy resources is often mentioned between the EU and Russia, Russia's dependence on Europe is another reality, because the most important customers of natural gas, which is Russia's most essential export item, are the EU members.

Russia's foreign currency needs are largely provided by the European natural gas market. The export of natural gas from Russia to alternative markets requires very large investments. Owing to the slumps in oil prices, Russia now hardly owns the means to finance the infrastructural investments for distant markets. This situation gives the EU the opportunity to use the natural gas issue as a political weapon with Russia.

Even during the Cold War, the Soviet Union successfully passed the energy-related reliability test in relation to the EU, despite pressure from the USA. Russia is commonly believed that she is using her energy advantages in her relationships with the EU. However, there are those who reverse this view, who assert the EU keeps the issue fresh artificially. Contrary to both views, it is in the best interest of both sides to treat the energy from the commercial angles instead of geopolitical approaches.²⁵

Lately, Russia needs infrastructure investments in order to protect its power in the natural gas market. On the other hand, Russia has begun to lose the ability to export Central Asian natural gas, produced at a lower cost, to Europe at a higher price. The rise of energy needs and demands of China has set the stage for new energy agreements with the energy-rich Central Asian states. With the advent of 2009 China–Turkmenistan Natural Gas Pipeline Project, Russia has lost its monopoly power on natural gas sales. This indicates that Russia may use its energy card less in the mid-term.

TOWARD DISAPPOINTMENT IN RUSSIA–EU RELATIONS

In the 2000s, the Russian–EU partnership had entered “a vicious cycle of decreasing mutual expectations” since none of the parties can receive what they want from the partnership.²⁶ An incompatible character has prevailed over relations between the EU and Russia. This unfavorable situation deteriorated further in August 2008 with the war between Russia and Georgia; and it reached another new tour in 2014 with the Ukrainian crisis, the annexation of Crimea and finally, the Syrian crisis. Russia prefers to respond to the West by acting with a strong reactions toward regions considered as critical zone.

Russia, in fact, seemed ignoring of enlargement of NATO and European policy toward post-Soviet area in the 1990s and early 2000s. Having had the muscle politically and economically, it did not hesitate to show its distaste for this. Early on, the Russian response to this diffusion was rather diplomatic; later it turned out to be hard power demonstrations. The “Color” revolutions in the Commonwealth of Independent

States were seen by the EU countries as natural developments on the way to democratization. But Russia perceived all this as part of the geopolitically imperial strategies of the West.²⁷ For this reason, Russia did not eschew the hard reactions in order to halt the advances of the EU as well as NATO. For example, Russia has exhibited its resolve in this context in Southern Ossetia, Ukraine, and Crimea.

Economic measures, which Russia adopts in general as its foreign policy and is an attitude that the West is familiar with, are also preferred in relations with the EU. Some of the instruments that Russia applies as foreign policy rhetoric toward EU countries are: raising the price of natural gas beyond the market price, restricting the importation of some products such as fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, milk under the pretext of their unsuitability due to “economic and health conditions,”²⁸ and advocating for the rights of Russian minorities in the Baltic states on the grounds of protection of human rights. It has not been easy for the EU, uncomfortable with Russia’s new foreign policy rhetoric, to respond to this attitude. The EU has applied economic embargoes in certain sectors in Russia on account of its annexation of Crimea. Among these are bans of armament sales by the 28 EU Countries to Russia, bans on the transfer of technologies in the oil and natural gas sectors, alienation of Russian state banks in European finance sector.

The deterring inefficiency of the EU and NATO has set the stage for Russian escalation in Syria and Ukraine. In the view of the EU, shaken after the 2008 Economic crisis, and of NATO, which failed to provide security guarantees against the Russia’s military interventions, Russia was leading toward the establishment of a Eurasian Economic Community, which seeks a more robust economic integration process in the former Soviet area.²⁹

BRIEF HISTORY OF TURKS’ “EUROPEAN ADVENTURE”

The Turks, with their roots originally extending onto the Central Asian Steppes, made inroads, from the late 4th century AD, into the West using different routes such as Northern and Southern Black Sea. Ottoman expansion from Anatolia toward Europe continued from the 13th century until the beginning of the 18th century. Occupying a superior position in all respects in face of the European states, the Ottoman Empire began to lose power against Europe starting in 1699, the Ottomans then began to retreat by territorial losses. Its dominance in trade was overtaken by Europe and this accelerated the rise of Europe from the 16th century against the Islamic world of the Ottoman Empire.

During the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the rise of nationalism created by the French Revolution were two important factors that accelerated the decline of the Ottoman Empire. All problems

related to the Ottoman Empire's internal and external politics were seen by European states as the "Eastern Question." All policies of the European states concerning Ottoman territories since the beginning of the 19th century stemmed from the fact that the Ottoman Empire was no longer an important power and could not stand on its own. The Ottoman Empire was increasingly powerless over the protection of its territorial integrity in the first half of this century; the loss of its territories in Europe in the second half of the same century, and the division of all of its territories between France and the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 20th century following its defeat in 1918 during World War I was inevitable.

The rise of Russia to the North was another serious threat to the Ottomans, both in Eastern Europe and on the Black Sea coast. Furthermore, as Russia became a European state over time and aimed at expanding to the south, the Ottoman Empire, which was the first barrier of Russia's expansion, became a natural rival of Russia, and this caused long-term conflict. Turkish-Russian encounters were also a game for the rise of Russia and the fall of the Ottomans, and during the Crimean War (1853–1856) European states supported the "Sick Man of Europe,"³⁰ as the Ottoman Empire was known in Europe. The main reason pushing European states to support the Ottoman Empire was keep under control the Balkans and the Straits (Bosporus, Dardanelles). After the Crimean War, the Ottomans became part of the European Concert.³¹ With the Paris Treaty of 1856, the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was affirmed. The Great Britain supported the land integrity of the Ottomans for fear of advances of Russia, and for protecting the passageways to its colonies. The Great powers gave a commitment to respect these rights, the Ottoman Empire was recognized as one of the Great powers, and the Ottoman Empire was to be regarded as an essential element in the European balance of power against Russia.

The system created by the Paris Treaty was changed in 1878. The main actor of that period, the Great Britain, abandoned its policy of supporting territorial integrity of the Ottomans, seeing that the Ottomans no longer maintained their territorial integrity and independence. In this case, it was inevitable for the Ottomans to enter into new alliances in Europe. The process of disintegration occurred after the First World War when the Ottoman Empire dissolved following its defeat in the war. The first Grand National Assembly opened on 23 April in 1920, and The Republic of Turkey was proclaimed on 29 October 1923. The young Turkish state, born from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, struggled to find its place at the "new" world by establishing diplomatic relations with European states against whom Turkey had clashed in its War of Independence (1919–1922).

FROM ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP TO FULL MEMBERSHIP: TURKEY'S EU PROGRESS

The EU membership process, which Turkey regards as a “modernization project,” has proceeded with ups and downs. The process, which began with the application of “associate membership” in 1959, officially started in 1963 with the partnership treaty called the Ankara Agreement. The Ankara Agreement witnessed three stages: the preparation stage (1964–1970), the transitional stage (1973–1995), and the final stage (1996 to full membership) for the integration of Turkey in the EEC (called the European Community after 1965). Turkey and the European Community have occasionally altered the conditions envisaged by the treaty for economic and political reasons.

The 1990s was the period when the dialogue and interaction between Turkey and the EU (called the European Union after 1993) accelerated. The agreement about the customs union which was an important step in the EU integration of Turkey came into effect on January 1, 1996. Turkey has adopted with the Customs Union the EU's common external tariff for most industrial products and industrial components of agricultural products.³² The EU Council has given full membership candidate status to Turkey at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999.

After the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, Turkey began to experience a remarkable transformation process thanks to expansion in the areas of democratization and freedom, greater economic integration with the global economy, and proactive foreign policy. The radical economic, political, and judicial reforms initiated by the AKP Government between 2002 and 2006 have made invaluable contributions to the full membership process of Turkey to the EU.

Full membership was also seen by Turkish decision-makers as one of important factors of both their domestic and foreign policy vision.³³ Constitutional changes, judicial reforms, and legal amendments were made in the framework of the Turkey's full membership process. Between 2002 and 2004, eight compliance packages and three comprehensive constitutional amendment packages in 2001, 2004, and 2010 were accepted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Under AKP rule, 342 primary and 1902 secondary pieces of legislation were enacted in order to align with the EU between 2002 and 2015.³⁴

Within the same period, Turkey did not escape the attention of the EU, not only in terms of political and social reforms, but also in terms of its remarkable economic achievements.³⁵ Although Turkey achieved a much higher pace than the EU average, its budget deficit, foreign debt, and unemployment rates remained well below the EU average. The high population growth rate in Turkey was also seen by some EU countries as a problem. The demographic structure of the EU may not help its populations in the future. The possibility of populous Turkey may gain weight

in administrative organs of the EU is one powerful reason why some nations resist to the full membership of Turkey. Therefore, some EU members argued that Turkey was not ready to join the EU yet.³⁶

Turkey's EU accession negotiations began with the adoption of the Negotiating Framework Document on 3 October 2005. In the accession negotiations, sixteen chapters were opened for negotiation and one of them was temporarily closed. Fourteen chapters have been blocked due to barriers of the EU Council or some member states.³⁷

The EU's "enlargement fatigue"³⁸ after the previous far-reaching wave of enlargement in 2004 led to a decline in the importance given to the Union's enlargement policy.³⁹ Undoubtedly, this situation negatively affected Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU. Despite problems related to the accession negotiations, Turkey remains an important strategic partner for the EU. The "Arab Spring" has increased the strategic importance of Turkey-EU relations for both sides. In the face of common threats and issues such as developments in the Middle East and North Africa, conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, and the refugee crisis, cooperation and joint action between Turkey and the EU have become a necessity.

Until 2007, Turkey followed a consistent foreign policy with the EU, with the effect of commencing the negotiation process and focusing on joining the EU. Obstruction of the negotiation process because of the Cyprus and the emergence of national security policies due to Syrian crises, such as the fight against terrorism, were the starting points for many disagreements with the EU. At this point, Turkey preferred to harmonize with the EU in its foreign policy issues that would not harm its national issues such as security, but not in cases that could harm them.⁴⁰

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TURKEY AND RUSSIA IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS WITH THE EU

Turkey and Russia present both similarities and differences in their policies toward the EU. Both of these states, which are geographically part of the European continent, have not been immune to developments in Europe. In the rivalries and conflicts between the Turks and Russians, European States preferred to support one of them against the other throughout the history.

Turkey and Russia started to experience problems in their relations with the EU for various reasons starting in the mid-2000s. The EU relations of both countries bear similarities and differences in terms of their leaders and decision-making processes, and also economic, political and social rights and obligations.

The leaders in the Turkish and Russian decision-making processes have played an important role in the EU relations of both countries. Regarding Turkey, the decisive role of political leaders in the EU policies of

Turkey has been always salient. Turkish leaders have been greatly interested in the common European market ever since Turkey's application for association with the EEC. The EU process has usually been used as political instrument in domestic politics by Turkish political decision-makers.⁴¹ Such developments as application for full membership, the Customs Union, candidate status, and negotiation process have been presented to the Turkish people in an exaggerated way as if EU membership was guaranteed.⁴²

It can be suggested that Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the leading political figure in Turkish politics since the early 2000s, has a periodically changing understanding about the EU subject and an attitude that transformed into a stance against the EU. When Erdogan established and assumed leadership of the Justice and Development Party, he considered the EU process as the main trigger for reforms required for the development of an understanding of democracy and human rights in Turkey. This understanding made him a zealous defender of the EU process.⁴³

Although, Turkey managed to start negotiations with the EU for full membership, optimism about joining the EU did not last long; there was a decrease in the enthusiasm and willingness of Turks, especially Erdogan, regarding full membership of the EU as the EU turned a deaf ear to Turkey's concerns, especially the Cyprus issue. Turkey has not applied Ankara Agreement referring to the opening of its ports and airports to trade from Cyprus, and European Council blocked Turkey's EU talks at the end of 2006. In 2002, Erdogan proclaimed that the so-called Copenhagen Criteria for EU accession should be renamed to the "Ankara Criteria." The fact that Erdogan repeatedly mentioned "Ankara Criteria"⁴⁴ instead of Copenhagen Criteria in such a process is a consequence of this disappointment. The Turkish government, which felt that it was left unaided by the EU in terms of the refugee issue arising from the Syria crisis, the fight against terrorism, and the failed July 15, 2016 coup attempt, lost its motivation for full membership and started to speak of "moving on without Europe."

The appeal of the image of a powerful leader in Russia has had an influence in its relations with the EU since 1999. President Putin has become the one who adjusts the EU policies concerning Russia.⁴⁵ Putin as a leader is compliant with both of the image of leader in Russian society and Russian state tradition in terms of his personal character and traits. He succeeded in eliminating the fragility of the period of transition of a new state and made political moves to regain the power and prestige that were lost for some time after the Soviet Union collapsed. Putin also managed to use Russian history for the reconstruction of power and definition of national interest.⁴⁶ The interests of Russia have been reconstructed on the basis of Russian nationalism under the Putin administration. During Putin's rule, Russia's economic, military, and political confidence has

been reinforced by rapid growth, strong central authority, military modernization and strong diplomacy.

Under the leadership of Putin, Russia has been a partner in cooperation and coalitions with the US and the EU on various matters, including the September 11 attacks. Initially, Russia attached importance to European integration, and an emphasis was laid on how Russia belonged in Europe. It did not even have a negative approach toward military restructurings in the EU and EU enlargement, and it followed a successful policy of balance in the matters of dispute between the US and the EU.⁴⁷ The war in Georgia in 2008 was the starting point of Putin's idea that he could not get what he expected from the policies of convergence with the EU. This war also became a turning point for the EU in terms of its relations with Russia. The demand for measures and sanctions against Russia due to its aggression did not receive any support from EU countries except the UK and Eastern European countries.⁴⁸ The EU's uncertainty and inability to produce a common policy served as a guide for the Russian leader in a series of economic and political moves that he would make later.

It is possible to find similarities in the approaches of Erdogan and Putin toward the EU. Although both leaders come from political traditions that are both contrary to the EU, they both initially evaluated relations with the EU from a pragmatic perspective. However, it can be suggested that neither of them ever perceived the EU process (process of membership for Turkey and process of partnership for Russia) as an inevitable, ultimate goal. Furthermore, both leaders have consideration that the EU is not sincere, and they react strongly to the EU's criticism of their countries.⁴⁹ Erdogan and Putin continued to take actions regarding EU policies affecting their countries due to the Syrian refugee crisis, visa-free travel around the EU, Cyprus issue, and economic sanctions imposed on Russia following the Ukraine crisis.

Economic factors are at the forefront of Turkey's and Russia's policies toward the EU. Moreover, it is the economic relations that shape the political, social, and cultural aspects of both countries' EU relations. The level of interdependence in economic relations for Turkey–EU relations and Russia–EU relations is quite high. Therefore, Turkey, Russia and the EU countries suffer from the impact of crises of trade, which has great potential to grow under normal conditions.

The EU is one of the major trade partners of Turkey and Russia. It was impossible for Russia and Turkey to be unaffected by the Economic Crisis of 2008 that shook the EU. In a similar vein, it was not only Russia but also the EU who suffered from commercial losses arising from the sanctions imposed on Russia after the Russian annexation of Crimea and the Ukraine crisis in 2014. Despite its strong political reaction to annexation of the Crimea, Turkey, the second largest purchaser of Russian natural gas after the EU, endeavored not to carry this issue into economic re-

sponse.⁵⁰ However, the economic tensions following the crisis between the two countries due to the Russian jet fighter being shot down by Turkey had a negative impact on trade relations.

