Turkish Foreign Policy and Russian-Turkish Relations

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Domestic Dynamics

--- 2002 elections --- (general)
- Only two parties in the parliament
  - AKP (34%) – CHP (19%)
- 2002-2003: Gül government (AKP)
- 2003-2007: Erdoğan government (AKP)

--- 2007 elections --- (general and presidential)
- 2007-2011: President Gül
  - 2007-2011: Erdoğan government (AKP): 47% of votes

--- 2011 elections --- (general)
- AKP receives 50% of votes
Domestic Dynamics

- AKP’s consolidation of power
  - Change in social and economic dynamics
  - Rise of religious conservatism (headscarf issue)
  - AKP: a moderate Islamic outlook based on liberal economy and promotion of values of democracy, human rights and rule of law

- New ‘initiatives’ for solution of Kurdish and Alevi issues

- Continuous economic growth and surviving the global financial crises of 2008-2011

- Restructuring of the judiciary system
  - Ergenekon, Balyoz and KCK trials
  - Towards an ‘AKP dictatorship’?
‘Change’ in Turkish Foreign Policy

1990s: Turkey as a ‘coercive regional power’
- Large-scale cross-border operations against Iraq
- Coming close to a military confrontation with Greece in 1996 and with Syria in 1998
- S-300 missiles deployment crisis with Cyprus in 1997
- Numerous problems with Russia
- Strained relations with Iran
- No dialogue with Armenia
- ‘2 ½ War Logic’ and ‘Sevres Syndrome’
- Turkey’s exclusion in OIC (1997)
- EU’s rejection of Turkish membership in 1997
Theoretical Framework

- **2000s** – Turkey as a ‘benign regional power’

- Explanation for change in Turkish foreign policy
  - Europeanization process
  - Changes in the definition of elites’ own identity
  - Impact of political developments (rise of AKP)
  - Geopolitical considerations (Davutoğlu factor)

- **Trading State** – Richard Rosecrance – 1986
- **Soft Power** – Joseph Nye – 2004
Can Turkey’s democratization experience be a model for the Middle Eastern countries?

- A secular, democratic, pro-Western Muslim country with a strong free market economy
- Turkish experience of Islam
  - A more tolerant and civil understanding that works in a democratic political setting
  - A market-oriented approach where economic successes and gains, not pure ideology, are the main driving forces
- Erdoğan’s AKP
  - Erdoğan’s rising popularity in the Arab world
  - Turkey’s gradual distancing from Israel
  - AKP’s cultural-religious affinity with the people of the region
  - AKP’s ability to present itself as a centrist political movement with a conservative outlook
“In terms of its area of influence, Turkey is a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf, and Black Sea country. Given this picture, Turkey should make its role of a peripheral country part of its past, and appropriate a new position: one of providing security and stability not only for itself, but also for its neighboring regions. Turkey should guarantee its own security and stability by taking on a more active, constructive role to provide order, stability and security in its environs.”

Strategic depth: Historical depth + Geographical depth

Turkey as a ‘central/pivotal’ state in world politics
Davutoğlu’s Principles

- Balance between security and democracy
- Zero problems towards neighbours
- Proactive and pre-emptive peace diplomacy
- Multi-dimensional foreign policy
- Rhythmic diplomacy aiming to maintain communication with regional and global actors
Popular Debates

- Re-emergence of Neo-Ottomanism?
  - Significant interest in Middle East, Balkans and Caucasus
  - Turkey as an emerging ‘centre’ of influence in the region

- A shift of axis in foreign policy?
  - More distant relations with the West
    - 1 March 2003 motion
    - May 2004 Cypriot accession to EU
  - Closer relations with Middle East and Russia
    - Rapprochement with Syria, Iran, OIC, Sudan, Hamas (visit of Hamas leader to Ankara in 2005, no vote for new UN sanctions against Iran in 2010)
    - Criticism against Israel’s actions (Davos incident and Gaza flotilla raid crisis)
    - Multidimensional partnership with Russia (Putin’s visits to Ankara in 2004 and 2009; Russian-Turkish dialogue in 2008 Georgian crisis)
Turkish-Russian Relations in 1990s