The most important aspect of Russia–EU relations is, of course, the “Common Economic Space.” The Common Economic Space covers such elements as cooperation in energy, transportation, agriculture, environment and space technology, and fair and mutual access to resources, infrastructures and markets.⁵¹ More than half of the budget of Russia, which is one of the energy giants of the world, is made up of income from oil and natural gas exports. An examination of the energy relations between the EU and Russia shows that 81% of Russia’s oil exports go to European markets.⁵² The latest EU–Russian strategic partnership agreement signed in 2011 came under threat because of the 2014 war in Eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.⁵³ The Russian intervention in the domestic affairs of Ukraine, and the occupation of Ukraine’s territory were unacceptable to the EU as well as the US, and NATO, straining ties with Russia and vice versa.

The established proximity between Russia and the EU came to an end after the Russian takeover of Crimea in 2014, and the perception of an “expansionist” Russia had the image in Europe, similar to the image of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The sanctions imposed by the EU and the US caused significant challenges for the Russian economy. The sanctions mostly affected the macroeconomic indicators, the exchange rate for the ruble and inflation. Russia also responded to the sanctions, which caused commercial losses for the EU countries trading with Russia.⁵⁴ In early August 2014, Russia prohibited imports of certain agri-food goods from some countries that imposed sanctions on Russia, in particular the USA, the EU, Canada, Australia, and Norway (extended later on to other countries).⁵⁵ Besides this, the initiative of the Eurasian Economic Union, which envisages economic unity of former Soviet countries under the leadership of Russia, seems to have an uncertain future.

Regarding the economic aspect of Turkey–EU relations, the EU has maintained its position as the largest trade partner of Turkey for many years. There has been a great increase in economic relations since 1963, when they were made official. Turkey was integrated into the EU common market in 1996, when the Customs Union began to be implemented. Turkey has experienced significant changes in the 21-year period during which the Customs Union has been implemented. The export-import rate and amount of investments between Turkey and the EU increased rapidly after that date.

Since 2007, Turkey notified the EU that there was a need for a more comprehensive and modern Customs Union Agreement to eliminate current problems. Such changes as the liberalization of the economic system, a striking increase in gross domestic product, and an increase in competitive power led to questioning of the Customs Union by Turkey. Upon the

insistence of Turkey, efforts were started in 2014 to revise the customs union, expand its scope, and eliminate any unfair treatment arising from legal loopholes.⁵⁶ Contrary to popular belief, economic relations between the EU and Turkey have not deteriorated even during the crises frequently experienced since 2007. Data on foreign trade clearly show that economic relations are strong for both sides, EU–Turkey trade is more important for Turkey in terms of its share in foreign trade.

In the foreign trade of Turkey, the lion's share is still accounted for by the EU and Germany; however a slump was recorded after the 2008 Economic crisis that shook whole Europe. The detentions and apprehensions in Turkey after 15 July 2016, and the state of emergency ramifications set the stage for increasing criticism by the EU. Nevertheless, the rise of foreign trade captures the attentions. Foreign trade volume between the two sides was 146 billion dollars in 2016. Turkey ranked fourth in the EU's exports in 2016, with a share of 4.5%. Similarly, Turkey ranked fifth in the EU's imports with a share of 3.9%.⁵⁷ The fact that the origin of two-thirds of foreign investment in Turkey is Europe also reinforces the fact that economic cooperation motivation between Turkey and the EU has not been lost.⁵⁸

It can be suggested that the relations of Turkey and Russia with the EU alter depending on the political crisis. Turkey and Russia have the lowest profile in political dialogue with the EU for five years. However, the factors leading to low levels of political dialogue are different for Russia and Turkey. Russia had a positive momentum in its relations with the EU until the period of tension reached its highest point following the Ukraine crisis. The EU and Russia cooperated in many areas that were significant in terms of bilateral relations and international issues: climate change, human trafficking, drug trafficking, the fight against organized crime, the struggle against terrorism, prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the peace process in the Middle East, and the nuclear program of Iran. Despite such extensive cooperation, the number of developments that caused different stances also was not low. The dialogue that had been sustained in the form of 'Partnership for Modernization' since 2010 was focused on such matters as the rule of law, the development of civil society, enhancing and deepening bilateral trade and economic relations, and promoting alignment of technical regulations and standards.

CONCLUSION

Turkey and Russia, two nations that competed with each other for the last few centuries share similarities in their relations with the Western world. During the period when the Ottoman Empire had greater power, European states struggled to counter the Ottoman Empire by forming an

alliance with Russia. The greatest supporter of Tsarist Russia, which succeeded its expansion against the Ottoman Empire in its periods of stagnation and decline, were European states led by the Great Britain. France, England, and Tsarist Russia, as part of the same alliance, acted together against the Ottoman State during World War I. Turkish–Russian relations continued on the basis of mutual trust and respect until the beginning of the World War II. The distant stances of both countries toward each other, starting during World War II, continued throughout the Cold War. What determined Turkey’s alliance with the West was also the cold and threatening attitude of the Soviet Union. This attitude prompted Turkey to maintain close relations with the West and the EU during the Cold War.

The new environment emerged after the dissolution of the USSR and the end of the Cold War encouraged new lines of cooperation among states, and the EU was the appropriate choice for such cooperation. The steps taken by the EU to develop relations with Russia in such an atmosphere of cooperation were also supported by the Russians, who adopted the goal of establishing a “strategic partnership.” However, despite the economic motivation, disagreements and tensions in political matters provided sufficient reason for the dissolution of the EU–Russian partnership in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s. Turkey’s partnership with the EU continued although there were ups and downs during the Cold War. After the Cold War came to an end, Turkey’s motivation for full EU membership increased despite insufficient interest from the EU side. The insistent and resolute choice of the Turkish governments and public encouraged the EU to further the process of Turkey’s full membership. As with Russia, Turkey’s full membership motivation has also started to decrease due to political tensions. The goal of creating a free trade area or a common economic space between the EU and Russia has been left to an uncertain future.

Turkey and Russia, whose relations with the EU deteriorated in similar developments, intensified their relations with each other due to various crises and alienations. The bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia, which are marked by commercial and economic interests, are also considerably shaped by political expectations and goals, and the EU has lost its attraction for both Turkish and Russian leaders. The EU seems to have plunged into stagnation and recession period in the last ten years on account of the 2008 crisis, followed by the rising far-right movements, refugee crisis, as well as the Brexit that paved the way for an institutional chaos. Not having received the expected support from the US and the EU following the July 15, 2016 coup attempt and the weakness of cooperation in countering terrorism and security threats have led Ankara to the questioning of the various aspects of Turkey’s relations with the West. Although Turkey–Russia relations became tense due to the Syrian crisis and the related shooting down of a Russian fighter jet, the progress that they

have made in a short period of time to improve their relations again shows that the capacity of these two countries to repair relations with each other is higher than their capacity to repair the deteriorated relations with the EU.

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TWELVE

A Proposal for Sustainable Peace in the Sykes-Picot Agreement's Hundredth Year

The Middle East Peace and Stability Pact

İbrahim Arslan and Mithat Baydur

At the end of the Cold War, the states had to develop common solutions against new threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In addition to these security threats, the features of some cross-border issues such as immigration, drug trafficking, and HIV, which cannot be effectively addressed by anyone state, have prompted countries to engage in closer international cooperation.¹

Radical changes in world politics with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a revision of the classical theories of international. Neoliberal institutionalism is the theoretical basis for this chapter. Neoliberal institutionalism, like realism, sees countries as monolithic and rational actors who pursue only their own interests. However, unlike realists, neoliberals claim that the countries can achieve international cooperation which is beneficial for everybody. In addition, they do not see international politics as realists do, rejecting that the nations loss is another's gain and that international politics is a zero-sum game where extensive deception is common. Contrary to realists, neo-liberals say that there is a "reciprocity mechanism" and the countries realize cooperation within the boundaries of this mechanism.² In order to establish sustainable peace in the Middle East, this chapter proposes an initiative called Middle East

Peace and Stability Pact, (similar to the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe [SP]), based on the assumptions of neoliberal institutionalism.

The Middle East, host to various cultures, and religions, with its strategic position near Asia, Europe, and Africa and rich energy resources make it an important region.³ Besides these characteristics of the Middle East, where the three major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—emerged, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, increased the significance of the region. These cultural, religious, and strategic advantages of regions explain why it is seen by global actors as an arena for rivalry.

As shown on the first map, the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East was divided by Great Britain and France during the World War I with the Sykes–Picot Agreement which was approved by the British and French Cabinets at the beginning of February 1916, even though its terms and existence were kept secret.⁴ Although the Ottoman Empire won a great victory against the British in Kut Al Amara in the north of the Persian Gulf in April 1916, it withdrew its forces from this area and redeployed to other areas after the victory. This decision meant that the area lacked military protection. Great Britain, having noticed this situation, did not miss the opportunity and later on occupied this region. This historical development became the beginning of the political shaping of the Middle East after the World War I when Great Britain and France increased their influence over the region.⁵ The Sykes–Picot Agreement was formed at the end of a series of correspondences among Great Britain, France, and Russia. Italy and Japan became acquainted with the Sykes–Picot Agreement later.⁶ The Middle East witnessed another significant development, the Hussein–McMahon correspondence, a series of letters exchanged in 1915–16, between the Emir of Mecca, and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt. The correspondence proclaimed British support of an independent Arab state in exchange for Arab assistance in opposing the Ottoman Empire. Although Hussein, who claimed to represent all Arabs, demanded independence for all of the Arabic-speaking lands to the east of Egypt,⁷ this region was largely divided by Great Britain and France with the Sykes–Picot Agreement later, forming the basis for the British and the French colonies of the Middle East. The disclosure of the secret Sykes–Picot Agreement by the Bolsheviks in 1918 revealed the policy of the British and French in the Middle East. The fact that the British tried to compromise with Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, one of the rivals of the Emir Hussein,⁸ was another example of Britain's complicated and interest-based policy in the region. The region witnessed European rule for the first time with the Sykes–Picot Agreement and this Agreement did not establish peace and stability in this region.

THE MIDDLE EAST BEFORE THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT

Where is the Middle East? Does the Middle East really have clear boundaries? It is not so easy to answer these questions. The term of "Middle East" was first used by Alfred T. Mahan, an American geopolitics expert, in his 1902 article "The Persian Gulf and International Relations" for the region of "Gulf of Aden" and "India."⁹ According to Mahan, the Middle East includes the area from the Suez Canal to Singapore.¹⁰ To Bozarslan who refers to Henry Laurens,¹¹ the term of "Middle East" emerged as a result of a bureaucratic problem as the government of Great Britain was trying to organize its foreign policy over areas previously not subject to British colonial rule. British control over the Persian Gulf region was based on the British government office in Mumbai-India. Thus, with regard to the management of the foreign policy of Great Britain, the British authority in India had responsibility for Gulf region of the Ottoman Empire. The rest of the Ottoman Empire was subject to the office of the British Foreign Office in London. This situation caused a friction between the British authority in India and the Foreign Office in London, became even more complicated after World War I. The British government connected the British Mandate in the Near East which included Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan to the Colonial Office in 1921. Finally, the Foreign Office established the "Middle East department" to control the region between the area of responsibility of the Indian Office and the area of responsibility of the Colonial Office.¹²

Another development related to the term the "Middle East" occurred in the United States (US). The Middle East Institute in Washington helped Americans who needed a definition of the extended region comprising the area from Morocco to British India after the World War II in 1945-1946. The Middle East Institute, which published *the Middle East Journal*, was interested in this region and called it the Middle East.¹³ In order to understand exactly where the Middle East is we can look at sources of the United Nations (UN). According to the UN, the region called the Middle East can be seen in map two.

After the Islamic Caliphate had passed to the Ottomans from Egyptian Mamluks with the Battles of Marj Dabiq in 1516 and Battle of Ridaniya in 1517, the Ottoman Empire ruled the great part of the region which lies on the west of the Persian Gulf for about 400 years until 1916. The shift of control the Hejaz region, where there are two holy Islamic cities, Mecca and Medina, to the Ottomans happened in 1517.¹⁴ Although the Arab world fell under the Ottoman sovereignty after the Islamic Caliphate was seized by the Ottoman Empire, the control of the Middle East did not come true immediately, and the Ottoman rule did not constitute the Arabian Peninsula completely. The region from the inner part of the Arabian Peninsula to Damascus province was under the control of the Bedouin tribes.¹⁵

At the end of the World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and the Turks founded a new independent country in 1923, the Republic of Turkey, largely in Anatolia. The Middle East region is explained under the heading "Relations with Middle East and North African countries" on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey. The aforementioned region covers: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.¹⁶ At this point, it would be appropriate to refer to the term "Bilad al-Sham" which is a part of the Middle East. The territory called Bilad al-Sham in Islamic history covers only Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.¹⁷ We also have another term, the "Levant." The Levant covers a wider area than Bilad al-Sham and includes Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.¹⁸ In order to perceive the same territory related to the term of Middle East, the most standard way can be accepting the UN sources.

The boundaries of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century are shown on map three.¹⁹ The Western powers increased their influence in the Middle East during the World War I. After the World War I, Britain reshaped the region by determining new boundaries without taking into account the political structure and the existing provincial system of the Ottoman Empire. The de Bunsen Committee which was established on 8 April, 1915 to advice to the British Cabinet what Britain ought to want in the Middle East. The de Bunsen Committee used the vague terms which had been used by Hellenistic geographers a thousand of years ago. The Committee, one of members named Mark Sykes, proposed in its report to divide the Ottoman Empire to five broad autonomous parts to be known as Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Anatolia, and Jazirah-Iraq (the southern and northern portions of Mesopotamia).

The general policy pursued by Great Britain toward the territory of Ottoman Empire can be understood by quoting the British Middle East expert Mark Sykes: "I want to see a permanent Anglo-French entente allied to the Jews, Arabs, and Armenians which will render Pan-Islamism innocuous and protect India and Africa from the Turco-German combine, which I believe may well survive Hohenzollerns."²⁰

THE LAST CENTURY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Great Britain and France established their power over the Middle East. After the World War II, Europe lost its power and was in need for Marshall Aid supplemented by the US. Under these conditions the world witnessed a bipolar international system in which the USSR and the US competing for dominance. The US fulfilled the power gap left by the Great Britain and France in the Middle East at the beginning of the Cold War. In other words, the

people who lived under the Ottoman rule in the region for almost four hundred years were left to live under the rule of the winners of the World War I and the World War II, since 1916. In this process, Great Britain and France, and later the US have tried to influence the region politically according to their interests.

The last hundred years of the Middle East, can be described as “a history of the violence.”²¹ The region has witnessed five different cycles of violence in the last century. The first historical cycle covers the period between 1918 and 1948. During this time, the Ottoman Empire crumbled, the Arab provinces of the Empire were partitioned by Britain and France, and colonial or mandate governments in the region were established. Frequent Arab revolts against colonial rule took place in the region during these thirty years. The second period cycle of violence occurred between 1948 and 1979. During this period, the State of Israel was established, the Palestinian issue developed, and the revolutionary Arab regimes were established. Between the years 1979 and 1989, the State of Israel was recognized by Egypt, Afghanistan was occupied by the Soviet Union, a revolution took place in Iran, and the Iran-Iraq war lasted for eight years, ending in 1988. Between 1990 and 2001, the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, sparking the Gulf War of 1991, Iraq occupied Kuwait, and the liberation of Kuwait by a US led coalition, rebellions and civil wars occurred in many Middle Eastern countries, including in Egypt and Algeria, and a new wave of radicalism developed with al-Qaeda, a terrorist group funded by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri around 1989. The last period cycle covers the period from 2001 to the present. In this period, the September 11, 2001 attacks took place in the United States, sparking the “War on Terror” to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Revolts in Palestine intensified, and armed conflicts involved Israel in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. In short, in the period between 1916 and 2017, the Middle East could not establish sustainable peace and stability.²² Not only states but also some terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and the Iraqi and Syrian Islamic State (ISIS) have involved in conflicts in the Middle East. Hezbollah was founded in Lebanon in 1982. According to Hezbollah, Israel is an illegitimate state established in the occupied territories. ISIS was witnessed in the region in 21st century. It aims at the establishment of Caliphate in the areas where the Sunni population reside in Iraq and Syria, started to increase its strength with the withdrawal of all US troops from Iraq in 2011.

The political systems in the Middle East founded after the World War I were generally based on dictatorial rule. The states in the region did not hesitate to use force against their own people to maintain their rule and suppress all dissent. In the last hundred years, several political factors influenced the way people resisted these dictatorships. These factors included applications of the pressure-exerting mandate/authoritarian regimes, due to dependency upon major powers for their survival asym-

metric relations of the countries in the region with Western countries, and most importantly, the establishment of the State of Israel and expansion of its territories over Palestine in defiance of the UN decisions, and resentment toward the leaders of Arap World due to their failure to prevent Israeli expansion.

Considering self-interested policies of hegemon powers it seems that efforts at shaping the Middle East will not come to an end. More recently, in order to achieve its objectives, the US tried to reshape the region²³ with a project namely the "Greater Middle East" which covers the territory from Pakistan to Morocco. Former US Secretary of States Condoleezza Rice emphasized on August 7, 2003 that in the long term the Middle East will be transformed and governments and borders of 22 countries will be changed.²⁴ In addition to fighting against states hosting and supporting terrorist groups, Greater Middle East project of the US is claimed to have different agendas such as disabling hostile regimes in the region and sustaining oil supply. Apart from that, Iran's efforts at increasing its power in the region against Sunni countries containing Iran, has created rivalry and hostility between Iran and its allies with the Sunni world. In this context, Iran supports Syrian government on the basis of shared religious sect, Shia. Shia Hezbollah was established by Iran and Syria as a response to invasion of southern Lebanon by Israel. Today Hezbollah continues its activities in Lebanon by the support of Iran. Hamas is another organization supported by Iran. Main influence area of Hamas is Palestine. The foundation of Hamas dates back to pre-1948 period even though it was declared in 1987. Hamas opposes Israel's territorial claim over Palestine.

SHAPING OF THE REGION'S FUTURE ON THE BASIS OF GLOBAL COOPERATION

The history of the Middle East offers insight into the causes of the violence and instability in the region. What does the Middle East need to create a more livable political atmosphere?

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the sectarian conflict based on the Sunni-Shiite confrontation are two of the major obstacles to establish peace and stability in the region. History presents some examples which show us that it is possible to handle similar intractable conflicts. For example, Egypt and Israel, two neighbor countries in the region, fought against each other four times in 25 years between 1948 and 1973, and then signed a Peace Treaty on March 26, 1979 on the basis of the Camp David Framework Agreement, ending ongoing conflict between these countries since 1948.²⁵ Israeli troops withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula toward the end of September in 1979 in two phases. This shows that cooperation between states could be possible in the Middle East if there are mutual benefits to both sides for making peace. A similar exam-

ple was also experienced in Europe recently. Immediately after the end of the Cold War, conflicts between Bosnians and Serbs, Croats and Serbs, and Bosnians and Croats in Yugoslavia ended in 1995 with the Dayton Peace Agreement. Later, the sustainable peace environment has become possible through the establishment of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe²⁶ in June 1999 until today. Many countries and major international political, military and financial institutions such as the UN, NATO, OSCE, European Commission, Council of Europe, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, European Investment Bank, World Bank and International Monetary Fund participated in the establishment meeting of the SP. This pact promised integration of regional states to Europe along with providing stability and developing cooperation. After establishment of the SP, formerly fighting sides have had the chance of finding solutions to their own problems altogether via projects of this Pact supported by the aforementioned actors. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization established on June 25, 1992 presents another example for such a case; despite the lack of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Turkey during the establishment of this organization, these two countries became members.²⁷

The strategic position of the Middle East, cultural diversity, the birthplace of the three major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and its rich natural resources show us that the interests of the major powers such as the US, RF and the EU will last in this region. The US, the strongest actor in the Middle East, has military bases in some countries in the Middle East such as United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Djibouti, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Yemen for the continuity of its own national interests. Main goals of the US in the region is to control the Persian Gulf and the waterway of the Red Sea and to support Israel. Nevertheless, the US is not alone in the region; the military bases of the United Kingdom in Cyprus's Agrate and Dhekelia regions, and the military base of Russia in Tartus-Syria can also be considered as political means of these countries in the region.

The security and social problems of the Middle East threaten not only the region but also the entire world. In order to overcome those problems, cooperation on a global scale is required. At this stage, some can claim that a comprehensive peace and stability initiative is not possible in the Middle East. There are many examples in history that lead to solutions to the persistent conflicts. One of the most prominent examples is the Yugoslavian case. As aforementioned, during the disintegration process of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the international community succeeded in stopping conflicts among the Serbs, the Croats, and the Bosnians. Another example of this is related to the relations between Iran and the US. On 14 July, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between Iran and the P5+1 and EU, a comprehensive agreement based on the April 2015 framework, was announced,²⁸ despite the fact that the Iran

had called the US as “the Great Satan.”²⁹ This example shows us that the cooperation is possible, as neoliberalism claims, when the sides have mutual gains resulting from cooperation. The tensions between the Arab countries and Israel, and the regional power struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia are the major obstacles to comprehensive regional peace. However, it is known that Israel and the Sunni Arab states have relations. For example, in January 1996, Israel and Oman signed an agreement on the reciprocal opening of trade representative offices.³⁰

In order to establish a comprehensive peace initiative, the people of the region, who generally complain about the influence of the West in the region, should be encouraged by the UN. “To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means ...” are the purposes defined in the UN Charter.³¹ An initiative under leadership of the UN, as proposed in this chapter, can also be a fresh start for Iran and Saudi Arabia to understand each other better. By using the polarization at the Sunni-Shia confrontation in the region, these countries stir up the struggle, and this situation harms the people of the region. Additionally, the strained political situation, due to deaths and traumas created by long lasting conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, is unsustainable. Israel’s uncompromising attitude toward regional peace initiatives and paying no mind decisions of the UN since 1948 has forced its people to live under the worry that they would be always attacked. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has influenced the Palestinian people very negatively for decades. Hopelessness, compulsion to live in certain areas, immigration to neighbor countries, embargo, and death have become the usual expressions of the experiences of Palestinians. Human Rights organizations in Palestine have stated that living conditions deteriorated remarkably because of Israel’s economic embargo applied over a decade.³²

The conflicts in the Middle East, stemming from the sectarian discrimination and cross-border questions cause humanitarian crisis. In this context, the data of the Centre for International Migration related to the Syrian crisis are worried. In 2016, 15.5 million people having been affected by the Syrian Civil War were in need of humanitarian aid and 6.5 million people were forced to flee their homeland. Indeed, 4.7 million people in the region are immigrants, of which 4.2 million are in Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon.³³ These figures show the misery the Syrian people have had to endure because of war and violence. The European Union, together with some countries in the region, particularly with Turkey, have tried to overcome the problems associated with immigration management, transnational organized crime, and security.³⁴ Regarding these issues, Turkey and the European Union organized a summit on refugee crisis and they agreed on decreasing the number of refugees’

trespassing to Europe. Solutions to these issues, require comprehensive and effective cooperation on both regional and global levels. Regional organizations, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have not been able to overcome historical problems in the region. Due to their structures,³⁵ all of the countries in the region can't become members of these organizations which causes a valuable opportunity missed for achieving a full regional cooperation. GCC is a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The purpose of the GCC is to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities, which are rooted in Islamic beliefs. Additionally the League of Arab States does not have any legal mechanism to enforce on member states to comply.

Applications of the countries in the region based on the interests should be lifted and it should be concentrated on creating a new Middle East with a new understanding. After the World War II, the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security was given to the United Nations. Five permanent members of the UN Security Council should fulfil the duty of international peace and security of the UN for the Middle East. The solutions for the ongoing problems related to regional peace and security require new approaches. The establishment of the Middle East Peace and Stability Pact or a similar structure under the leadership of the UN is vital for not only the region but also for the entire world. However, this initiative needs global support. Major Powers and global institutions should get involved in this effort. Principles of this initiative should be determined by the international society and regional countries together without discriminating any country in the region, and international organizations or actors. Taking into account major problems of the region, we offer the recommendations as follows:

- All countries in the region should be invited in participating in this initiative unconditionally and free from prejudices.
- Experiences of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) should be taken into account.
- Good neighborhood among the countries of the region should be prioritized without interfering in internal affairs.
- A regional academic research center, where the problems of the region and solution proposals to be discussed, should be established in a country that will be decided after negotiations.
- A regional monotheistic religion research center devoted to end the conflicts on the religious and sectarian axis and strengthening of dialogue between religions should be set up.

It can be argued that such an initiative in the Middle East, particularly with respect to the recognition of Israel may not be supported by all

countries in the region. At this stage, it should be emphasized that the developments after the rapprochement between Egypt and Israel do not confirm this foresight. As it is known, the Arab countries in the Arab League determined a common policy against Egypt, which was accused of betraying the Palestinian case, on March 26, 1979. According to the decision, the ambassadors have been recalled and diplomatic relations were severed with Egypt. However, the countries of the Arab League and Egypt negotiated and solved the problem between them, and then they started to reestablish political relations within six months.³⁶ This experience forces us to rethink and find new ways out to understand the regional problems. Neither Israel, nor many countries in the region existed before the World War I. However, during the period between 1916 and 2017 many of these countries were established, developed, and were recognized by other countries. This indicates that a status quo was maintained in the region, and all actors in the Middle East have to accept this political reality.

The UN should lead this initiative, since according to the Charter of the United Nations, the UN is a responsible organization for the maintenance of international peace and security in the world.³⁷ In the past, a similar initiative called the Middle East Peace Process was started in 1991 in Madrid and failed because of diverging points of views among the quadruple (UN, EU, US, and Russia) which were responsible of this process.³⁸ It should be a lesson learned for not only regional countries but also for the UN. Particularly, the US and Russia should remember their responsibilities for establishing sustainable peace in the world as strong members of the UN Security Council and the states capable of convincing the countries in the Middle East. Regional countries such as Turkey and Iran should also support the major Powers. In the ongoing Syrian crisis, Russia, Turkey, and Iran sponsored Syrian Peace talks in Astana.³⁹ It should be seen as a significant regional initiative. The region needs similar peace efforts rather than proxy wars.

CONCLUSION

A large part of the Ottoman Empire's territory was seized by Great Britain and France with the secret Sykes-Picot agreement a century ago. Although there is no consensus about the boundary of the term of the Middle East, this agreement is recognized as the launch of the sovereignty of the Western states in this region after the World War I. Thus, the Middle East has been formed by different powers according to their own interests since 1916. The last century of the Middle East is mostly described by the people of the region with conflicts, blood, tears, immigration and exploitation of resources.

Majority of the Middle Eastern countries, which did not exist in the region before the World War I, were founded by the hegemon powers during the interwar period and later. Those countries, supported by global major actors, have complicated the security environment in the region by using tyrannical methods. Additionally, tensions between the Arab countries and Israel, and the regional power struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia on the axis-sect have aggravated political atmosphere in the region. As long as the problems in the Middle East were limited to the region, the hegemonic powers did not worry about what were going on.

As the effects of ongoing Syrian crisis still persistent in the region, the current security environment in the Middle East is getting worse and worse. This fragile situation affects not only countries in the region but also the ones in the West. Geographically, there is only one country between Syria and the EU: Turkey. People flee their homes because of war and violence and try to find different routes to arrive in Europe. The intolerable results of the chaotic environment in the Middle East can substantially harm the international system. Violence can widespread around the world if the international society is not able to find a sustainable solution to the problems of the Middle East. The ongoing proxy wars in the region just provoke hostility among people. Particularly for the major powers, it is time to put aside dissociative politics and prejudices, and to start genuine and productive cooperation.

It is almost obvious that the Middle East problem cannot be solved by policies of major Powers concerned about their interests only. The last developments in the Syrian crisis show that the US and Russia have more capabilities than other major powers to convince countries in the region to a comprehensive peace initiative. Both countries taking into account their responsibilities stemming from being members of the UN Security Council should support this initiative under the leadership of the UN. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that functionality of the UN related to peace and security in the world is debated. Hence, the Middle East Peace and Stability Pact initiative can be a good opportunity for the UN to prove the need of its existence as a functional organization in the field of peace and security in the world. Moreover, Turkey, as a regional power, having historical state experience derived from its history and ability to talk to all groups in the region, should provide strong contribution to this peace initiative in a neutral and impartial manner without ignoring any country, religion, and sect in the region. The deep-rooted problems of the Middle East cannot be resolved by producing temporary solutions. In order to establish sustainable peace and stability in the region, the Middle East needs comprehensive cooperation on the global scale. The balance between the expectations of countries in the region and the international society should be established in this initiative. The SP experience in Southeast Europe should encourage the international society to try to

pursue a similar policy in the Middle East. This would be a real win-win situation for all the sides and for the entire world.

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THIRTEEN

Social Dynamics of Modern Russian and Turkish Societies

Abulfaz Suleymanov, Gali Galiev,
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The current state of Russian and Turkish societies can be characterized as transitional and connected with two main factors: namely, the “post-imperial” reorganization (although not synchronously) and the influence of globalization. Turkey represents a unique historical experience of the mutual influence of Muslim identity and also European-orientated development—the combination of secular and religious traditions, and the interaction of democracy with political Islam. On political and ideological levels, the social structure of modern Turkish society is divided into different groups and grouped according to a variety of approaches to the development of the state and society. While Turkey’s integration policy to the non-Muslim world acquires more and more social support, there are a number of supporters of a “special development way” advocating the establishment of a strong Turkish government on the international arena. Such political directions came into collision with the ideas of those political groups who have thought that Turkey has always been a leading state in the entire Muslim world. Therefore, one of the main issues for Turkey is a necessity to find a political compromise between these different layers of the modern Turkish society and to develop a common approach for them.

In terms of the social structure of the modern Russian society, it should be emphasized that the factors of mentality, the mobility of mentality, and its activity and conformity have played a significant role in the construction of a new social structure. From this perspective, the social

division of Russia into “Westerners” and “Slavophiles” (in today’s terminology it corresponds to the division of “democrats” and “patriots”) has entered a new stage. Russian society has always been divided into supporters of the Russian traditionalism and followers of the new Western mentality. It is possible to discern the emergence of more mobile and diverse social groups which increasingly intertwine and interact with each other. At the same time, there is a process of disappearance of the old and the emergence of new social groups and strata, as well as major shifts in value orientations. The socio-economic and political transformation in the society has significant influence on this process.