- Geopolitical competition versus economic cooperation

  - Major conflicts between Turkey and Russia in 1990s
    - Russian uneasiness about Turkey’s active foreign policy in former Soviet space
    - Russian-Armenian alliance against Turkish-Azeri alliance in Caucasus
    - Competition over Caspian Sea oil pipelines
      - Turkish scheme: Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
      - Russian scheme: Baku-Novorossiysk
    - Russia’s attempts to be exempt from OSCE’s military limits in the Caucasus
    - Mutual accusations about involvement in Chechen and Kurdish issues
    - New Russian/CIS bases and troops on Turkish borders
    - Russia’s decision to sell S-300 missiles to Greek Cypriots
Turkish-Russian Relations in 1990s

- Facts and figures in Turkish-Russian relations
  - **Trade and economy:**
    - 367% increase in Turkey’s exports to Russia (1992-1997)
    - 177% increase in total trade volume (1992-1997)
    - Remarkable figures in ‘shuttle trade’
    - Projects undertaken by Turkish construction companies in Russia
    - Turkey becomes a favorite destination for Russian tourists
  
- **Energy cooperation:**
  - Initiation of ‘Blue Stream’ natural gas pipeline in 1997
Multi-Dimensional Partnership

- Continuation of pragmatism (i.e. closer relations in fields such as trade, energy, defense industry, etc.)

- Search for a new dialogue in regional political issues (South Caucasus, Central Asia, Black Sea)
  - Turkish PM Demirel’s Caucasus Stability Pact proposal in 2000
  - Turkish FM Cem’s Moscow-Ankara-Central Asia strategic triangle proposal in 2001
  - Launching of BLACKSEAFOR in 2001

** Signature of the ‘Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia’ in Nov. 2001

- Institutionalized cooperation in:
  - a) Regional political issues (e.g. Balkans, Caucasus, Cyprus, Afghanistan)
  - b) Other bilateral issues (e.g. security, terrorism, energy, trade)
Multi-Dimensional Partnership

- Turkey’s problematic relations with the EU
  - Major issues: education and broadcasting in Kurdish language, abolition of death penalty and solution of Cyprus problem
  - Russia as a strategic alternative to the EU?

- Change of government in Turkey
  - Change in foreign policy vision
    - Resolution of all problems with neighbouring countries,
    - Formulation of a ‘multi-dimensional’ or ‘multi-track’ foreign policy,
    - ‘Rhythmic diplomacy’ which aimed to maintain communication with regional and global actors
Rapprochement in Post-Iraqi War Period

- US intervention in Iraq
  - Russia in the anti-war coalition with France and Germany
  - Turkish Parliament refuses the opening of a ‘northern front’ in March 2003

- 2003-2005 period: common frustration with the West
  - Turkey:
    - Relations with US get worse due to issues particularly related with Northern Iraq
    - Relations with EU get worse due to Cyprus issue
  - Russia:
    - Disappointment about Russia’s benefits from close relations with Washington in post-September 11 period
    - Cooling down of relations with West due to US and EU involvement in ‘colour revolutions’ in Georgia and Ukraine
‘Strategic Axis’ against the West?

Issues of cooperation
- Increasing number of summits between Turkey and Russia
- Speeding up of cooperation in trade, energy, tourism
- Convergence of views in regional and global issues
- Inauguration of Blue Stream pipeline in 2005
- Talks for construction of Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline

Issues of conflict
- Increasing Turkish dependency on Russian energy
- NABUCCO versus Russian-led pipeline projects (South Stream)
Russian-Georgian War: A Test Case?

- August 2008 – Russia intervenes in Georgia’s military dispute with its breakaway republic of South Ossetia

  - Turkish concerns
    - Limited room of maneuver due to heavy dependency on Russian energy as well as close economic ties with Moscow
    - Risks posed by the war against regional stability in the neighbouring Caucasus

  - Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform proposal
    - Ankara’s approach in the face of US request to send military ships with to Georgia through Turkish Straits
    - Solution of regional matters with Russia, rather than the West
2009-2012 Period

- ‘Economic interests’ outweigh ‘geopolitical conflict scenarios’
  - Trade volume: 38 billion USD in 2008
  - Target: 100 billion USD in 2015
  - Putin’s visit in August 2009
    - Ankara’s ‘green light’ for South Stream pipeline
    - Russia’s consent for Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline
    - Akkuyu Nuclear Plant deal
  - Formation of a high-level intergovernmental council in 2010
  - Abolition of visas for stays up to 30 days

- Current problems
  - Conflicting positions in Syrian crisis
  - Turkey’s inclusion in NATO Missile Shield

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<th>TOP TRADING PARTNERS OF TURKEY as of December 2012</th>
<th>Trade Volume (billion USD)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Germany</td>
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<td>7 France</td>
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