An important peculiarity of the Turkish and Russian civilizations consists of the fact that, unlike the homogeneity of many Western and Eastern nations, the process of formation of these two civilizations occurred in multicultural, multi-confessional, and polyethnic terms. Turks tended not to alienate other ethnic and religious identity groups living in Turkey. A “civilizational accumulation” formed due to the historic processes of cultural interaction with the Chinese, Persian, Arab, Slavic, Greek, and Roman civilizations have formed a stable base for the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups during the centuries-long Ottoman Empire rule.¹ Likewise, the number of various ethnic and religious groups increased over the course of the Russia history; many of these groups represent a synthesis both of Northern and Eastern-European Slavs, as well as Eastern Turkish ethnic groups, which is indicative of how over the centuries Russia expanded its territory. Later, there had formed an upper-national identity of “a Soviet man” in order to keep this pluralism in the Soviet times.² Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has been transformed into the identity of a “Russian.”

This chapter presents a brief analysis of the common aspects of Turkish and Russian civilizations and the mutual perceptions of the two nations. The items of overcoming of “remoteness of perception” between two nations that can promote the strengthening of social relations will also be addressed. The results of the social surveys presented here reflect the current attitude of the Russian people to Turkey, its citizens, and state policies pursued during the 2015–2016 crisis. A social review is presented as an analytical means of the achievement of Russian–Turkish relations’ sustainability. Its forms and sense are revealed regarding the social dynamics of Russian and Turkish societies.

RUSSIA AND TURKEY: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Russia and Turkey with their close proximity to the West are two Eurasian countries with powerful and centralized state traditions which have been Westernized to some extent in some areas but have also experienced their own specific modernization processes. There are a variety of ap-

proaches that draw attention to the historical similarities of the centralized state organization's determinative impact on society. While the significance of the Byzantine heritage for the both countries has been emphasized, it has also been suggested that in the case of Russia, an additional strong influence of the Khanate of Golden Horde should not be underestimated.³ Along with the references to the similarities of the social understanding of governance in these two countries,⁴ it is argued that during this historical period, social structures have also been shaped in parallel ways (while with different features). And it is also clarified that an underdevelopment has emerged as a result of the similar dynamics in state and society relations.⁵ While trying to overcome their backwardness in comparison with the West through the modernization projects in the second half of the 19th century, the question of Westernization became a central issue of the political debates and a focal point of the historical and philosophical thinking in both Russia and Turkey. The search for a solution to similar questions of what should be adopted from the West and how and to what extent to adapt to the West without harming national and cultural values constituted a central issue for the modernization process in both countries.⁶ In these two countries, Westernization and modernization initiatives have created a professional middle class with modern education.

As Turkey and Russia were passing through a process of non-Western modernization specific to them, both countries' intellectuals developed various thoughts about the process. These thoughts constituted a wide spectrum of approaches ranging from those with a strict appeal to the past and those with a strong belief in a necessity to completely abandon the past and traditions. In Russia, the Slavophiles, Westerners, and the Narodniks have guided the social movements through the solutions proposed to them.⁷ These movements, which were widely spread among the Russian society, found their place in the Ottoman intellectual life too. Turkish intellectuals have been exposed to the influence of intellectuals coming from Russia and their specific (divergent from the Western) thoughts which take their roots from the peculiar conditions of Russia and its backwardness compared to the West. The significance of industrialization has been emphasized and a process of questioning of liberal economic thoughts has been started by the Russian intellectuals such as Parvus.⁸

One of the most significant common features of the Turkish and Russian civilizations is their unique geographical identity constituting a synthesis of cultural traditions of the East and the West.⁹ Russians, due to Russia's geographical location on two continents, have been constantly interacting with both Eastern and Western societies throughout their history. Konstantin Kosachev, the co-chairman of the Turkish-Russian Social Forum noted: "If you feel yourself European in Asia, Asian in Europe, it means you are Russian." Ethnic and cultural factors explain that Russians

have been influenced by the Northern and Eastern nations of Turkic origin as well. Moreover, religion and popular culture reveal the influence of the Western world on Russia. As chapter 1 discussed, Turkey had expanded into Southern and Eastern Europe for centuries. Since then Turkish people have been interacting tightly with the West. Nowadays, Turkey from a geographical point of view, remains a unique binding component between Europe and Asia across the straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles preserving its distinctive geopolitical meaning. Possessing eastern roots, however, the Turks suffered serious impact from the Western civilization as a result of long history of interaction.

In terms of ethnocultural codes, Russians had been significantly influenced by the Northern and Eastern nations, especially the nations of Turkic origin, but as for religion and popular culture, they have been under the considerable impact of the West. During the Ottoman Empire, Turks expanded their borders and influence in Europe and had lived side-by-side with Western nations for centuries.¹⁰ The Turks and Russians have similar perceptions about the role of the government in citizens' life, identical political and administrative culture, and collectivist structure of the society that allow making a clear differentiation from the Western society in terms of mentality. It is important to note that Turks and Russians are considered by Western societies as the "others" or "strangers." It has caused mental and civilizational distinctions between them and the West. This very factor is the base for a certain feeling of social-psychological trauma toward the West that exists in both societies.¹¹ On a social level, a rapprochement of Russians and Turks, united by a unique Eurasian identity and being in a large-measure kindred people (the statement "scratch a Russian and you will discover a Tatar" is prescribed to A. S. Pushkin, Russian classic, and is often used in this case), seems to be important for the development of these two nations, as well as all Eastern societies. Russian-Turkish solidarity, as part of the social, economic, and cultural achievements of the eastern societies, will play a historic role in overcoming chaotic state the 21st century faces.

TRADITIONS OF GOVERNANCE

It is important to notice the similarity between the Turkish and Russian traditions of statehood and politics. The history of Russian statehood starts from the Kiev principdom.¹² Correspondingly, during more than 1000-year-long historical process, the perception of government in Russian public consciousness had been formed on the basis of a combination of such concepts as strength, power, and submissiveness. Inner dynamics of the development of Russian society in the historical periods of the governance of such personalities as Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Joseph Stalin, who are perceived in Western societies as examples of

authoritarian rulers, was directed by “government’s hands.” This quality promoted Russia to become an independent and strong empire in the international arena. Similarly, historical epochs of the governments of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Sultan Mehmet II, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, and Kemal Ataturk are regarded as important “turning points” in the history of Turkey. Turkish politics has been historically associated with strong, authoritarian rulers. Considerable parallels between the approaches to the government in these two countries can be traced on the following cases: the state apparatus is considered to be adjudicators and a superstructure of the society and its internalization into Turkish collective consciousness through the concepts of “a merciful state,” “a great state,” “a paternalistic state” is similar to the Russian concept “a great state” proceeding from a legitimate right to dominate over society.¹³

The following perception of the state is entrenched—the ruler of “a strong state” must necessarily be “a strong leader.” It got its legitimacy among the Turks almost in the pre-Islamic period and was supported by the assurance that “power of the governor comes from God (Tengri)”; after the adoption of Islam by the Turks it was believed that “a ruler is the God’s Caliph on Earth.”¹⁴ Russians have the same understanding of the state; it was reflected in such concepts as the “Tsar is the ambassador of God through the Church,” he is “God’s will,” “the Anointed of God” and (in the Soviet period) “a great leader.”

At the beginning of the 20th century, the monarchies in both Russia and Turkey were replaced by different kinds of republican regimes, which were followed by various large-scale modernist social transformation projects with the aim to create a future that would overcome a state of backwardness. As a natural consequence of this situation, there emerged a need for educated bureaucratic and technical personnel for the implementation of these projects and a necessity to provide a qualified labor force from the new modern educational institutions. The educated middle class would necessarily be the most important actor in these projects. Turkey considered the modernization practices and institutional developments in the Soviet Union as an alternative that could be adopted for itself; some intellectual circles close to the political establishment argued that these practices should be applied to Turkey by emphasizing the social, historical, and cultural similarities with Russia.¹⁵ While the Soviet Union adopted Communism, a political system that emphasized the working-class power and collectivism against bourgeois values and Capitalism, Turkey adopted a discourse of a non-privileged and massed classless, while the educated, qualified middle classes in both countries became privileged. The “essential” middle class composed of civil servants and bureaucrats in the Turkish Republic, similar to that in the Soviet Union, gained a top status in the society as a result of their historical roles and missions, as well as their qualities and political significance.¹⁶ On the other hand, the development of the private sector in

Turkey has resorted to the example of public economic enterprises (KİT) in many respects including transferring qualified staff from the public enterprises and using their understanding of management.¹⁷ This in turn became another factor which has influenced the formation of the middle class in Turkey.

FAITH IN A TRANSCENDENT POWER

Another element uniting Russians and Turks, despite their different religions, is a common tendency to mysticism and fatalism typical to Eastern societies.¹⁸ The sense of fatalism sometimes reaching excessive degree in the Turkish society is also widespread in the Russian society, in spite of the fact that it existed for a long time within the Soviet environment which categorically denied the destiny phenomenon in accordance with Marxist doctrine. This shared belief in destiny got its reflection in everyday Turkish language with such expressions as “to befall” or “not destiny,” while in Russian language, it shows itself in phrases “God forbid” and “such a fate.” Furthermore, both societies show an increased interest in fortune-telling, predicting the future, a habit to throw a coin to a holy place, making a wish, a belief in an evil eye, and a strong belief that whistling in the house, standing on the threshold, or seeing a black cat on the way are bad signs. The similarity in religion and superstition of Turks and Russians testify that there is a cultural and spiritual affinity between them.

THE SPIRIT OF CONQUEST AND EXPANSION

The Turkish and the Russian civilizations occurred as the antithesis to each other, from a geopolitical point of view, however, two states historically share a common understanding of expansionism. In this context, Lev Gumilyev in his famous theory of *passionary ethnogenesis* gives the definition of “super-ethnos” as a mosaic set of ethnic groups that appeared simultaneously in a certain region and are connected with each other by tight social-economic, cultural, and political links. He calls them Muslim and Slavic super-ethnos.¹⁹ Indeed, according to the theory of super-ethnos, the “Russian ethnos,” which is considered to be the leader of the Christian Orthodox world, started to develop the doctrine “Moscow—the Third Rome” from the moment when it began to build its independent statehood. It envisaged its role as the savior of the Christian peoples and constituted a legitimate base for Russian expansionism.

The doctrine of “Nizam-i-Alem” (The Order of the World) became an ideological and philosophical forerunner of the spirit of conquest and expansion of Turks who represent a leading power of “Muslim super-ethnos.” This doctrine is based on the Islamic belief that teaches the unity

and greatness of God, as reflected in the Holy Quran. In a nutshell, it is claimed, Islam is the ideal religion for all humanity and should be widely spread over the globe.²⁰

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the idea of “Turkic world domination” widespread in pre-Islamic times in Turkish society and the ideology of “the leadership of the world proletarian revolution” in Russian society in the Soviet times lead to the conclusion that this common feature doesn’t come from a religious factor but it is a characteristic feature of its internal structure.

TURBULENCE OF RUSSIAN AND TURKISH SOCIETIES

The modern Russian and Turkish states and societies can, with certain reservations, be characterized as transitive. Their “transition” is connected with two main factors: post-imperial re-organization (though asynchronous) and the influence of the dynamics of globalization process on their development.²¹

The Turkish Republic embodies a unique historical experience of mixing a Muslim cultural identity with the European culture of development; thus, it presents a combination of secular and religious traditions, as well as an interaction of democracy and political Islam. Contemporary Turkish society is divided and grouped on the basis of various views that exist in the country on opinions about the development of the society and the state. “Turkey’s international integration” policy acquires more and more followers, but there is a significant number of followers of the “special way” of the development of Turkish society advocating the creation of a strong Turkish state that would preserve itself from the outside influences. These rather different political directions confront with political groups who always consider Turkey as the leader of the Islamic world. Therefore, one of the main tasks of the Turkish political elite, government, and civil society is to find a political compromise and work out a common course for various layers of the society.

Concerning the social structure of the Russian society, the mentality factors have played a big role in the formation of a new social structure. First of all, the mobility of the psyche and attitudes should be active or conformal. Meanwhile, traditional for Russia, the conflict between the “westerners” and “Slavophiles” (in modern terminology – “democrats” and “patriots”) entered its new phase. The whole society is divided into the followers of the traditional Russian mentality and the followers of the western individualistic mentality. In Russia, there appear more mobile social groups and social layers that mostly cross and interact. Simultaneously, old social groups and social layers disappear and new ones appear; there happen serious changes in value orientations. Social-economic

and political transformations in the society impact this process significantly.

Despite their geographic proximity to each other, Turks and Russians are too “distant” from one another in terms of having a common perception. Yet, the factor of more than 500 years of interactive history shouldn’t be ignored. After the experience of going through several wars, including the World War I, and the influence the historical conditions of the time, these two nations signed an agreement on “Friendship and Brotherhood.” Nevertheless, this period of development of peaceful relations didn’t last long and was distorted by the conditions of the Cold War era that had led to a significant disruption of social ties between Turkey and Russia. However, immediately after the end of the Cold War, the nations of Russia and Turkey started new contacts, which did not take long to strengthen, and throughout the 2000s, the relations reached their historical culmination also due to the harmonious interaction of the leaders of these two nations. Millions of citizens of Russia and Turkey got a possibility to visit each other’s countries without a visa (Russia canceled its “no visa” policy in November 2015, after the plane incident). Besides, according to the current statistical data, there are about 100, 000 international marriages between Turks and Russians with even more children born out of these marriages. This has contributed to the development of the relations between Russia and Turkey.²²

Ordinary Russian citizens form their attitude toward Turkey due to a number of factors including their education, general informational awareness about the situation in the world, personal experience of visiting this country, and interaction with its people. Turkey has gained its favorable image in the eyes of Russians due to its recreational resources which Russians normally find affordable and of good quality. For example, in 2014, more than three millions of Russian tourists chose Turkey for their destination. This means that an intense communication among the people of these two countries took place due to tourism in that particular year.

Estrangement in the Russian–Turkish relations started by events of 24 November 2015 (when a Russian bomber jet was destroyed by Turkish air forces on the Turkish–Syrian border), which was followed by a range of sanctions of Russia imposed on Turkey. According to the official data of the Committee on Industry of the Russian Federation, by 2016, a tourist flow from Russia to Turkey fell 92%, the volume of bilateral trade reduced to 45% (up to \$4,8 billion²³), and about 500 out of 3,000 Turkish companies working in Russia got under direct sanctions or were closed down and left the country. One of the instruments that led to a significant reduction of labor force from Turkey on the Russian territory was the reduction of the quota for the employment of migrant workers in the Russian Federation.²⁴

Public opinion foundation FOM (a state research organization) revealed the polarity in Russians' attitudes and perspectives about the development of Russian-Turkish relations and their reactions to Russian sanctions. According to the results, 42% of the respondents supported lifting the ban on selling tours to Turkey, 39% didn't approve of the sanctions, and 36% considered it possible to establish good neighborly relations between two countries; on the other hand, 38% of the respondents found improving the relations impossible.²⁵ In fact, one of the most significant events in Russia in 2016 was the restoration of Russian-Turkish relations.

MAIN CONTOURS OF SOCIAL POLICY OF RUSSIA AND TURKEY

The issue of "social welfare policy" is the most urgent and discussed topic in Turkey and Russia. Definitely, injustice in income distribution is one of the most important social problems in the modern world, including Russia and Turkey. Therefore, social policies all over the world target to reduce the gap between various classes and their income.

One of the most attractive features of European countries is that they are social states; this fact distinguishes them from other countries significantly. Among the main tasks of these states is satisfying the needs of poor people that include social security, fee for caring for the elderly, and food support. Turkey has experienced significant changes in this sphere lately, particularly in the realm of health care. The budget has steadily increased the share to address social needs of the needy people. The level of social support in GDP rose to 0.5% in 2002, 1.3% in 2013.²⁶ The increase of expenses for social support indicates the rise in poverty level and the number of deprived people. The basic goal of social support is to restore rights of the needy and decrease poverty level.

Social welfare assistance that are indisputable advantage in European countries became an actual topic in Turkey only after 2002. The main cause of this delay was the poor Turkish economy. Gradual economic development of the country has historically provided numerous facilities and services to all layers of society in the form of a social support. Nowadays, social support is given as conditional cash support for children's education and newborn care, pensions for the elderly, monetary support to widows, and food support and housing to the needy people.²⁷

During the global economic crisis in 2008, unlike European countries, Turkey didn't reduce the amount allocated for social support, rather that amount was increased, resulting in a rise in economic development, and prevented the worsening of social dynamics and possible social risks. Social assistance directed to reduce poverty level, to satisfy different demands of the needed such as education, health, food, and housing led to social activity of many families and individuals and resulted in social

integration in the country. However, this activity, according to European standards, is one of the steps on the way to turn Turkey into a “social state.” In fact, 165 billions of Turkish lira were allotted to social needs in the period from 2002 to 2015. 1.15% of the state budget accounted for social welfare and this rose 4.8% in 2015.²⁸

In the 1990s and 2000s, social policy in Russia was formed in the context of solving a double task—to rebuild a social-economic system and increase the capacity of adaptation to the competitive demands of global economy. The chosen strategy assuming quick narrowing of the government’s power sphere and accelerated privatization defined the character of social policy that in fact consisted only of social care that could whenever possible compensate costs of reforms to the population. The problem was viewed exclusively as optimization of redistribution of limited resources among socially vulnerable groups. In Russia, spontaneous liberation of the market was not followed by a formation of a competent system of social isolators or consistent industrial policy and employment policy stimulating effective fulfillment of labor resources.²⁹

During the reforms in Russia, the number of facilities of effective employment decreased. Parallel to the growth of open and latent unemployment, there was an outflow of labor from spheres providing maintenance and development of labor force, innovations and saturation of the consumer market. The structure of employment changed by increasing shares in manufacturing industry due to the rise of proportion of extractive industries, trade, and subsistence agriculture.³⁰ Non-industrial sphere extended due to the influx of workers into the trade, state administration and finance-credit sector. The most important area of employment and the source of income became working at homestead and garden plots, which has taken a significant and constantly increasing part of total fund of working time. More than 40 millions of people work at subsistence agriculture in spring-summer period. In fact, 17–18 million are engaged only in this activity.³¹

In Russia, state investments in social spheres during the last decade didn’t exceed 20% of GDP. The share for the social sphere reduced to 15.6% in 2001, while investments in education and health care decreased up to 3.1% and 3%. Expenses on science fell from 0.93 to 0.29% of GDP during the 1990s.³² In comparison with the US, these figures are very low. In the US, direct state expenses on health care (excluding the expenses on scientific research and construction of medical facilities) in 1999 reached 6% of GDP, including expenses on insurance fund—more than 10%. State expenses on education in 1998 constituted in the US 5.6% of GDP, total investments in this sphere reached up to 10%.³³

In 2001, the salary in oil industry exceeded an average salary in Russia 4.4 times, in gas industry—4.9 times. In certain periods, the wage scale of state employees fell under the minimum wage. A survey on social protection of population was held in 2002 by the Center for Studies of the Labor

Market, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences (PSS-2002), among workers with a salary lower than a minimum wage. Interestingly, 28% of them had a higher education and 43.3% had secondary special education.³⁴ These are “new poor,” whose unfavorable conditions were formed by low price workforce.

The fall in the income level and life standards of the significant part of population in Russia as a result of the impairment of labor potential is the most important indicator of social ill-being in the country. However, reducing social costs of reforms to the lost income creates a methodological base for limiting social benefit by the redistribution of the part of GDP in favor of the less wealthy social layers of the society. Still, there are other aspects of the problem. Sharp fall of social protection of population has had a negative influence on a labor potential, as people were not ready for it. The process of privatization of a social sphere has also played a role in that when paid services changed to free services; but it wasn't followed by a corresponding rise of salary. For example, 2/3 of total health care costs is carried by the private sources, while in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries this share doesn't exceed 25%.³⁵

There is a point of view explaining the growth of negative phenomenon in social-labor sphere of employment by slow speed of trade transformations and classifying this phenomenon as “manifestation of non-market elements of the development.”³⁶ Experts consider that the reason is not inconsistency of reforms but the fact that liberation of the market itself is not enough for “a breakthrough in the new economy.”³⁷

These disproportions in the employment sphere are caused by different factors, first of all, by deinstitutionalization of the labor market, weakness of legislative branch, insufficient development of industrial forces, and by the presence of monopolistic non-market elements. Normal functioning of the labor market is possible nowadays only under the conditions of the developed institutional infrastructure that represents itself a non-market superstructure necessary for the rise of its effectiveness.

All modern economies are based on the interaction of market and non-market sectors and they use market and non-market levels of control. Success of individual entrepreneurs doesn't mean that the society would not develop more successfully, if social control ruined by tough competition and income polarization was possible to save and develop. An equal distribution of social control in the information society is an important factor of efficiency as a concentration of finance capital.³⁸

Liberation of the market under serious structural disproportions, monopolization of economy, immaturity of civil society, workers' lack of skills to protect their own interests, and low level of salary at the beginning of the reforms have led to the destruction of human capital and social control in Russia, and it is more problematic to restore them.

CONCLUSION

The culture of international relations is an important factor in the social dynamics of Russian and Turkish societies. The integrative function of the culture of international relations consists, first of all, of the promotion of strengthening friendship between the people of Russia and Turkey. The culture of international relations develops continuously taking the best achievements from individual national cultures. By absorbing the wealth of national forms and colors, it expresses the process of interaction and rapprochement of national cultures in this way. In turn, the principle of democracy in domestic context is connected with a reflection of a social and historical experience of the nation; and national values in international or all-human culture do not lose their uniqueness; and this is a significant factor in social dynamics of Russian and Turkish societies.

In late modern times, many problems of international character need to be studied utterly and systematically. The dynamism inherent to the initial stage of formation of culture of international relations was seriously lost and disrupted. A range of topical questions raised by the course of development of Russian-Turkish relations couldn't find timely response and solutions. Negative tendencies that accumulated in economy, politics, ideology, and morality were ignored.

Now, there is a process running to overcome negative phenomena of the past and recover the damaged atmosphere of Turkey and Russia. Therefore, social scientists have to reveal the true causes of negative events and find social technologies to overcome international conflicts. Thus, science and practice face a difficult task; it has to take into consideration that some objective reasons (both internal and external) revive negative phenomena in social dynamics of Russian and Turkish societies. It is important to take a note about them in advance so that evaluating them thoughtfully and finding effective ways to prevent potential conflicts in these societies could be feasible.

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FOURTEEN

The Future of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in the Context of Contemporary Developments

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This chapter deals with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). The organization is important for the future of the region, but is not able to provide substantial influence to change the situation when many members have serious problems in relations for the better. The key members of the organization, Russia and Turkey, should perform the most important efforts to improve the regional situation because they have more resources than other member countries. The organization should be able to provide assistance to improve the economy of the region, with the crisis in Ukraine as a priority. The size of the Ukrainian economy makes the Ukrainian problems a pain for the entire region. The future of the BSEC depends on its ability of increasing the list of members that have sufficient resources, and China, which has great interest in the region because of the “one belt— one road” initiative, should be invited to become a new member in the BSEC.

The wider Black Sea area has been an important venue for the development of human civilization for centuries. As a location of strategic routes, where different nations come together, the region had witnessed many wars. The situation has not changed sufficiently in the twenty-first century; it is a strategic area for the world’s powers for both traditional security reasons and its energy potentials. The European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Secur-

ity and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are involved in the Black Sea region and there have often been tensions between them.¹ The wider Black Sea area includes a population of 332 million people living in twelve member countries of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.²

Twenty years ago, Ines Hartwig wrote: "Considering the political situation in, and the relations between, the BSEC states, any attempt which would go beyond pragmatic economic and functionally oriented cooperation would not be successful at this stage."³ At best, nothing has changed since then for the better if the situation did not go worse. The oldest, most 'institutionalized' regional organization of the Black Sea region⁴ is a permanent arena not only for cooperation, but also for disputes between some members. Unacknowledged conflicts among international players over the region are factors that prevent the BSEC from having a sound institutional structure and the capacity to act and to realize its objectives.⁵ The BSEC is aiming at fostering interaction and harmony among its members, as well as to ensure peace, stability and prosperity, encouraging friendly and good-neighborly relations in the Black Sea region.⁶ However, conflicts between Greece and Turkey, Russia and Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Albania and Serbia create problems for BSEC. Another crisis started in 2015 between Russia and Turkey when Moscow launched military operations in Syria. Ankara treated it as an intrusion into its sphere of influence, and reacted angrily. Happily, in 2016, their relations improved and cooperation resumed. Above these interstate problems, poverty, corruption, organized crime, and territorial claims continuously threaten to undermine both the existing regimes and the balance of power in the area.⁷

The BSEC has built a permanent and extensive institutional framework of cooperation that covers all levels of governance (intergovernmental, parliamentary, and financial).⁸ According to Manoli, regional cooperation needs to address the three strategic "I's"—an inclusive, innovative, and integrated Black Sea region.⁹ Which countries may and will provide influence on the future development of the organization? The US will be one of actors that are most important for this organization in the next decade. Although the US is not a member of BSEC, Washington will use its close cooperation with some members of BSEC to defend its interests in the region. Five countries of the BSEC—Turkey, Greece, Albania, Romania, and Bulgaria—are members of NATO, where the US traditionally has a leading role. The US has particular influence on Albania and Georgia. The Albanian government is very grateful to the US for getting help at the territory of Kosovo; and the Georgian government regards Washington as an important ally against Russia to return Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the breakaway autonomous republics. It is expected that the influence of the US on the BSEC will be in favor of the continued dominance of NATO in Black Sea region.

Russia is one of the most important members of the organization. The size of its economy (\$2 trillion), territory (the largest in the world), and population (145 million people) make Russia the leader of the BSEC. At the same time, the reality is much more complicated. Russia has a lot of resources, but also troubled relations with some other member countries of the organization. Ukraine, Montenegro, Albania, Georgia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania are the countries that have imposed sanctions against Russia after the Ukrainian war started in 2014 due to Russia's support for Ukrainian rebels. In such a situation, Russia faces serious problems to positively influence the development of the BSEC. As a result, Russia's semi-annual chairmanship of the BSEC in the first half of 2016 wasn't productive. The role of Russia in the future development of the BSEC depends on its ability to improve relations with the seven aforementioned members of the organization. For the successful operation of the BSEC, Russia's role is crucial, since it is incredibly influential in the region's economic, financial, political, transit, and cultural realms, but its policies in Ukraine are diverse from that of most other BSEC member nations.

The role of Turkey in the BSEC's life is also very important. The BSEC was founded in June 1992 because of the Turkish initiative of 1990.¹⁰ Turkey is an important regional actor, and it has offered many ideas for regional cooperation, some of which include the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Pact, and the BlackSeaFor (the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group).¹¹ The special role of both Turkey and Russia in the BSEC is based on their crucial role in the global distribution of energy through the region.¹² Turkey and Russia have long seen the Black Sea within their own spheres of interest. While Russia's policy toward Turkey aims at increasing Ankara's "dependence" on Moscow in strategic areas, such as energy, Ankara's policy toward Moscow seeks to promote a greater "interdependence" between these countries.¹³

The role of Ukraine should not be overestimated, but the situation in this country will have a positive or negative influence on the BSEC. All positive scenarios foresee that Ukraine will be able to overcome its current economic and political problems. An alternative scenario—the transformation of Ukraine into a failed state—will have extremely negative impact on the future of the entire region. The BSEC should provide some assistance to improve not only the economy of the region in general, but also that of Ukraine in particular. The unclear perspectives of the Ukrainian economy make it a problem for the region. The most effective measures could be undertaken to help Ukraine overcome its economic crisis could be through offering credits of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) to this country. However, the biggest economies of the BSEC are not able to help in this situation. Russia and Turkey will not provide such assistance. Russia is hostile to the Ukrainian government and supports the rebels. Additionally, low oil prices in the world markets

and losses from Western sanctions created problems in Russia's own economy. Similarly, Turkey has too many challenges (from slowed development of the economy to Syrian Civil War) with a restricted budget to answer them.

The BSEC has created a number of affiliate institutions that are important for its development. The role of the Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) in the future development of the organization is not significant because of conflicts between members. As Asaf Hajiyev, the Secretary-General of the PABSEC claimed, "The main objective of the Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, which was established in 1993, is to achieve a high degree of regional economic cooperation and to transform the Black Sea region into a zone of peace, stability, and prosperity. This requires a close cooperation among national parliaments and also international support that will allow efficient use of the full potential of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation."¹⁴ While the objective is right, PABSEC has no essential resources to fulfill this mission. Instead, the main role of the Assembly is to provide a forum for discussions of the members of national parliaments of different BSEC countries.

The BSEC Business Council (BC) is also an important part of the successful work of this organization. The financial and business sectors of the BSEC countries are able to provide much more assets for the development of the region than any other donor. However, providing the right incentives to promote cooperation between the business sectors of all the member countries is important. At the same time, the political conflicts between the members of the BSEC negatively influence the work of the BSEC Business Council. The 53rd Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the BSEC Business Council, conducted in April 2016, was the first time in the last few years when a quorum for taking legitimate decisions was provided. On the eve of the meeting, Ukraine and Romania sent a letter to the members of the BSEC BC, informing it about their temporary suspension of their membership in the BSEC BC for subjective reasons.¹⁵ The development of the BSEC BC depends on the ability of the member countries to try to find ways for cooperation, not conflict. It is necessary to learn not to confuse political problems in relations with economic interaction.

The Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) was founded in 1994, but only started to operate in June, 1999. The Bank gives priority to regional projects and cross-border operations in the key sectors of manufacturing, energy, transportation, telecommunications, and banking, and also supports the development of small businesses and regional trade. The Bank also provides financing to both public and private sector enterprises.¹⁶ The BSTDB should become one of leading centers of support for the small and medium size entrepreneurs (SME) in Ukraine because that government is not able to provide resources to economy. The general

directions for the development of the BSEC are clear: to stimulate peace in the region; to stimulate development of the regional economy; to give a priority to the development of tourism in the region; and to advance local system of transportation (new roads should be built and old repaired). The Black Sea region is economically significant.¹⁷ Black Sea economies are connected by trade, financial transactions, foreign direct investment, technology, and labor and tourist flows.¹⁸ The BSTDB role is to create incentives to foster all those directions of development in the region. Countries with the lowest GDP per capita (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) should conduct reforms to follow the way done by their more prosperous neighbors.

One of the most important steps for the future development of the BSEC could be establishing strong ties with China; as a matter of fact, China's full membership in the BSEC is recommended, since this would bring about both short-term and long-term benefits to all the members of the organization through strengthening cooperation among them. The Black Sea region is also important for China to promote its various economic initiatives.

There are several important reasons why establishing cooperation with China is necessary for the future success of the BSEC. First, all members of the BSEC have a history of positive relations with China, including sufficient economic cooperation. Their trade with China has different size, but usual picture consists of great import from China and very small export to Chinese economy. For example, in 2016 Turkey exported to China 1.7% of its export, but the share of Turkey's imports from China was 13%. The situation is different only for Armenia, Bulgaria, Russia, and Ukraine, which have substantially less difference between export and import with China. In 2016, 5.6% of Armenian export went to China, and the share of Armenia's imports from China was 11%, 1.9% of Bulgarian export went to China, and the share of Bulgaria's imports from China was 4%, 9.8% of Russian export went to China, and the share of Russia's imports from China was 20.9%, 5.9% of Ukrainian export went to China, and the share of Ukraine's imports from China was 9.5%.

Second, China accumulated substantial financial resources (for example, assets of four biggest banks of China are 11.5 trillion dollars) and is looking for places where these assets could be invested safely. The rise of salaries in the country where people are accustomed to make sufficient deposits in banks resulted in enormous sums in Chinese banks that could not be invested locally without producing financial bubbles. A similar situation is the case with the Chinese companies that are more and more interested in the going abroad. Therefore, full membership in an active regional organization would be an additional advantageous factor for Chinese companies, thus pushing them to invest regionally. With China as a full member, the BSTDB will be able to attract assets from biggest Chinese banks and agencies, such as China Overseas Development Asso-

ciation (CODA, also known as China Industrial Overseas Development & Planning Association).

Third, China's outbound tourism has already become an important source of development of many Asian economies. More and more Chinese tourists go to Europe for vacations, specifically in France, Switzerland, and Italy, but the perspectives for the entire European tourism are clear. According to Merrill Lynch, Chinese outbound tourism is expected to expand all over the world by 2019, with a wave of 174 million Chinese estimated to spend \$264 billion overseas.¹⁹ Many BSEC economies rely on tourists as one of the main sources for economic development. Any steps to attract Chinese tourists to the Black Sea region are important for its stable regional economic development.

Fourth, the interests of China in joining the BSEC may increase because China is already a neighbor of the organization as its borders Russia. If a member of the BSEC, China will only further increase its influence in the world through this organization. Although China has no rich experience in taking part in regional organizations like the US, Great Britain, Russia, and France, the membership of the BSEC wouldn't require much experience. Before opening to the world in the middle of the 19th century, China, for several centuries, was isolated from world processes. After opening, Beijing has become a victim of strong empires until the mid-20th century. In the second part of the 20th century, China had no sufficient resources to be an influential state like the US and the Soviet Union. As a result, although China has necessary resources, it lacks experience how to use them to increase its influence over the world affairs. Therefore, Chinese politicians usually prefer to have a deal with nearest states and organizations than with distant ones, to avoid unexpected situations and diminish potential risks.

However, there might be two mayor obstacles for China in joining the BSEC as well. First, the US will be for sure against that idea. President Trump has demonstrated a concern about the rising role of China in the world politics and economics. He believes that in order to make America great again China should play according to the rules created by the US. The role of the Black Sea region in world policy is too important for the US to invite new big players there. There are enough members of the NATO in the BSEC and close allies of the US to create problems for China to become a new member of the organization. Ostensibly, the position of the US would create the most serious obstacle for inviting China to join the organization.

Second, Turkey and Russia, as the most important members of the BSEC, could be afraid of inviting China to join the organization. The size of China's economy is several times bigger than the size of the economy of all BSEC members taken together. As a full member, China would be able to influence the work of the organization; possibly, even overshadowing Russia, Turkey, and other members. The major focus of Turkey's

foreign policy vis-à-vis the Black Sea region is mainly the protection of the status quo in the maritime area. In addition to keeping the Montreux Convention requirements (agreement that gives Ankara control over the Bosphorus Straits and the Dardanelles, and precisely regulates the transit of naval warships) valid and in force, this would prevent a penetration of any other power into the region that might possibly change the so-called regional balance. It can be argued that although Turkey is one of the most powerful and influential Black Sea coastal states, with biggest army at its shores and biggest seaport, it has not and cannot, create an internal drive for intra-regional union.²⁰ Apparently, under these conditions, Turkey would not support China's membership unequivocally.

At the same time, there are also incentives for Russia and Turkey to invite China to the BSEC. Both countries, especially Russia, have many problems with the US. Both Russia and Turkey view the alternative cooperation initiatives coming from within the region and backed by the US with suspicion.²¹ Russia is a subject to both political and economic sanctions from the Western countries led by the US, and has suffered significantly since the sanctions were introduced. The US has solid positions in the Black Sea area; most members of the BSEC are important allies of Washington, and the US is fully satisfied with this situation. Moscow could create additional difficulties for Washington by inviting China to the BSEC. Nowadays, Turkey also has many problems with the US. Ankara has lost its trust in the US as a reliable ally of Turkey because Fethullah Gülen, the alleged mastermind of the 15 July coup attempt in Turkey, has found a safe haven on the US territory. Ankara many times demanded Gülen be extradited to Turkey from the US but Washington refuses. Moreover, despite Turkey, Washington has chosen to cooperate with the Kurdish PYD/YPG that Ankara sees as a terrorist organization. These are some of the problems that exist between Turkey and the US. If they can't find necessary ways to eliminate their differences and rebuild mutual trust, Ankara will seek new allies. In that case, the growing power of China looks enticing to establish new alliance between Ankara and Beijing. The only serious problem that exists with China is the question of Beijing's policies toward the Turkic Uyghur people in Xinjiang province of China who have expressed pro-independence sentiments. However, this problem is relatively too small compared to the opportunities to have China as a new ally for Turkey.

The third problem is related to the position of the business community in the BSEC countries. Many of the representatives of business, especially small and medium, have a negative attitude toward China. Their positions in the economy suffer significant loss due to the successful development of China's exports. The success of Chinese businessmen stimulates a natural desire among the businessmen in the BSEC countries to distance themselves from China as much as possible. It can be expected that the small and medium-sized businesses (SMB) of the BSEC countries will

lobby their governments against China's membership of the organization. However, it must be remembered that the ability of the SMB to influence the governments has significantly reduced in recent decades in the world economy. Instead, the transnational corporations (TNCs) have become more powerful and they have become the main actors in the economic domain within the region. For them, trade with China and creation of new industries in China is a source of big profits. For many Western-based TNCs, profits coming from the Chinese market have already become the most important source of their profit. Although this is not yet the case for most TNCs based in BSEC countries, it is expected in the coming decades.

CONCLUSION

The BSEC is an important organization to increase prosperity and the peaceful development for its members. While its development depends on the interactions between the participating countries, non-participating countries are also important. The future of the BSEC might closely be tied with China, which should be invited to join the organization. The Chinese economy is most promising in the world. It makes China the most important and promising future member. China has a rising interest in developing logistical routes everywhere and investing in promising projects. For the sake of its future, the Black Sea region needs more cooperation with both the Chinese government and business.

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FIFTEEN

A Third Party Role in the Normalization of Russo–Turkish Relations

Ali Askerov and Stefan D. Brooks

The latest crisis between Ankara and Moscow started on 24 November 2015, with the shooting down of a Russian SU-24 fighter jet by Turkey along the Turkish-Syrian border, but the crisis did not last too long as both sides resolved their differences, and relations had improved by the following year. This crisis witnessed the importance of a third-party role as a means of resolving this international crisis peacefully. Without an active third-party role in the process, the relations between these two countries would probably not have improved as quickly as they did. The history of the Russian-Turkish relations is replete with crises and yet also quick resolutions, however, the last crisis was unique given the fact that both President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey initially took hardline, uncompromising positions. Nonetheless, when the conditions became ripe for peace and cooperation, both leaders changed their attitudes. The institution of a third-party mediation process started to work immediately after the crisis began and eventually yielded a reasonable outcome, although its real role in that achievement is somewhat dubious which will be discussed below.

As subsequent developments indicated, to peacefully manage this crisis sparked by the shooting down of a Russian fighter jet by Turkey, mediation was needed. A few abortive attempts, such as direct bilateral talks between the ministers of foreign affairs of Russia and Turkey, took place on different occasions, but instead of reconciliation, they tended to aggravate the crisis because of each side's uncompromising position. A

third-party role was used by some governmental actors that were not a party to the conflict to find a solution to the crisis without invoking a formal meeting or summit, but neither Russia or Turkey seemed receptive to. It is significant to note that all of the third parties mediating between Ankara and Moscow had their own interests in the compromise, but none had any leverage to exercise over the disputants.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the crisis in relations between Turkey and Russia started to develop with the Syrian Civil War, however, the turning point was the shooting down of the Russian military jet. The situation was unique and unprecedented because for the first time in history, a NATO member destroyed a Russian jet during a combat mission. Moscow blamed Ankara for deliberately shooting the Russian jet for no reason, whereas Turkey defended itself by appealing to its right to protect its borders, and blamed Russia for being reckless and culpable by violating Turkish airspace. The crisis escalated quickly, bringing about punitive measures by Russia by imposing economic sanctions against Turkey. Although the consequences of the crisis damaged the economies of both countries, the leaders of both nations repeatedly declared their intentions to not to change their positions since each side regarded itself as the victim and the other side as the aggressor. Russia demanded an official apology from Ankara and compensation for the destruction of the fighter jet, while Ankara declared that if Russia were to violate its airspace again in the future, it would take the same action again. However, the reality was that both sides to the conflict, especially Turkey, wanted to resolve the crisis and restore the relations as soon as possible. In addition to discussing the role of third-parties in conflict resolution, this chapter will address why Ankara softened its position so quickly, why Russia accepted the half-hearted Turkish apology, why the mediators got involved in the crisis in the first place, and how the mediation process developed in resolving the crisis.

EARLY ATTEMPTS OF MEDIATION

Early attempts to mediate between Ankara and Moscow came from the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, Ilham Aliyev and Nursultan Nazarbayev, respectively. However, neither Nazarbayev's, nor Aliyev's initial mediation attempts were effective in facilitating dialogue between Russia and Turkey in the midst of hostile rhetoric and mutual recriminations.¹ Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan offered their readiness to mediate between the sides to encourage Ankara and Moscow to explore a resolution by their own design through a dialogue.² Obviously, there was a negotiable issue to discuss, but, as we know from the previous chapters, its nature was too sensitive for the volunteering mediators to offer a non-binding solution to the parties, especially to Russia. The initial offer of

mediation by Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan ended without yielding a positive outcome, the details of which will be discussed below. Since Moscow's answer to the initial offers of mediation were not affirmative, no early opportunity came into existence to prevent the crisis from growing or to resolve it at an initial stage. Later, as the economic costs of the crisis soared, both sides realized the dangers of abandoning the strategic partnership they had labored to develop, the rhetoric of both sides started to mollify, and this helped to establish an environment that was more conducive for a potential resolution of the crisis.

The efforts at mediation were contingent on several factors, including a necessary de-escalation of the crisis. Under normal circumstances, the mediators would mainly try to use a problem-solving approach to improve the communication between the Kremlin and Ankara, encourage both leaders to reevaluate the unfavorable consequences of the crisis on their relations, and manage it constructively to minimize their mutual losses. However, the mediators' freedom of action and impartiality were restricted significantly due to the Kremlin's formidable position. In other words, Astana and Baku could be involved in the mediation process only as much as Moscow would allow them as they both are within the sphere of Russia's influence.

The underlying factors of the mediation attempts were connected to the national interests of the mediating countries as they have strong political and economic ties with both parties to the crisis, especially Russia. Both Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are within the sphere of Russia's influence, and this calls into question their ability to be neutral in any effort at mediation with Turkey. On the other hand, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have strong cultural and economic ties with Turkey, which eliminated the necessity of the mediators having to build an initial trust with Ankara.

The mediating countries, especially Azerbaijan, would also suffer from this crisis economically as the ongoing and proposed energy projects involving Russia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan were halted due to the crisis. In addition, President Aliyev needed good relations between Russia and Turkey to affect the power imbalance in the Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which is not in Azerbaijan's favor since Armenia enjoys Russia's support. As an ally and guarantor of Armenia's security, Russia has played a key role in the Karabakh War between Armenia and Azerbaijan that started in 1988 and resulted unfavorably for Baku which has hoped for some positive changes in Russia's position in its own favor that might be possible to get by means of Ankara's friendly influence over Moscow. As the leading regional power, Russia has been the main factor in Armenia's victory in the war over the Upper Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Currently, Moscow exercises major influence in the region, maintains the regional status quo set by itself in its own favor, and has a military base and troops stationed in Armenia, which is under

heavy military and economic influence of Russia.³ Russia is clearly powerful and influential enough to influence Azerbaijan's freedom of making and implementing foreign policy. Ironically, along with the US and France, Russia has been a co-chair of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that has a mission to mediate between Armenia and Azerbaijan for a peaceful resolution of the Upper Karabakh conflict.⁴ This violent conflict has become a frozen conflict since 1994 due to the ceasefire agreement, which works in Armenia's favor as the Upper Karabakh region, together with the seven administrative districts of Azerbaijan, is under its military control.⁵

Sometimes mediating between the sides to a conflict quickly is necessary to increase the chances for achieving a peaceful settlement since it would prevent the differences between the opposing sides from becoming too vast and irreconcilable. In the case of the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet, Moscow and Ankara eventually became less entrenched in their original positions, and were more willing to consider the point of view of the other, which created favorable conditions for successful mediation of the crisis. Since the parties to the conflict were not initially conducive to mediation, applying mediation to the situation against the wills of the sides to the conflict at this stage would not simply work. Remarkably, the necessary conditions for effective mediation became ripe quite soon after the cooling down of the anger from both sides and the effects of the crisis were felt on the economies of the both countries. This, then, created a favorable environment for the activities of the mediating parties.

As the Russian-Turkish crisis unfolded, efforts by other third parties besides Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan offering assistance occurred, but those efforts were ignored. One of those attempts was the role of President Sauli Niinistö of Finland who met with President Putin and President Erdogan separately to convey their respective messages to one another.⁶ As it found itself in an awkward position due to its relations with both countries, Iran was also willing to mediate, but this willingness never developed into actual mediating efforts, possibly because Tehran expected some positive signals from the disputants before it started to mediate. According to the Iranian analysts' interpretations, Ankara was responsible for not accepting Tehran's mediation offer.⁷ However, it was more likely that Iran's attempts failed because the Kremlin did not want an independent international mediator to be involved in the process because it wanted to avoid any problems related to the designing and managing the process as it desired. Some third parties from Russia's own sphere of influence would work for the Kremlin better, and it knew that there were many out there to serve Russia's needs loyally and earnestly.

MEDIATION AND SECRET DIPLOMACY

Certainly, mediation and secret diplomacy are two very different notions. However, in this case they worked hand-in-hand. As Stuart Murray argues, the practice of hiding information from certain individuals or groups is characteristic of many institutions, including governments.⁸ Following the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet by Turkey, secret diplomacy was necessitated so as to conceal information from the media and the public due to the potential for both Russia and Turkey to have to make concessions to resolve the Russian–Turkish crisis. Based on the outcomes reached as a result of mediation and/or secret diplomacy to the crisis, it can be argued that the main side desiring for secret diplomacy was Ankara considering the possibility of producing methods that would go against its official rhetoric.

Besides public third-party mediation of the Russian-Turkish crisis, secret diplomacy was another method of resolution of the problem. The third parties such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan took an active role in the process of reconciling the disputants, although it is not clear who proposed to hold such diplomatic efforts in secret. The main players in this context were Ramazan Abdulatipov, head of the Republic of Dagestan, a republic of Russia, and Cavit Çağlar, a Turkish investor in Dagestan and former minister of state in the Turkish governments in the mid-1990s under Prime Minister Tansu Çiller.

Secret diplomacy played a crucial role in preparing and underlining the details of the apology letter that Russia and Turkey would later agree on; more importantly, it helped to create an environment in which envoys of the both parties met to work toward an acceptable resolution of the crisis. It is doubtful that Abdulatipov, as an official of the Russian government, would dare to participate in any meeting with Turkey without the knowledge and consent of the Kremlin. It was very possible that Abdulatipov was instructed and directed by the Russian intelligence services as the Kremlin desired. However, it is hard to assess a concrete role of the Russian secret intelligence in managing the process. In any case, the fact that Dagestan is an integral part of the Russian Federation raises a question about its role as a mediator between Russia and Turkey. In other words, if it did act as a mediator, then the situation was very odd as it was a party to the conflict as an integral part of the Russian Federation. In other words, Dagestan, as part of Russia, mediated between itself and Turkey.

THE STATUS OF THE MEDIATORS

One of the interesting aspects of the mediation process between Russia and Turkey was that all the third parties were the leaders of countries

with weaker political and economic positions compared to both Russia and Turkey. Indeed, all of the nations that made some serious efforts to mediate between Ankara and Moscow are either a constituent part, or under the influence of Russia. Due to these facts, it is hardly believable that the mediators had a neutral and impartial position, which is normally an important premise of mediation. The countries within Russia's sphere of influence would act very carefully not to risk their own ties with Moscow, if their initiatives were not known or coordinated by Moscow prior to the start of the mediation process.

Although the names of some leaders of major powers, such as Angela Merkel of Germany, were announced to be mediating, no serious action was taken by them due to Russia's and Turkey's unwillingness to compromise.⁹ Perhaps, President Putin's unconditional demand for an official apology from Ankara was effective in deterring the possible mediation efforts by major powers. Turkey's reaction to the crisis was bolstered by the attitude of the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO); only six days after the incident, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a press conference with Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in Brussels that NATO was affirming its support to Turkey in its efforts to defend its borders, and Turkey had the right to defend itself and its airspace.¹⁰ In the same press conference, Prime Minister Davutoglu reiterated his country's policy of not offering any apology to Russia, because all that Turkey did was defend its borders. Davutoglu also stressed that the situation was related to the dignity for Turkey, stressing Ankara's determination not to apologize for shooting down the fighter jet, however, it is worth noting that when the conditions were ripe for reconciliation between Turkey and Russia, Davutoglu was no longer prime minister of Turkey. Our intention is not, however, to link the success of the third-party role in mediation to the absence of Davutoglu, rather, the argument is that Russia had organized the process in a way that it could control and manage it. At the very least, Moscow's favorable position due to its relations with the mediators enabled it to have prior knowledge before any step was taken by the third parties.

Understandably, both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, the two principal third parties trying to broker a reconciliation between Russia and Turkey, feared the prospect of being forced to choose between being friends with Turkey and Russia. To avoid this undesirable situation, they tried to avoid getting directly involved in the conflict. Neither Astana, nor Baku, wanted to take Moscow's side, however, they did not want to be seen on Ankara's side either since they are under the influence of Russia. Clearly, the best option for them both was the resolution of the crisis as soon as possible.

Azerbaijan

A post-Soviet Republic, Azerbaijan has suffered tremendously due to Russia's policies in the Caucasus. With its declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan inherited a Soviet-era violent conflict with Armenia over the Upper Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Although the independent Azerbaijan managed to oust Russian troops from its territory, and build economic and political ties with the West, Russia has used the Karabakh conflict to keep Azerbaijan in check by supporting Armenia. Russian troops played a decisive role in the Karabakh War in the early 1990s, helping Armenian troops to invade Azerbaijani territory. Moscow has always supported Armenia to maintain its favorable position in Karabakh. Ironically, Russia has been a co-chair of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) since its inception in 1992, which has played a main role in sustaining the status quo in the region that can be characterized by the "no war, no peace" principle. Azerbaijan's military achievements during the Four-Day War, also known as the April 2016 War, did not last long as Azerbaijan's military achievements were prevented by Russia, which has a military base in Armenian town of Gyumri near the Turkish border. Paradoxically, Baku still claims that it has very old, well-established, friendly, and strong relations with Moscow, but it is very clear that when Moscow's interests are at the center of things, the fear and anxiety the Kremlin creates for Azerbaijan plays the dominant role in every step Baku makes.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey are built on strategic and economic partnership, and cultural ties. In 1991, Azerbaijan's independence was first recognized by Turkey, which also supported Baku in its efforts to establish ties with the West, maintained active diplomacy on the Karabakh issue on behalf of Azerbaijan, and cooperated to implement projects to export Azeri Caspian oil and natural gas to world markets. Although Turkey did not militarily help Azerbaijan in its war with Armenia, it publicly supported Baku. A fleeting crisis between Azerbaijan and Turkey took place in late 2009 when Ankara made an attempt to change its isolationist policy toward Armenia, but this did not damage its relations with Azerbaijan which supposes that Armenia's isolation from the regional projects would help end its aggression against Azerbaijan.¹¹ Baku made attempts to mediate between Turkey and Russia, a palpable friend and a furtive foe, by initially trying to offer its services as an impartial actor, but the realities of Russia's influence on it and its friendship with Turkey affected Baku's mediation policies significantly.

Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's prime minister at the time, on his visit to Azerbaijan in early December of 2015, sought Baku's support in its crisis with Russia, and stated that Ankara would keep all avenues of communi-

cation with Moscow open. In a press conference, Davutoglu invited Russia to resolve its differences with Turkey diplomatically, stressing the futility of sanctions.¹² Although Azerbaijani President Aliyev initially said that Baku would support Turkey under any conditions,¹³ later on his approach to the crisis was more balanced and impartial. Any public statement made by Aliyev in support for Ankara's position would be a critical misstep leading to more problems for Azerbaijan. Such a declaration would have cast a cloud on Baku's original position of impartiality, eliminating the option of its mediation between the sides. Likewise, demonstrating solidarity with Moscow would damage Baku's interests. Having positioned itself at an equal distance from Russia and Turkey, Baku refused to support either Moscow or Ankara and tried to distance itself from the crisis. Its position did not go further than regretting the conflict between Azerbaijan's two partners and neighbors, and extending an offer to mediate between Moscow and Ankara.¹⁴ Nonetheless, it allowed the Turkish truck drivers to use Azerbaijan's land for transit purposes to reach Central Asian markets. Baku reduced the costs for the transit passage and facilitated visas for Turkish truck traffic that helped Turkey retain its trade with the Central Asian countries.¹⁵

In a similar situation in Astana, President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan noted that the crisis between Turkey and Russia, two important partners of Kazakhstan, has affected his country very adversely; therefore, the peaceful resolution of their differences would be in Astana's interests.¹⁶ This statement strengthened Astana's position as a mediator, at least on paper, portraying its position as neutral, an important stance for Astana not to anger Moscow by taking Ankara's side.

Nonetheless, Baku did not waste the opportunity created by the crisis between Russia and Turkey of selling its natural gas to Europe. Azerbaijan developed a southern gas corridor to expand Baku's natural gas exports to the European Union, which the Kremlin viewed as an unnecessary manipulation of the Russian-Turkish crisis that endangered Moscow's domination over European energy markets.¹⁷ Azerbaijan's outreach to European energy markets diminished significantly with the normalization of Russian-Turkish relations, as the energy projects between Russia and Turkey were restored.¹⁸

Kazakhstan

A large post-Soviet country, Kazakhstan has a big Russian population which is the main reason for its vulnerability to Russia's policies. For Russia, Kazakhstan is just one of the countries in its sphere of influence that should always be loyal, friendly, and supportive and never threaten Moscow's interests. Kazakhstan is one of the most loyal allies of Russia among the post-Soviet states and supports the Kremlin's position against the West while trying to also maintain cordial, if not friendly, ties with

the West.¹⁹ Once the main locations for nuclear tests during the days of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited the fourth-largest nuclear arsenal in the world, which included 1,410 strategic nuclear warheads and an undisclosed number of tactical nuclear weapons.²⁰ After gaining its independence, the Kazakh government under President Nursultan Nazarbayev decided to dismantle the warheads and make nuclear nonproliferation a main characteristic of his new country's security policy. All the nuclear weapons were transferred to Russia, or were dismantled by the end of 1995. This action, which culminated in Kazakhstan's 2010 initiative for a UN General Assembly resolution calling for an International Day Against Nuclear Tests, undermined its security leverage against Russia.

A multi-ethnic country, Kazakhstan has large Russian, Ukrainian, and Uzbek minorities. The Russian population constitutes a quarter of the total population of Kazakhstan and they constitute a majority in the northern part of the country that borders with Russia.²¹ Considering the case of Russia's aggression toward Ukraine, another post-Soviet state, it is easy to imagine the potential danger Kazakhstan may face should Russia use this large Russian population as a pretext to foment unrest and/or seize territory as Moscow did in Ukraine in 2014. Russia's hegemony in the region and the presence of a large Russian population in Kazakhstan is obviously an endless source of concern for this post-Soviet state.

With the start of the Russian-Turkish crisis, Kazakhstan tried to remain neutral, making numerous impartial statements on different occasions urging the parties to deescalate the crisis and focus on fighting international terrorism.²² Offering itself as a mediator was the most rational way for Kazakhstan to avoid both Russia's and Turkey's natural expectations to take their side. Kazakhstan has established good relations with Turkey since its independence due to their cultural ties.

Dagestan

This case is especially interesting, since, unlike Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, the Republic of Dagestan is a part of the Russian Federation. This means that Dagestan, at least formally, was a direct party to the crisis as a part of the Russian Federation. Therefore, Dagestan's participation in the conflict management process as a mediator between Russia and Turkey was very unusual. It probably makes more sense to argue that Dagestan was directly representing Russia in secret talks, although it would be fair to ask why the secret talks did not take place directly between Moscow and Ankara. It is important to remember that Turkey was not represented in the secret diplomacy by a member of its government, although the representative, Cavit Çağlar, was authorized by the government.²³ As Dagestan was part of the secret diplomacy employed as a means of problem-solving, potentially it was acting according to the framework of the rules set by Russian authorities. Therefore, what Mos-

cow declared publically to be the most important precondition for the rapprochement—an apology—was also dealt with secretly until the secret diplomacy became an open mediation. Paradoxically, what Ankara declared publicly—that it would not apologize—was violated with Ankara’s own consent in the process of doing secret diplomacy between the sides. Apparently, the parties wanted to remove their differences. Yet, Putin wanted to receive what he wanted from Turkey—which was a written public apology.

Moreover, Moscow’s demands from Ankara included compensation for the dead pilot’s family, and punishment of the perpetrators that were also preconditions for starting the process of normalization of relations between Turkey and Russia. Although these demands were declined by Ankara, they were not totally ignored by Erdogan. When he learned about the possibility of reaching Putin through Abdulatipov, he agreed to work on a proposal to satisfy Russia’s demands.²⁴ Erdogan gave his consent on 30 April 2016 while he was meeting in Istanbul with Turkish General Akar, and a businessman and former politician Cavit Çağlar.²⁵ It was easy for Çağlar, Turkey’s informal representative, to conduct shuttle diplomacy with Russia without being noticed due to his business dealings in Dagestan, which he visited regularly. The preparation of the draft letter of apology was a long and bilateral process carried out through secret diplomacy and concluded in June of 2017.²⁶ Abulatipov, head of Dagestan Republic, noted that the original version of the letter did not include any words of apology, confirming that the preparation of the letter was the product of a process that included multiple meetings.²⁷ It is still not clear which of the sides to the conflict initiated the talks or came up with the offer for secret diplomacy, however, the Kremlin publicly rejected a proposed working group between itself and Turkey in May of 2016.²⁸ Although it is hard to know whether the Kazakhs were aware of the secret Dagestani channel, Astana remained faithful to its diplomatic efforts until the crisis was over.

THE FINAL STEPS AND POST-CRISIS POSITIONS

Turkey made an attempt to end the crisis with Russia by sending a letter to Moscow on June 12, 2016, when a national holiday—the Russia Day—was celebrated in Russia. The letter stressed that Ankara desired to resort relations with Russia prior to the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet. The Kremlin however, did not see the letter as satisfactory and insisted on receiving an official written apology message from Ankara.²⁹ Removing all options but one, Moscow’s firm position demanded radical moves from Ankara to break the impasse.

On 22 June 2016, C. Tuymebayev, Kazakhstan’s ambassador to Ankara, informed Turkey that President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was sure

that Putin was ready to accept the letter of apology.³⁰ The final draft of the letter was speedily prepared and arrived in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, in two days, on 24 June 2016. President Nazarbayev gave the letter to Yuri Ushakov, a Russian presidential aide, who handed it to Putin who was present there for the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).³¹

When Yuriy Ushakov, Putin's chief advisor on foreign policy and security issues, let the Turkish representatives know that the Kremlin would publicize the deal on June 27, the Turks wanted to see the text in advance.³² The Russian side agreed with the request, and sent the draft to Ankara. On June 29, the Kremlin made a public statement about ending the crisis with Turkey, and announced of the commencement of a process of normalization.³³ Apparently, both sides were happy with ending the crisis that had an adverse effects on their economic and socio-political relations.

The main post-crisis discussions in both Turkey and Russia, but especially in Turkey, were about the content of the letter as it was associated with the prestige of Ankara and Moscow.³⁴ Moreover, a question was if Ankara would apologize, why it waited so long, causing huge losses for the economy of the country. The harsh statements made by President Erdogan to blame Russia prior to reconciliation, were still fresh in the public memory; therefore, making concessions to Russia so readily could have damaged both his own and AKP's reputation. Perhaps, the Turkish President had no problem with the apology, but the pro-government Turkish media started a discussion arguing that the worlds of the letter had been chosen very carefully, and that the authors favored very soft words that did not really correspond to apology.³⁵ Since the letter was prepared in Turkish and translated into Russian, and the art of translation never works flawlessly, both sides had a chance to manipulate the meanings of the key words that was politically important for them.

The first post-crisis meeting between Putin and Erdogan took place eight months later on 9 August 2016 in St. Petersburg, Russia, where the two presidents jointly announced the start of the normalization of relations between their countries.³⁶ Some areas of the pre-crisis cooperation, like tourism, would be restored rapidly, while other projects, such as the Akkuyu power plant project, would be restored gradually. The St. Petersburg meeting officially put an end to the crisis which had started eight months earlier as both nations began taking steps to restore relations.

WHY DID TURKEY RELAX ITS POSITION?

It took Ankara some time to realistically calculate the cost of the crisis for Turkey in both economic and strategic terms. Once the economic costs started to be felt, Ankara felt compelled to create some alternative ways

for conflict management from its rigid stance of not making any concessions to Russia. The main reasons for Ankara's policy change included considerable economic loss, fading trust in its Western allies, trying to gain a new strategic ally, and increasing domestic unhappiness caused by the economic downfall. Over the time, it became very apparent that the crisis with Russia hit Turkey's tourism, construction, energy, and agriculture sectors badly, resulting in billions of dollars of losses.³⁷ The Turkish government had tried to find alternative markets and ways to soften the loss of Russian business with little success.³⁸

Another factor that made Ankara reconsider its position during the crisis was the response of its Western allies to the problems in the region. As the Syrian Civil War developed, Ankara concluded that the West was not willing to remove Syrian President Assad from power, despite initial calls for him to step down. The impact of this fact on Turkey's calculus was significant, since it had already burnt all of its bridges with Damascus by calling for the overthrow of Assad, despite the good relations it had with Assad prior to the Syrian Civil War. But once the Syrian Civil War started in 2011 and the Assad government responded to peaceful protests by resorting to force, Turkey called for the overthrow of the Assad government. This apparent policy change on the part of its Western allies as far as at the very least acquiescing with Assad remaining in power, after having initially called for his overthrow, now put Ankara in an unfavorable position as Ankara could neither proceed with its anti-Assad policies because of its interests, nor could it immediately change the directions of its Syrian strategy as it would not be easy to justify this sudden change. Turkey's expectations that the West would continue to seek the overthrow of the Assad government based on its alliance with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) did not materialize. The priorities of the West had changed with the altering circumstances in the region because of the rapid conquest of large parts of Syria by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The outbreak of violence between al-Qaeda in Syria with ISIS undermined and divided the opposition against Assad. These developments and the ineffectiveness of the Free Syrian Army prompted the United States to change its policy from initially focusing on overthrowing Assad to what it now regarded as an even greater threat: the rise of ISIS in Syria and also Iraq. The West, including the US, now saw the Assad regime less dangerous than ISIS, and looked for a new strategy for destroying the terrorist organization. These developments worked to the benefit of the Kurds of Syria who now became the main part of the new US strategy against ISIS.

As was discussed in chapter 5, the US and Turkey have had a problem over the Democratic Union Party (PYD) of Syrian Kurds, which Ankara regards as an offshoot of the PKK, which is recognized as a terrorist organization by most countries, including Turkey and also the US. Washington, however, stated that it does not share Turkey's views about the

PYD and offered weapons to the PYD fighters in their struggle against both the Assad government and also various jihadist groups, namely ISIS and al-Qaeda in Syria.³⁹ This difference continued over time, seriously damaging the trust between Turkey and US.⁴⁰ Turkey understandably regarded with alarm the American support for and the arming of Kurdish fighters in Syria given that Turkey has experienced decades of conflict with the PKK in southern Turkey. With relations with Washington strained over American support for the PYD, Turkey sought closer ties with Russia.

Ankara, however, confronted two problems in seeking closer ties with Russia. First, relations between Turkey and Russia were at an impasse. Second, to become Russia's ally, Turkey had to change its Syrian policy vis-à-vis the Assad government. Undertaking both of these acts was difficult and hard to justify as Turkey had had adopted a hardline anti-Assad position since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, but Ankara was able to adopt a new policy to break the impasse by making a change in the Turkish government. In May 2016, Prime Minister Davutoglu, who was the architect of the *zero problems with neighbors* policy, resigned from his post after a meeting with President Erdogan. Before long, Binali Yildirim, the new prime minister, announced a rapprochement policy toward those with whom Turkey was in conflict.⁴¹ The Turkish government's readiness to use pragmatic steps to address the foreign policy issues of the country also made it easier to resolve the differences with Russia.

The growing unhappiness among various Turkish economic interests whose trade with Russia was crippled by Russian sanctions on Turkish commerce was another factor that pushed Ankara to change its policy with Russia. The farming tourism, and construction sectors, were among the top losers during the crisis in Russian-Turkish relations. The souring of relations with Russia caused Turkey much more economic damage than it expected, pushing both the government and various Turkish economic sectors to search for alternative markets for Turkish products and services other than in Russia, but this failed, forcing Ankara to quickly resolve the crisis.⁴²

WHY DID RUSSIA ACCEPT THE APOLOGY SO WILLINGLY?

President Putin received the letter of apology and accepted it in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he was present for a conference.⁴³ His first reaction was that the letter was slightly closer to Turkey's position than that of Russia, however, he announced that the content was acceptable.⁴⁴ The public reactions to the letter of apology in both countries were generally positive and within days relations started to normalize. An interesting point is that Russia accepted the apology letter quite gladly, perhaps because it saw no benefit from prolonging the crisis since Turkey had

made a sincere gesture to resolve the crisis, Russia's economy was suffering as well because of the loss of Turkish trade, and the sanctions imposed by the West in reaction to Russia's actions in Ukraine in 2014 limited Russia's economic capability.

Both countries started to suffer economic losses from the moment Russia applied sanctions against Turkey. The sanctions halted mutual projects in the energy and construction sectors, and affected the prices in Russia's own food market adversely. More importantly, Moscow needed to halt the hostility with Ankara due to the war in Syria that required a close cooperation with Turkey. Prior to the crisis, Putin had tried to build special strategic relationships with Turkey, a NATO country, to form a new regional alliance. As aforementioned and discussed in the previous chapters, Turkey and Russia have cooperated on many joint projects, which were suspended or abandoned due to the sanctions. Apparently, the results of the conflict with Turkey reached a point in which the situation played an effective role in Putin's decision to use the opportunity offered to him by the institution of mediation to end the crisis. In fact, as we argue, the Kremlin itself made a significant contribution to the progress of the mediating process in the way it took place.

Putin also saw the crisis as an opportunity to create even stronger ties with Turkey. The Kremlin worked clandestinely toward ending the crisis. It chose actors such as Ramazan Abdulatipov, head of the Republic of Dagestan, an acceptable name by Turkey and its public, whose role was crucial for the success of the process, to contribute to the creation of that moment which took place in Tashkent. Once receiving the apology letter, Putin judged Turkey's apology as consistent with affirming his reputation and saw no reason to not resume cordial relations with Turkey.

During the crisis, the Kremlin made every attempt to show that it was not against Ankara in general, if the latter understood its mistake in shooting down the Russian fighter jet. Russia was one of the first countries to express solidarity with the Turkish government immediately after the coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016, whereas the Obama administration waited several hours to make a statement.⁴⁵ One of Putin's many tactics was making it publicly known in Turkey that he was friend of Turkey, and did not desire to see any chaos and instability that would hurt the people of that country. This was rather a deliberate policy seeking a rapprochement with Turkey. In addition, some analysts have argued that it was Russian intelligence that warned Erdogan about the coup in Turkey just minutes before it took place.⁴⁶

It was not surprising that Russia included the energy sector in the sanctions only partially, and throughout the crisis, it continued exporting natural gas to Turkey, which is the second largest market in Europe after Germany. Given the fact that Turkey still maintains the status of being the main transit country for oil and natural gas to Europe, it becomes more apparent that Russia would not want to lose Turkey as an energy

partner. Nevertheless, the sanctions and their detrimental effects on Turkey pushed Ankara to look for alternative sources of energy for its own consumption. Turkey had talks with Azerbaijan, Qatar, and even Israel as substitute markets for Russia.⁴⁷ It is quite likely that Russia knew about these talks because they were not secret and Moscow presumably wanted to resolve all obstacles that were jeopardizing its partnerships with Turkey in the energy sector, a vital source of hard currency for Russia.

Furthermore, Moscow sees Turkey as part of its new regional security strategy. One of Putin's main concerns prior to the crisis with Turkey was to build a strong security partnership with Turkey. This seems odd given the fact that Turkey is a NATO member. Nonetheless, Putin is keenly aware of Turkey's strained ties with NATO and also the European Union, sees a rare opportunity to exploit this at a time when Russia has few allies or friends and is isolated and suffering from sanctions imposed by the West for Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although it is very likely that the mediation process was designed and developed under Russia's influence, the mediation process included various steps appropriate for this kind of third party role. One was the use of a caucus, or a private meeting between the mediator and only one of the parties to the conflict at a time. This was especially done by Nazarbayev who explored settlement options and presented them to the sides. Nazarbayev also used deadlines to pressure on Ankara effectively by letting the Turks know about the time-sensitive opportunity to end the crisis in Tashkent where President Putin was a visitor. This served as a driving force for the preparation of the final draft of the letter and its rapid delivery to Uzbekistan's capital before Putin left for Moscow.

Arguably, when any two sides to conflict reach a negotiated agreement, they actually reach two agreements; each of which reflects each party's own understanding, and therefore, they need to document the agreement.⁴⁸ In this situation, no immediate written agreement was necessary; however, the parties had a letter of apology in two languages, the original one in Turkish, and the translated one in Russian.⁴⁹ The issue that bothered the parties was related to the rhetoric used for the apology; the letter contained a word—*izvinite*—used in Russian to express sorrow. The Turkish side later claimed that this word was the softest one to use for an apology, but the most important point was that Putin was satisfied with the letter of apology, and publicized it in Russia as a sign of victory and justification for starting a new chapter of cooperation with Turkey. Pragmatically, each party had the flexibility to claim that the letter was compatible with its own position. This, in fact, was a creative side of the reconciliation process that gave it extra flexibility within the context of

domestic politics for both countries such that each side could claim victory.

The relative power of the parties to the conflict was one of the most important defining characteristics of the process. Russia's relatively more powerful status hurt Turkey's economy more than its own. Since Russia and Turkey calculated their losses and gains from either continuing the crisis or resolving it, concluding they both had more to gain than lose by resolving the crisis, they gave up their initial posturing and instead looked for a way of restoring relations. At this point, their balance of power was a defining factor in whose position would prevail in the end.⁵⁰ Obviously, Russia enjoyed more leverage, and therefore, it was able to lead the entire reconciliation process in line with its own aspirations. Moscow did not find Ankara's attempts of trying to restore the relations attractive and designed its own. In this sense, Moscow managed to use its own channels to initiate a third-party mediation as it was convinced that no better alternatives were available. The urgency of economic and strategic needs compelled Ankara to make concessions; on the other hand, Moscow managed to exercise its power to gain a more advantageous position to satisfy its interests and aspirations.

Although the mutual efforts made possible by a third-party role yielded a win-win situation, Russia's initial position was satisfied more than that of Turkey. The fact that Erdogan changed his initial position unexpectedly, and sent a letter of apology to Putin is not a sign of weakness; rather it is an indicator of how flexible policies serve national interests. However, the fact that Turkey was not able to play any dominant role at any stage of the process raises a question if Ankara had lost precious time that caused it more harm. Considering the manner of delivery of the letter to Tashkent that was done very hastily, it can be guessed that Ankara did not want to lose another minute. It was very speedily sent to Putin who was visiting Tashkent for an unrelated multilateral meeting, as if it were the last opportunity that, if missed, Ankara would suffer big losses. The entire course of the mediation, as well as secret diplomacy, shows that the mediation process progressed under the control of President Putin from the beginning to the end. Putin not only let the third parties mediate as much as he wanted, but he directed them as well.

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Conclusion

Conflict or Cooperation?

Ali Askerov

In this volume, relations between Russia and Turkey, both in the context of the deep-rooted crisis in the Middle East where their interests do not converge and outside of that context where they mostly cooperate for mutual gains, have been discussed broadly. As seen from the various chapters, Russia and Turkey have interacted for centuries mostly through conflict but also through cooperation; and sometimes both at the same time. Today, despite their visible differences, Russia and Turkey need each other to satisfy their political and economic interests; and this is natural as they are close neighbors. These cooperative interactions are a necessity of the globalization age, which generates interdependence among nations in economic terms. This usually ties politics to itself as politics and economics often go hand-in-hand. In the age when the global civil society network continuously grows, the human factor is crucial to building relations among nations, including Russians and Turks; and governments can't overlook this factor while formulating their foreign policies. In the Russia–Turkey case, ignoring the wishes of the citizens might be effective in the short run, but in the long run, it won't yield positive results. Russians like Turkey for its shores, sun, food, and hospitality; Turks like Russia for its opportunities and attractions. It is necessary to take these points into account when making foreign policies; and building relations accordingly would only increase mutual gains as much as possible through satisfying the citizens' needs and aspirations; thus, also contributing to the growth of the regional peace and prosperity.

As discussed in the chapters of this volume, in the modern era, Russo–Turkish relations are affected by many domestic and international factors. Dynamic regional and international crises irresistibly magnetize assertive countries, like Russia and Turkey, so that avoiding or ignoring those crises while formulating foreign policy options is almost impossible. The Syrian disaster, that has engulfed Russia and Turkey in hostility and rivalry, has also generated some opportunities for cooperation. They, naturally, belong to opposite camps rejecting the main visions and policy lines of each other, and this is not unusual in contemporary poli-

tics. Unlike the traditions of a zero-sum approach, two states can both cooperate and compete at the same time in accordance with their interests. Changing this tenuous situation is very difficult and sometimes unnecessary because the complex nature of the international interactions may not always allow it. The war in Syria is the worst form of that interaction, which has manifested many ugly outcomes of the mixture of the use of force in various forms by both governmental and non-governmental actors, where the latter often uses the support provided by the first.

The factors, such as rivalry, miscommunication, and using heavy tactics, among others, that cause conflict escalation make the problem worse by enlarging the original problem, either intentionally or unintentionally, and by adding new complexities to the old conflict through new issues and parties, or through bringing about more casualties and violating human rights gravely. As the Syrian case has clearly shown, a similar crisis may cause grave consequences. The refugee waves, a product of the Middle Eastern crisis with its astonishingly enormous size, have created critical economic, political, and social problems for the West, as well as some regional countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Turkey alone hosts almost four million refugees. However, even a relatively successful refugee policy of the Turkish government is not a solution to this humanitarian crisis as long as the root causes of the problem are not addressed. To find a political solution to the problem will entail huge transformative changes on local, national, regional, as well as global levels. Russia, like many other states, has spent a great amount of resources in Syria to satisfy its own interests. At this point, it would be in the interest of all states to think about the solution to the problem that would satisfy all the parties at least partially, which also is necessary for a more permanent peace. However, the “national interest” dilemma is likely to continue to be an obstacle for full reconciliation in the region.

Expecting full cooperation of Russia and Turkey free from competition is not only unrealistic, but also it is unnecessary, since conflicts are a driving force of progress and positive change. Thus, no rivalry not necessarily is a good sign, as normally, competition is needed for development. It is very important for all sides to develop and operationalize skills of using conflicts for constructive purposes. Destructive conflicts should be kept in check to prevent new conflict escalations that would cause damage and grief. The *zero problems with neighbors* foreign policy trend of Ankara, which has recently been abandoned, has shown that pure idealistic policies are possible only on paper. However, diminishing the problems to minimum while partnering for peace would yield peace and prosperity. Yet, expecting too much from Russo–Turkish relations is not realistic since they belong to different blocs. As long as the US and Russia have problems in their relations, expecting full cooperation be-

tween Russia and Turkey is futile, unless Turkey totally abandons its Western orientation or Russia becomes a true Western country.

It is true that Turkey and Russia have clashing interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which Moscow sees as its backyard, despite cultural differences. The reality is that both regions are within Russia's sphere of influence, despite the independence of these regional states since 1991. The past 27 years did not change much but the future is always unpredictable and pregnant to changes. If we see Russia's aggression in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, which still continues in other forms, as a test for Turkey, it failed that test. Moscow did not face any serious challenge from Ankara in either case. The reality is that Moscow also should be pushed to a position of choosing or at least having alternatives to its aggressive policies, which necessitates an effective diplomacy alongside with using unyielding means provided by civil society organizations. This also means that most effective solutions to the protracted regional conflicts still lie, at least partially, within the positive domestic structural change.

By and large, both constructive cooperation and constructive competition are and must be preferable to destructive conflict and destructive competition; and the last crisis between Turkey and Russia showed that no destructive conflict causes benefits for the disputants. In this case, the sanctions imposed on Turkey by Russia seriously hurt the economies and well-being of people of both countries and forced them to look for the ways of a quick rapprochement. Hopefully, both Ankara and Moscow have learned from their own mistakes so that in the future they will handle their conflicting issues through dialogue and constructive efforts to find a common ground for a mutual gain. More interstate cooperation is needed to build a better future for these two countries, for the entire region, and for the whole world. It is time for the successors of two great empires, Russia and Turkey, to see peaceful relations as an eternal mission, which is important for the solution of the deep-rooted protracted conflicts that exist in the Middle East and post-Soviet region. Realistically, both countries need serious domestic political transformative change to reach the point where they would be able to make peaceful interactions the main form of relations with others. Notwithstanding, ignoring the factors of the external world, allies, commitments, interests, and many unforeseen dynamics, among others, is not possible. Yet, learning a lesson from the past would help both Moscow and Ankara to avoid letting their differences escalate to harmful margins—handling their differences by force would never bring them a real satisfaction.

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